A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF GENERATION Y EMPLOYEES

WORKING IN GEORGIA STATE GOVERNMENT:

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE PLANNING

by

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Abstract

The exploratory mixed research design included quantitative and qualitative research data, techniques and methods in one case study. A descriptive analysis reveals emerging workforce trends in various areas, such as ethnic group, job classification, and compensation, among other variables. In particular, the descriptive analysis assessed staffing gaps of the most critical positions that Baby Boomers and Generation Yers occupy. More than 4,000 Generation Y and Baby Boomer employee records were analyzed from Georgia's human resource information system (PeopleSoft). Semistructured interviews were conducted assessing awareness among HR professionals of their understanding of generational differences, emotional intelligence, competency needs, and other factors impacting recruitment and retention of the Generation Y cohort. Workforce trends impacting strategic workforce planning efforts were identified.

Dedication

To my husband, Vincent, and my sons, Vincent, Jr. and Victor, "To whom much is given, much is required." Thank you for all your love and support. Many thanks to my parents, family and friends for praying for me year after year; you're the best. And to my precious baby sister, Wendy—your love is always with me. To God be the glory for the things He has done!

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Approximately 64 million Baby Boomers will be eligible to retire within the next 2 years, and the demand for talent has never been higher (Siegfried, 2008). Many career employees are highly skilled knowledge workers who manage the day-to-day operations of a myriad of functional areas. These employees do not add value because of personal work histories, but instead, because of what they know (Lee & Maurer, 2001). Years of experience from these employees will be lost if a strategic workforce plan is not in place to ensure future generations will be developed and retained to take over predecessors' responsibilities. An organization's ability to properly assess the future workforce is imperative to ensuring that the right talent is in place to fulfill its vision, mission and goals. The General Accounting Office (GAO, 2004) contended that in order for an organization to be effective, workforce planning has to be derived from accurate and comprehensive workforce information.

For most organizations, retaining talent and developing future leaders are organizational goals (Lowe, Levitt, & Wilson, 2008). G. L. Johnson and Brown (2004) further asserted that a culmination of the changing workforce, exacerbated by the retiring Baby Boomers, converging with a greater need for public services, triggered the need among human resource management professionals to properly plan, develop and

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implement strategies that consists of talent acquisition, succession planning, and retention initiatives. Consequently, Workforce Planning is now the subject of increased attention as Baby Boomers retire, which has influenced organizations to ensure plans for replacing employees are in place (Helton & Soubik, 2004). Today, the public sector is responding to the urgent need for workforce planning. Government entities regardless of size have begun to examine their workforces with scrutiny to prepare employees for the workplace of the future (Miracle, 2004).

The state of Georgia has developed and implemented strategic workforce plans as early as 2001. Various workforce reports have revealed significant numbers of Baby Boomers are eligible to leave the workforce by retiring within the next 5 years, and that retention among new employees is problematic. Many employees leave Georgia state government within 1 year of employment, and many more within the first 5 years of service. However, after 6 years of tenure, the turnover rate decreases significantly among state workers. The state identified this trend as early as 2003. A more in-depth review of Georgia's capacity to attract and retain talents critical to meeting the needs of Georgia's citizens has served as a case study beneficial to both public and private sector organizations.

Background of the Study

The state of Georgia has not escaped the demographic trend regarding the impending retirements of more than 17,000 state employees who will be eligible to retire by 2012 (State Personnel Administraton, 2008). With an employee population of approximately 82,000, the possible mass exodus of 20% of the workforce will likely have

a major impact on the state's ability to respond to the critical needs of Georgia's citizens. State employees provide the frontline services to its constituents in the areas of health, education, public safety, economic development and administrative services (Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, 2008).

While many public service organizations face similar workforce challenges, the state of Georgia has been recognized for having leadership beyond the HR community to formally address its workforce planning needs through legislation (G. L. Johnson & Brown, 2004). Since 2001, the state of Georgia has required, by statute, that each state agency submit an annual workforce plan to the State Personnel Administration (SPA; formerly known as the Georgia Merit System). Georgia's Workforce Planning Law states:

> Each agency shall develop an annual workforce plan according to state-wide criteria and guidelines and shall provide a report of such plan annually to the State Personnel Administration (formerly the Georgia Merit System) for incorporation into the statewide workforce plan to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly. (State Personnel Administration, 2008b, p. 8)

Georgia's implementation of best practices in workforce planning have been recognized on the national scene for seveal years. Most notably, through its Government Performance Project, the Pew Center has recognized Georgia as a leader in workforce planning by grading Georgia with an *A* in 2005, and an *A-* in 2008 (Pew Center on the States, 2008). The Pew Center advances effective public policy approaches with respect to critical issues facing the states. The organization serves to improve public service by strengthening government policy and peformance. *Governing* magazine reported, that over the past 10 years, the state of Georgia has developed a completely new human resource system that is now likely to be the best in the United States. Also reported in the

article was that Georgia engages in rigorous workforce planning designed to find workers with the required qualifications needed for the future, rather than only seeking individuals with expertise in certain jobs ("Grading the States," 2005)

The statewide workforce plan is an aggregate reporting tool of all agency plans which includes demographic analysis, statewide trends, and enterprise recommendations for improving talent acquisition, employee development, and retention strategies (State Personnel Administraton, 2008). This plan serves as a resource to agencies to help manage the state's human capital. Human capital management includes not only HR practices, but also people management strategies to increase organizational performance (Dooney & Smith, 2006). Workforce planning in Georgia is a key people management strategy.

The state's definition for workforce planning reads,

Workforce Planning is a systematic, proactive process, which aligns strategic planning, human capital (the workforce—your people), and budgeting to meet organizational goals and objectives through [a] forecasting mission critical talent needs (i.e., competency, staffing, diversity), and [b] developing, implementing and evaluating strategies to close gaps. (SPA, 2008a, p. 8)

The state of Georgia recognizes many benefits for engaging in workforce planning. Namely, workforce planning (a) generates insight and knowledge for making business decisions, (b) provides in-depth clarity of workforce dynamics, and (c) enables organizations to effectively manage human capital by assessing the ultimate consequences of their talent acquisition choices (Credit Union National Association, 2006).

Within the last 7 years of strategic workforce planning, the state has had to manage a mounting labor shortage, and a workforce that has become increasingly

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diverse. State records indicate that 28% of agencies that submitted workforce plans specify they are faced with limited talent pools, particularly for specialized occupational areas, and they lack the resources to attract qualified applicants. Forty-four percent of the agencies indicated that the aging workforce and employees retiring at an accelerated pace has made career development a challenge (State Personnel Administraton, 2008). This trend is not unique to Georgia state employees, but impacts both public and private sectors throughout the country. In order to specifically address the aging workforce issue, organizations must have a clear understanding of the demographic trends, continuous improvement opportunities, and skill gaps deriving from the labor shortage (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006).

Georgia recognizes that it must continue to take a proactive position in facing its workforce challenges by developing targeted strategies for successfully acquiring and managing the talent it needs. However, the state also acknowledges that more research is needed to properly assess the complexity of the problem before it can begin rendering viable solutions. Thus, the state of Georgia has chosen to examine its generational cohorts more closely by beginning with its youngest employees—Generation Y. Along with acknowledging the need for exploring generational differences, addressing the state's capacity for managing its emotional intelligence among its managers is of equal importance for attracting, and particularly retaining talent. Profiling Generation Y employees, and identifying specific staffing gaps of the exiting Baby Boomers, has enhanced the state's ability to develop targeted HR strategies that will help to ensure Georgia has a competent workforce in place for its long-term future.

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Statement of the Problem

The problem is the lack of information concerning the Generation Y employees in state government and targeted strategies for this cohort. While approaching their mid-60s, Baby Boomer's exit from the global workforce poses a significant problem because the upcoming generational groups do not comprise of sufficient numbers of workers, nor do they have the necessary job skills to adequately replace those leaving the workforce (McDonald, 2008a). Today's workforce is comprised of several generational cohorts working simultaneously, the youngest of which is Generation Y. Hornstein and Guerre (2006) make it clear that generational differences will impact the way organizations retain talent, manage emotional intelligence and address workplace malaise. Generation Y appears to be the first demographic cohort to expect and demand more participative democratic structures (Hornstein & Guerre, 2006). Clearly, Generation Y represents the long-term future of Georgia's workforce. However, because these employees have recently entered the workforce, very little data analysis has been conducted to accurately assess how to effectively plan for employee retention and growth. Understanding the needs of Generation Y as they enter the workplace is just as important as understanding the needs of Baby Boomers as they exit.

The state of Georgia, like many other organizations, has begun to support the transition of the Baby Boomers leaving state government and acknowledges that it also must more effectively manage a serious retention issue among its newly hired employees which encompasses the Generation Y cohort. Statewide projections in 2008 indicated that less than fifty-percent of newly hired employees will be retained in Georgia state government over 5 years (SPA, 2008d). In January 2008, approximately 5,000 state

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employees were age 25 or less (SPA, 2008d). This group of Generation Y workers constitutes only 6% of the state's employee population.

As the state plans for tomorrow, it should be noted that Generation Y constitutes approximately 80 million strong across the nation, and part of the largest generational cohort on record (Milliron, 2008). Generation Y will ultimately dominate the workforce of the future. The Generation Y cohort must be proactively recruited and managed in order for the state to meet its ever-changing, yet critical, goals and objectives in serving its citizens. However, additional data analysis with respect to Generation Y employees in state government is needed, and targeted human resource strategies for this cohort are lacking. The descriptive analysis has provided the baseline data for supporting a formal enterprise workforce plan that includes addressing the needs of the state and its emerging Generation Y workforce as the Baby Boomers retire.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to collect baseline data to support a formal enterprise workforce plan that includes addressing the needs of the state and its emerging Generation Y workforce as the Baby Boomers retire. Today, an unprecedented four generations are now working together side by side, which has prompted organizations to recognize that generational differences affect the workplace (Patalano, 2008). Failure to embrace these differences will result in limited talent being available to ensure the organization's success (Lowe et al., 2008). Earle (2003) asserted that to successfully develop an efficient talent acquisition and retention strategy, it is vital to understand the

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various expectations and needs of all the generational cohorts dominating today's workforce.

While the state of Georgia engages in annual workforce planning, it has become apparent that developing effective workforce strategies to attract, retain, and develop its employees to close pending staffing, competency, and diversity gaps may not be feasible without additional demographic analysis of its generational cohorts. The exploratory mixed designed case study encompassing qualitative and quantitative data techniques and methods was conducted to examine the youngest employees within Georgia state government; members of Generation Y. The information developed will aid the state in identifying recruitment and retention strategies for maintaining a competent and sustainable workforce. The researcher conducted an analysis to determine the occupational/demographic profile of the group. The descriptive analysis research provides the baseline data for supporting a formal enterprise workforce plan that addresses the needs of the state and Generation Y employees as the Baby Boomers retire.

A semistructured interview instrument was used to conduct interviews with the state's HR professionals in an effort to assess the impact of generational differences particularly among Generation Y employees. Questions addressing benefits, work–life balance, career opportunities, and so forth, were assessed. The instrument also gauged the level of understanding of emotional intelligence among management and HR professionals which is important for sustaining healthy employee relationships. Research suggests that high levels of emotional intelligence can positively impact an organizations ability to retain its most valuable talent. The research identified among the state's most

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critical jobs, how many Baby Boomers are leaving, and how many Generation Y employees are currently holding those same jobs (staffing gap analysis).

In addition, the instrument identified competencies needed by agencies to fulfill their missions. Feedback from HR professionals provided meaningful data with regard to what concerns them most about their abilities to fill the state's most critical positions that Baby Boomers are leaving. As a result of the research, statewide workforce trends can be analyzed in conjunction with HR professionals' perceptions and opinions about how to effectively attract, and retain Generation Y employees so they can readily fill critical positions. A comprehensive review and analysis of the data provided meaningful information for the state to develop effective strategies to close the critical staffing gaps of the existing Baby Boomers. The following records were reviewed for answering the research questions in the study.

- 2007, 2009 Georgia in Perspective Report, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
- 2008 SPA Statewide Human Resource Audit Report
- 2008 SPA Annual Report
- 2009, 2010 SPA Enterprise Workforce Report
- 2008–2010 SPA Enterprise Critical Hiring Reports
- 2009, 2010 SPA Workforce Analytics Report
- 2011 Agency Workforce Plans
- PeopleSoft Data Workforce Demographics (age, gender, ethnic group, tenure, retirement eligibility, job title, job code, pay grade, salary)

The research questions were divided into two parts.

Part 1

Five research questions were based on the analysis of records-based data to develop a descriptive demographic profile of the Generation Y cohort. Staffing and diversity gaps were identified. The following research questions were addressed:

RQ 1. Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest need to be filled by Generation Y employees due to the exodus of Baby Boomers (high turnover)?

RQ 2. Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest number of retirement eligible employees occupying them? Are these critical jobs most prevalent in a particular occupational industry, such as health care, public safety, education, and so forth?

RQ 3. Where (geographically) are staffing gaps most prevalent among Generation Y employees where Baby Boomers are retiring or resigning (rural vs. inner-city)?

RQ 4. What is the ratio of Generation Y employees currently in critical state jobs versus Baby Boomers who are retirement eligible in critical jobs?

RQ 5. What is the turnover rate of Generation Y employees in critical state jobs?

Part 2

The remaining 11 research questions were addressed based on semistructured interviews with state HR professionals.

RQ 6. Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are comfortable reporting conflicts they have with their manager(s) to HR?

RQ 7. Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are concerned about career opportunities within their agencies?

RQ 8. Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence?

RQ 9. Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of generational differences between employees?

RQ 10. What concerns do HR professionals have regarding their capacities to fill critical positions with Gen Yers?

RQ 11. Is work–life balance a significant factor in addressing high turnover among Gen Yers?

RQ 12. Are compensation and benefits an effective resource for recruiting potential Gen Yers?

RQ 13. Does job location impact filling critical vacancies among Gen Yers?

RQ 14. Among critical jobs, what areas of competency development do Gen Yers need most?

RQ 15. Have state managers been trained in the area of understanding generational differences?

RQ 16. Have state managers been trained in the area of emotional intelligence?

Nature of the Study

Many organizations understand the value of workforce planning, but often fail in properly implementing HR strategies. Plans should be developed to identify and address, and not simply analyze, the staffing implications of business plans and strategies (Bechet,

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2002). Bechet (2002) explained the workforce plan needs to be broad in scope, and it is important that more than just head count figures are included. First, workforce planning requires an internal analysis of (a) core capabilities, (b) pivotal roles, and (c) extensive skill set changes within the organization. Secondly, a workforce forecast of the future should be conducted assessing (a) jobs, (b) skill sets, (c) timing, (d) and numbers. Finally, transitional planning takes place which involves processes that enable an organization to shift from the current workforce to the workforce of the future (Bechet, 2002).

An exploratory mixed research design was used to examine the critical roles and workforce implications facing the youngest employees —Generation Yers. The research included quantitative and qualitative research data, techniques and methods in one *case study* to assess the Generation Y cohort, and to some extent, the Baby Boomer generation. According to Robson (2002) a *case study* is described as a research strategy that focuses on studying single cases whereby the case may involve a particular situation, institution, or individual. The case is studied in context, generally involving several methods for collecting qualitative data; however, the researcher may also use quantitative data collection. This inquiry-oriented approach is designed to find out something about the problem.

The researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of the Generation Y cohort and identified critical staffing gaps needed in Georgia state government brought on by the exodus of the Baby Boomer generation. The data can be used to develop a comprehensive workforce plan for the state that ultimately addresses staffing gaps and generational differences within all four generational cohorts. The Generation Y cohort research provides the working model for researching the remaining generational groups.

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Table 1. *Workforce Planning Conceptual Framework*

	Organization workforce plan	Competency gaps	Staffing gaps	Diversity gaps	Succession plan	Recruit	Hire	Retain	Emotional intelligence	Knowledge transfer & training	Retire
Leadership	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
State managers		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
HR professionals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Veterans					X					X	X
Baby Boomers									X	X	X
Gen X							X	X		X	
Gen Y							X	X		X	

Significance of the Study

This research provides the demographic and trend analysis data needed to effectively implement workforce planning strategies in Georgia state government. In particular, Generation Y employees were examined to ascertain which human capital strategies should be deployed in order to attract, develop and retain members of this generational cohort.

Retirement issues can not be addressed through high level solutions because they are too generic; but are best managed by implementing specific staffing strategies and plans that are targeted to key issues (Bechet, 2002). McDonald (2008a) contended that planning strategies compel organizations to identify which competencies leadership will need in the future and pair those requisites with workers' talent and goals. As a result of this study, the state has the ability to prepare for the mass exodus of the Baby Boomers with detailed plans for managing the gradual transition of the Generation Y employees into the workforce.

The study provides the framework for exploring the workforce needs of this generational cohort to meet future demands of the state required to deliver services to Georgia's citizens and stakeholders. In particular, the findings are a valuable resource to other state agencies and public sector entities that are faced with similar retirement issues. An analysis of the demographic data and workforce trends was assessed along with generational differences that have been well documented and scholastically profiled. Examining the data from a comprehensive perspective ensures that the appropriate human capital strategies are developed. Thus, the body of knowledge for developing

targeted human capital strategies for the Generation Y cohort has expanded with specific emphasis on public sector employees.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined.

Baby Boomers. "Born between 1946 and 1964, these individuals belong to a generation that comprises about forty percent of the U.S. workforce" (McDonald, 2008b, p. 60).

Coaching. A leadership role in which a leader prepares, guides, facilitates, cheers, and directs the team but does not play the game (Newstrom & Davis, 2002).

Core competencies.

The skill sets essential to the effective management of an organization. They represent the fundamental capabilities that individuals must possess to accomplish the organization's mission, and can rarely be substituted for or replaced without compromising the organization's ability to operate effectively. (Bell, Bresnahan, Chew, Holdrege, & Sander, 1999, p. 32)

Critical jobs. For the purposes of this applied dissertation, the term *critical jobs* refers to jobs identified in state agencies' workforce plans and described as the most critical for meeting the future needs of the state (SPA, 2010a).

Emotional intelligence. "The ability to detect and to manage emotional cues and information" (Robbins, 2005, p. 638).

Executive Salary Plan. The pay plan within Georgia state government from which senior executives receive compensation. The salary plan is used for the governor, agency heads and their immediate senior management/first line direct reports, and one confidential secretary per agency (SPA, 2009).

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Generation X. "Composed of individuals born roughly between 1965 and 1979" (McDonald, 2008b, p. 60).

Generation Y. Also known as *Nexters*; persons born between 1980 and 2000 (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006). This term also refers to the cohort of individuals sometimes referred to by experts as Millennials, Generation www, the Digital Generation, Generation E, Echo Boomers, and N-Gens, as described by Lowe et al. (2008).

Generational cohort. "A society-wide peer group born over a period roughly the same length of time as passage from youth to adulthood (about 20 years), who collectively possesses a common persona" (Lindquist, 2008, p. 56).

Human capital. "The combined knowledge, skills, and experience of a company's employees" (Society for Human Resource Management [SHRM], 2005a, p. 1-99).

Human capital management. The activities, costs, and assets associated with the recruitment, hiring, training, development, and compensation of all types of personnel; labor relations activities; and development of knowledge-based skills and core competencies (Thompson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2005).

Human resource development.

Ensures that the skills, knowledge, abilities, and performance of the workforce meet current and future organizational and individual needs. This is accomplished through activities and programs that address employee training and development, change and performance management, and the unique needs of particular employee groups. (SHRM, 2005c, p. 3-1)

Job competencies. "Basic characteristics that can link individuals or teams to enhanced performance; critical success factors needed to perform a given role in an organization" (SHRM, 2005b, p. 2-244).

Knowledge work. Within management research, *knowledge work* is often defined as work in which value is created primarily through the manipulation of ideas or symbols, and occurs primarily in intellectual domains, such as academic institutions, industry, and other major institutions (Austin, 2006).

Mentoring. A developmentally oriented relationship between two individuals, usually a senior colleague and a junior colleague or perhaps peers (SHRM, 2005c).

PeopleSoft System. The HR management system for maintaining performance management, demographic, and payroll data for Georgia state employees.

Performance management. "Process that provides an opportunity for employees and managers to discuss development goals and jointly create plans to achieve them" (SHRM, 2005c, p. 2-219).

Staffing levels/gap. "Too many staff (a surplus) or too few staff (a gap or deficit) in some job categories to implement the company's business plans effectively" (Bechet, 2002, p. 48).

Statewide Core Competencies. The five competencies identified by the state of Georgia as critical for all state employees which are Customer Services, Teamwork and Cooperation, Results Orientation, Accountability, and Judgment and Decision Making (SPA, 2010b).

Statewide Salary Plan. The primary salary plan for Georgia's Executive Branch agencies. Over 85% of all state employees are paid on this plan. Twenty-three pay grades on the Statewide Salary Plan represent a pay range from minimum to maximum salaries for each grade (SPA, 2009).

Succession planning. "A dynamic, ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent to contribute to the achievement of future strategic goals" (SHRM, 2005c, p. 3-130).

Veterans. Persons born between 1922 and 1943 who are the World War II generation (also known as the "Silent Generation"; Lindquist, 2008).

Workforce planning. "A systematic, proactive process, which aligns strategic planning, human capital (the workforce—your people), and budgeting to meet organizational goals and objectives" (SPA, 2008a, p. 3-130).

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions were made in this study.

1. Data from the PeopleSoft system database were accurate to the extent that minor discrepancies did not impact the studies' findings.

2. The Generation Y profile developed provided enough information to make assessments about probable workforce planning strategies (that address staffing, competency, and diversity gaps, as well as, talent acquisition and retention strategies) that can be successfully deployed.

3. Currently, no comprehensive studies regarding the Generation Y cohort in Georgia state government have been conducted.

The following limitations of the study were acknowledged.

1. Generation Y data were limited to Georgia state agencies that use the PeopleSoft system which covers approximately 6% of the employee population.

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2. Integrity of the data was contingent upon each agency's submission.

3. No centralized point of data entry for PeopleSoft users exists across the state; thus, standard entry practices are not monitored from a single authority.

4. Some data fields are not required; therefore, some agencies have entered demographic data on the Generation Y population, while other agencies have not done that for certain data points.

5. Some inconsistencies may occur in the use of some PeopleSoft codes, such as reason for termination, resignation, and so forth.

6. Data primarily describe Generation Y cohort, (and to a lesser degree Baby Boomer cohort) instead of all four cohorts currently working in Georgia state government.

7. Educational data were limited because it is not a required field in the PeopleSoft system. However, acquiring the data is a very important variable for assessing competencies. Some technical competencies (which may also be core competencies for agencies) are assessed based on educational level, such as holding degrees in field of nursing, computer science, accounting, law, finance, and so forth.

8. The researcher's biases include the belief that the needs of the Generation Y cohort have not been adequately addressed to retain these employees in state government. However, the researcher also believes the deployment of targeted retention strategies could significantly reduce turnover among the Generational Y Cohort.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 consists of a review of current literature related to workforce planning, with particular emphasis on generational cohorts, namely Generation Y. The chapter provides a detail overview of the basic concepts of workforce planning, the benefits and challenges faced by both private and public sector organizations. A discussion of the mass exodus of Baby Boomers is ensued, and its impact on the workforce. Generational cohorts are defined and generational differences are addressed with respect to the impact on recruitment, development and retention strategies. The Generation Y cohort is examined extensively in recognition that this generational cohort will soon dominate the workforce. A critical discussion of the importance of properly assessing employees based on a competency framework is also addressed. Chapter 2 concludes with an in-depth discussion of emotional intelligence to address communication strategies, strengths, and barriers that impact workplace effectiveness across generational lines.

The mixed design research methodology for this case study is presented in Chapter 3. The procedures for conducting the qualitative and quantitative components of the research are discussed, the population is defined, and an explanation of the statistical analysis and data collection methods is provided. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study which include a demographic profile of the Generation Y employee population in Georgia state government. Staffing and competency gaps are identified, and comparative data is presented on the Baby Boomer generation. Chapter 5, the final chapter, includes recommendations for implementing workforce strategies that address the Baby Boomer retirement problem. Suggestions for future research exploring the Generation Y workforce and this group's impact on the state's workforce are also discussed.

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CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature for subject areas related to each of the research questions identified in Chapter 1. Workforce planning, generational differences, the Baby Boomer retirement problem, competencies, and emotional intelligence are all areas that are interrelated and impact effective workforce planning. These subject areas were thoroughly researched so that an in-depth analysis of the findings was presented from a comprehensive perspective. Bechet (2002) provided the theoretical framework for this research on workforce planning, M. W. Anderson (2004) on competency management, and Goleman (1998), a pioneer on emotional intelligence research.

Workforce Planning

Business Case

Blackwell (2007) asserted workforce sustainability is one of the most critical issues facing organizations. The economic downturn of 2008 and 2009 has plagued the U.S. and global economies to such an extent that the need for workforce planning has been exacerbated exponentially. Workforce planning is an HR strategy that progressive organizations deploy to ensure they are able to attract and retain key talent to meet organizational goals. Workforce planning has been defined as "a framework for decision-making that aims to ensure that an organization has the people with the right skills,

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available when and where needed, to respond to change and accomplish the agency's strategic goals" (GAO, 2004, pp. 2–3). Georgia's workforce planning model is comprised of four steps: forecast, analyze, develop/implement, and evaluate, as shown in Figure 1.

I Forecast	II Analyze
What needs attention? (Current challenges, anticipated changes) • Future business priorities • Future workforce trends/ demographics	What do we need? What do we have? What are gaps? • Competencies • Diversity • Staffing levels
IV Evaluate	III Develop and Implement
Did we do the right thing? Did we close the identified gaps? • Compare outcomes to goals	What should we do? • Identify Strategies • Implement Strategies

Figure 1. Georgia's workforce planning model. From *Enterprise Workforce Report,* p. 8, by State Personnel Administration, State of Georgia, 2010.

While many benefits to organizations that engage in workforce planning are quite evident, some key components and outcomes warrant greater discussion. A survey

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conducted by the Institute of Management and Administration (IOMA, 2006) indicated organizations consider strategic workforce planning as valuable because it (a) generates additional knowledge and insight that senior leaders can exercise when making business decisions, (b) provides an in-depth understanding of workforce dynamics, (c) enables more effective management of human capital and enhances the ability to ultimately assess the consequences of talent acquisition choices while producing a more rigorous internal job market, and finally, (d) it enables HR to be appreciated for their contributions to critical strategic decisions.

Many governmental entities, including the federal government, are heavily engaged in workforce planning efforts. The GAO (2007) found within the federal sector, there are many opportunities to enhance strategic human capital management in order to effectively combat the workplace challenges facing 21st-century. The GAO has also provided policy statements and guidance reiterating how vital workforce planning and human capital management is to an organization. Of particular note, the GAO (2007) emphasized that what determines the success of the workforce planning is not the *process*, but rather it is measured by the agency's ability to fulfill its strategic goals and mission.

Organizational approaches to workforce planning may differ; however, fundamentally the process is aimed toward reaching the same goals. The State of Wisconsin (2009) asserted that a workforce plan translates strategic concepts into specific steps through talent acquisition and development, and strives to address the following concerns:

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1. How many and what types of jobs are needed in order to meet the performance objectives?

2. How will worker skills be developed?

3. What strategies could be used to attract and retain these skills?

4. How have retirements, reductions in staff, and/or hiring freezes impacted the capacity to get the work done?

G. L. Johnson and Brown (2004) reported on a survey from the International Personnel Management Association-Human Resources members where workforce planning activities revealed the following: Respondents with workforce plans specified which components were or would be included in the strategic workforce plans. The survey revealed that more than 40% of the respondents identified the most prevalent workforce planning elements as talent acquistion, diversity, succession planning, retention, competency management, development and training, classification, selection and staffing, and internal forecasting.

Upon completion of the planning phase, implementation of effective workforce strategies often required a significant amount of time, resources, and strategic planning. The GAO (2004) asserted strategies that are key to effective workforce planning include (a) recruitment and retention strategies, (b) professional development, and training (c) equitable compensation plans, (d) performance management programs, (e) employee-friendly workplace strategies, (f) succession planning and knowledge management, and (g) workforce contingency plans. By implementing such strategies, organizations are able to move from passive acknowledgment of current workforce supply needs to meeting the workforce demands of the future.

Forecasting Demand

Forecasting is the first step in the workforce planning process. Assessing whether gaps exists between the current and future workforce required to meet program goals is critical to ensuring proper staffing levels (GAO, 2003c). Fact-based analysis ensures the efforts are not undermined as organizations attempt to identify and respond to current and emerging challenges. Consequently, the characteristics of the future workforce should be predicated on the required skillsets and the number of employees that will be necessary to manage the anticipated workload. The analysis of the current workforce should identify the number of employees who have those skills, as well as, the number of employees who are likely to stay with the organization for an extended period of time. Proper analysis should also account for employees leaving due to retirement and other attrition. Ultimately, fiscal management, including appropriating funding for critical staff is enhanced by the workforce gap analysis because program objectives and strategic outcomes are readily identified along with the human capital needs.

M. W. Anderson (2004) contended organizations should create an attrition forecast to understand the elements of the attrition rate in order for adjustments to be made which take into account the demand for new workers, hiring freezes, layoffs, and economic changes that impact the workplace. M. W. Anderson (2004) further indicated a general rate of attrition can be determined based on the number of resignees minus I minus the number of transfees minus t minus the number of retirees divided by the total number of workers. In order to understand the degree to which attrition is a problem, organizations can evaluate labor market conditions in locations where they operate; the

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analysis can provide context for understanding attrition rates that are higher than expected in those locations (GAO, 2003a).

Getting from supply to demand requires knowledge of trends from the workforce of the past (M. W. Anderson, 2004). Such trends include external and internal forces that are generally readily identified; however, planning could depend on a future that can not be quantified. Anderson made it clear that internal and external forces that have not been discovered, makes workforce planning, and calculating planning metrics, quite challenging. Bechet (2002) supported this premise stressing a distinct difference exists between *staffing data* and *information*. Bechet (2002) emphasized that some organizations analyze turnover data in order to develop a forward looking staffing model for making future projections. The information is valuable to the organization and should continue to be analyzed. However, when results are simply passed on to managers as *nice to know* and no decisions are made based on the data, then the process should be eliminated (Bechet, 2002).

Further delination of how supply and demand analysis are descibed by M. W. Anderson (2004), who stipulated by using an integrated approach, supply analysis explores both the future and current composition of the workforce, workload, and competencies. Transaction data can then be used to identify employment trends, and baseline information from examining trends in workforce demographics based on the structure of the organization, occupation, grade level , age, race, gender, national origin, tenure, and retirement eligibility (M. W. Anderson, 2004). Subsequently, the author contends, from the data gathered, organizations can develop valuable information from turnover data, such as resignations, retirements, and transfers for a specific time by

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developing projections based on current demographic workforce information. M. W. Anderson (2004) finally asserted the data can be integrated into an organizational action plan.

Bechet (2002) contended that while many organizations understand the value of workforce planning, they fail during implementation due to cumbersome and ineffective processes. Bechet described typical (or traditional) planning as involving the development of a template for use by organizations, generally managers, to determine the number of staff needed, as oppose to determining the required competencies they should possess. This information is then rolled up into a division level plan where staffing level reports can be generated and turnover data analyzed. Unfortunately, Bechet (2002) surmised that this approach is somewhat haphazard in that the staffing projections are often innaccurate, unrealistic, and not grounded in business plans.

In contrast, M. W. Anderson (2004) defended a supporting viewpoint of workforce planning that focused on assessing competencies and explained that demand analysis assesses future activities, competencies and workloads required to manage shifts in the workforce that stem from changes in work tasks, technology, and turnover. The author contends the demand analysis provides quantitative information on projected workforce and workload trends throughout the planning phase, as well as, qualitative and quantitative information on competencies required for the future. M. W. Anderson (2004) further stipulates that demand analysis results establishes requirements for an organization's future workforce and work load, and provides valuable information for competency assessments. M. W. Anderson (2004) asserted that when developing a comprehensive workforce plan, demand analysis results help identify and define the

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competencies needed by the organization. Current and historical employment projections, demographic profiles and occupational outlooks, are readily attainable through the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

When workforce planning is not conducted properly, Bechet (2002) argued that managers in volatile and rapidly changing environments will question the validity of workforce planning, and the value of forecasting for staff well beyond the managers' abilities (or needs) to forecast. Traditional approaches to workforce planning often provide very little return on investment, and rarely drive staffing decisions. While today's organizations are facing clear challenges as they engage in workforce planning, current research demonstrates the benefits of effective workforce planning are overwhelming.

Generational Differences

Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2007) stipulated in excess of 60 years delineates the most senior workers from employees who are now beginning to enter the workforce. Workers of various ages are aggressively competing for positions, purpose and rewards in order to achieve professional and personal aspirations. In order to acquire and retain competent workers in a competitive labor market, HR managers must be well informed about the traits and preferences of workers who are at varying career phases (Blythe et al., 2008).

Demographic changes, generational differences, along with skill gaps and experience are areas that should be taken into consideration as organizations address problems driven by the aging workforce. The root causes for the shortage of skilled workers and an aging workforce are related and include (a) demographic trends

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impacting the size and age of the available workforce, (b) worker attraction toward various industries and the type of jobs offered, (c) hiring restraints, and (d) tenure-based retention (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006).

Many organizations have management consultants and HR specialists that have begun to advocate workplace accomodations in order to manage generational differences (J. A. Johnson & Lopes, 2008). However, the authors contended no solid social science evidence exists to support this approach, and argued this viewpoint is similar to sterotyping. Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2007) presented a diverging perspective and argued that the multiple generations working in today's workforce require human resource professionals to be aware and understand age-based work attitudes and values. The authors contended, such awareness will enhance human resource professionals' capacity to identify generational stereotyping among management while developing and implementing succession planning programs.

Notably, the aging workforce is a national problem impacting organizations in every industry. Solutions for combating this issue requires senior leaders to consider long-range collaborative strategies. The talent race is likely to get tougher as the economy rebounds and HR professionals confront an unprecedented worker shortage (IOMA, 2003). The IOMA (2003) reported that experts envision a wave of Baby Boomers retiring over the next 20 years. Author of a Conference Board report, Howard Muson (as cited in IOMA, 2003) asserted HR strategic planning is needed, and noted that a recent survey revealed that 66% of participants surveyed did not have a workforce profile reflecting age, signifying those organizations will not be prepared to determine how retiring Baby Boomers will impact operations.

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Bridgers and Johnson (2006) further indicated generations are clustered into several categories primarily associated by birthdate beginning with the Veterans; born before 1945. Poindexter (2008) called veterans the Silent Generation and stipulated that the oldest veterans were born in 1926. Poindexter further asserted, while some of these individuals were too young to recall the Depression or serve in the armed forces during World War II, they were influenced by the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the era. In today's workforce, many veterans are now over 60 years old and preparing for retirement (Poindexter, 2008).

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006; Calo, 2005) and make up nearly 80 million Americans (approximately 26% of the total U.S. population). The Baby Boomer generation, as a notable percentage of the population, and in terms of absolute numbers derived from high birthrates immediately after World War II (Calo, 2005). Baby Boomers will begin turning age 65 in 2011 and represent the largest generational cohort in the United States (Calo, 2005).

Due to a myriad of personal challgenges, some Boomers are now reassessing personal perspectives of entitlements, earnings, and accountability (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Boomers want to be challenged and contribute in a way where contributions make a difference. Boomers give back through mentoring programs, teaching, and consulting opportunities as they prepare to wind down careers and transition into retirement (Glass, 2007; Kupperschmidt, 2000). Westerman and Yamamura (2007) found relationship fit as the principle indicator of employee satisfaction for Baby Boomers, which possibly points to a constraint that Baby Boomers sense when facing a progressively unstable job market

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along with the decline in abilities to relocate as they get older. Most authors point out the dichotomies between first and last wave Boomers. Although some may still be workaholics, last wave Boomers are often described as longing for a simplified lifestyle and re-examing how success and work is defined (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Baby Boomers may have more established family and social networks than Generation X or Y workers (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007). The authors emphasized that while limitations impact the Baby Boomers' capacities to leave the workplace, research suggests that relationship fit is of notable importance to job satisfaction for Baby Boomer workers, and should be taken into consideration when implementing HR strategies for managing this generational segment of the workforce (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007).

According to the IOMA (2003), recent studies indicated that Baby Boomers will be essential for workforce planning. The SHRM Older Workers Study (a joint initiative between the Committee for Economic Development, National Older Worker Career Center, and SHRM; as cited in IOMA, 2003) reported that over half (59%) of organizations currently do not focus on the talent acquisition of older workers. Organizations that recruit older workers heavily depend on referrals from employees (30%), as well as networking (19%). Challenges for many organizations include three perceived drawbacks of employing older workers, which include (a) lack of technological skills and knowledge (53%), (b) rising cost of healthcare (36%), and (c) lack of flexibility (28%). However, perceptions regarding the advantages of employing and retaining older employees included (a) willingness to work different schedules, (b) capacity to mentor, and (c) and invaluable experience (72%). Additional advantages included being reliable and having stronger work ethic and (69%). The survey further indicated that

professionals within the human resource field understand it can be advantageous to the organization to employ older workers (IOMA, 2003).

Generation X

Generation X was born between 1965 and 1979 (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006). While Generation X, makes up 17% of the U.S. population, this cohort of 51 million workers will still not be adequate in number to replace the Baby Boomers leaving the workforce. The SHRM (2005a) found that, as Generation X workers' careers advance, HR professionals are faced with preparing this generational cohort for management responsibilities. Generation X employees are likely to be mature and flexible employees who perform well in team environments where they seek ways to reward team performance (SHRM, 2005a). They are also excellent collaborators and consensus builders who unfortantely find themselves frustrated in many large organizations where managers are restricted from rewarding employees in a timely manner. Managers report that they are not able to give employees time off or bonuses when they want to throughout the year, but are instead told to hold off until it is time for annual performance reviews (SHRM, 2005a).

Generation Y

Generation Y, sometimes referred to as Nexters, was born between 1980 and 2000 (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006). This cohort of employees has been named Generation Y for coming after Generation X, Nintendo Generation, Echo Boomers, the Internet Generation, Millennials, and finally, Generation 2001, acknowledged as the new millennium's first graduating class (Zemke, 1999).

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Generation Y is perceived to perhaps be more team oriented than Generation X and with all likelihood will be highly creative, more educated, and more technologically savvy than their predecessors; however, they may seek more mature employees to help foster an effective work environment (SHRM, 2005a).

Rawlins, Indvik, and Johnson (2008) asked seniors and juniors in college what they considered career nonnegotiables and bottom lines. The researchers contended assessing career decisions provides a clear path to discovering what matters most to the 81 million millenials. As Baby Boomers retire, in order for organizations to attain the best talent, Generation Y will have to be agressively recruited. Based on survey results, despite a poor economy, organizations are under great pressure to offer health and retirement benefits in conjuction with entry level compensation of approximately $50,000 (Rawlins et al., 2008). Generation Y employees value work environments where developmental and promotional opportunities are plentiful, ethical standards are high, and where they can impact the world by performing their duties with excellence and in a thoughtful manner (Rawlins et al., 2008).

Millennials reflect societal trends by embracing new technological trends, and the principles of consumerism as just a way of life (Fogarty, 2008). According to Gagnier (2008) organizations that discover that self-definition and the ability to create their own solutions within society are important to millennials, are positioned to take advantage of this generational cohort's affinity for technology and social networking (Gagnier, 2008). Fogarty supports this premise and stipulates that Millennials do not shy away from working together in team environments or celebrating themselves or successes in public forums. These generalizations are essentially what makes the Millennials different from

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the other generational cohorts, in that the primary psychological principle of the Millennial phenonmenon is primarily rooted in the Millennials' value of positive self-esteem (Fogarty, 2008).

Generation Y employees require constant feedback regarding how they are performing (Willmer, 2008). When managers do not communicate with Gen Yers, they may inadvertently alienate the employees to the extent the employees feel that hard work is not valued by the organization. This view is also supported by Dunnigan (2008), who asserted, Generation Y wants open communication with their supervisors and regularly converses with them throughout the day. Nevertheless, Willmer (2008) contended that Gen Yers are not interested in being micromanaged, they simply want support, not barriers to progress.

Research has revealed that Generation Y values work-life balance and an inspiring workplace far more than the typical career progression tracks of Generation X and Baby Boomers ("Young, Gifted and Hired," 2008). Accordingly, Willmer (2008) stipulated that Generation Y employees should not be viewed only as members of the Gen Y cohort, but rather as employees with specific talent, values and beliefs which may require the organization to update or develop various policies, procedures, and leadership strategies.

Willmer (2008) argued that Millennials are a rapidly emergent talent, and organizations that work toward understanding the values, work styles, ideals and professional expectations of these potential employees will find successs in acquiring and retaining the most talented employees. Dunnigan (2008) concurred with this position, and stipulated that in light of the talent deficit, managers should strive to make sure their

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workers feel valued, and work to increase retention particularly among Gen Yers by talking with them about their career goals and discussing what support can be provided to assist them in achiving their objectives.

Rolich (2008) argued the digital technologies beloved by Generation Y are here to stay, and organizations that expect to successfully recruit and retain young people, should ensure technology is readily available in the work environment. Rolich (2008) reported that statistics for Generation Y college students revealed (a) 97% own a computer, (b) 95% own a cell phone, (c) 76% use instant messaging, (d) 34% use the Web as a primary source of news, and (e) 75% have a Facebook account. Rolich (2008) contended that Generation Y has grown up immersed in digital technology, and that it is merely an extension of their life experiences.

Generation Y has not had the same level of recognition as Generation X; however, the Gen Y cohort consists of employees with very different needs and desires (IOMA, 2008). Gen Yers are most likely to work in lower level and junior level positions within an organization; therefore, understanding this group of young people will help an organization develop appropriate reward programs that will motivate and retain Generation Y employees (IOMA, 2008).

Retention strategies are further delineated by Lowe et al. (2008) who emphasized that the keys to retaining Generation Y employees include (a) understanding the importance of the relationship with the immediate manager is critical to the Gen Yer's level of engagement; (b) developing a coaching relationship which includes establishing a career path and the necessary steps to achieve success; (c) assigning challenging, yet meaningful work with unambiguous goals and expectations; (d) providing consistent and

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constructive feedback, and as appropriate, extending immediate praise and rewards for excellence in performance; (e) establishing a flexible and fun workplace; and (f) upgrading work areas to be technologically competitive, conducive for team environments where innovation is fostered and ideas are shared.

Generation X/Y Contrast

Generation X and Generation Y demonstrate diverse viewpoints and expectations from those of the Baby Boomer generation (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Over the past few years, the ability to attract workers from the Generation Y cohort and retain workers from the Generation X cohort has been a challenge for many organizations primarily because of the need to understand what motivates these workers, and how their attributes and differences impact the organization (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Baby Boomers were more willing to sacrifice their families for work, while Gen Xers and Yers pursued and highly valued, balance in their worklives (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Additionally, the authors further contended, Generation X is drawn to diverse organizations, that are team oriented, technically savvy and those that provide training and career opportunities, such as, mentoring programs. Organizations are able to take advantage of these generational characteristics through fostering a supportive work environment and culture throughout the talent acquisition and development process. Generation X and Generation Y cohorts are interested in working in team-oriented environments to manage critical problems. Both generational groups are interested in helping to develop the organization through continuous improvement initiatives that enhance proceses or productivitity (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

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Rolich (2008) compared and contrasted Generation X who embraces technology, with Generation Y asserting that they have *lived* technology. Rolich (2008) further contended that the Generation Y members expect freedom in the use of technology, and will not tolerate a work environment which promotes a restrictive technology culture.

Baby Boomer Retirement Problem

Knowledge Transfer

Calo (2007) asserted that humankind is now experiencing a new phenomenon in history in that the older generations are outgrowing the younger generations within the population, and that history is now being created, versus repeated. The author further contended that past techniques and assumptions to manage succession planning and workforce planning will not meet our needs any longer.

As the baby boom generation prepares for retirment, organizations are preparing for the mass exodus of competent and loyal professionals (Calo, 2005). Calo (2005) asserted these organizations must take measures to ensure the collective body of knowledge and skills of these workers are retained.

Trinkle (2005) supported this position and asserted whenever knowledge is considered as an organizational asset, then knowledge management acquires new meaning. The author further contended that the assets belonging to an organization add value to the enterprise, and it is critical to the organization's success that the management of the asset be under consideration when developing the organization's strategy and throughout the planning phase. Trinkle (2005) further explained that knowledge adds value to an organization because when employees share information, the transfer of

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knowledge enhances the organization's ability to impact reaching financial goals, and meet the mission. Trinkle (2005) stipulated that knowledge sharing becomes an ever-increasing asset when valued as a strategic resource, but warns that quite often a concerted effort within collaborative environments must be made for the process to take place. The author's perspective is described by Calo (2005), who argued, if we are to be considered a *knowledge society*, then in order for organizations to be competititve and survive, they will need capacity to transfer amongst themselves their knowledge of their organizational culture, business processes and products. The author further emphasized that long-term valued employees, often take away accumulated knowledge and skills upon retirement without transferring that knowledge to others workers.

In response to the succession planning and knowledge transfer delimma, McDonald (2008a) contended leaders should support younger talent to manage greater tasks and challenges such as spearheading key meetings, reengineering business processes or making presentations before the organization's senior leadership. McDonald (2008a) believed that future leaders should be coaxed into the spotlight while providing coaching, advice and a support system, as needed. McDonald (2008a) contended it is necessary for those with the highest potential to tackle difficult leadership problems in order to master the interpersonal and technical skills inherently required of leadership.

"In the public sector, knowledge is critical to mission fulfillment; therefore, public organizations must ensure that critical knowledge is shared so that it will not be lost" (Trinkle, 2005, p. 118). The author emphasized that organizations need to identify what knowledge is critical to the mission, who owns the knowledge, and what measures

can be taken to ensure the information is accessible to those who need the information for successful job performance.

Calo (2005) asserted it is imperative for organizations to plan and manage opportunites of knowledge transfer by taking advantage of transferring the expertise, skills and wisdom of older employees leaving the workforce to other workers in the organization.

Trinkle (2005) explained that knowledge that is explicit is readily documented through media, such as, databases, manuals and other sources and it is easy to protect from the natural loss that stems from attrition. The author indicated further that conversely, knowledge that is tacit lives within the individual, and is not readily identifiable, shared, or preserved based on its natural attributes.

McDonald (2008a) argued that today's organizations, regardless of size, should make an effort to identify two or more possible successors for each critical role. McDonald (2008a) emphasized employees can be developed over time, and do not need to be able to assume roles immediately, because succession planning focuses on capabilities, and not just filling upcoming vacancies. Bridgers and Johnson (2006) asserted that multiple approaches to transferring knowledge to workers is necessary to manage the Baby Boomer retirement problem. The authors contended that on-the-job training will not be sufficient to resolve the challenges alone, but additional support systems would be required to compensate for experience and competency gaps within organizations. Beyond ensuring future leaders experience appropriate developmental opportunities, senior management should make sure protégés indentify mentors or coaches who can enhance the growth process, particularly with respect to interpersonal

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traits (McDonald, 2008a). By connecting senior leaders with younger talent, organizations are able to transfer knowledge that is vital to the organization, such as business acumen, professional aptitude, tacit knowledge and institutional wisdom before it walks out the door (McDonald, 2008a).

Succession Planning

Many public sector organizations manage turnover by hiring a new employee only when they lose an employee (Kiyonaga, 2004). However, the author argued that the economic downturn has forced organizations to critically assess each position and provide justification for filling the vacancy. Succession planning and workforce resources deal with these financial concerns and provide a clear understanding regarding the placement of a position within the organization and why it is important (Kioynaga, 2004).

Kiyonaga (2004) also stipulated that not only will new employees need to be trained, but existing employees will have to be retrained, due to vast amount of experienced employees leaving the workforce. Kiyonaga explained further that the prioritization of the organization's training and development needs is best facilitated by comparing those competencies that are needed by the organization to those that actually exist within the workforce.

Rothwell (2004) asserted succession planning involves creating bench strength and developing employees, in order to maintain the skills and knowledge of the organization. Succession planning required filling positions beyond just replacing workers, it is about ensuring institutional knowledge which is often held by veteran employees with specialized knowledge regarding how to improve government processes and operations. Succession planning takes into account the historical viewpoint of

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successes and failures of the organization. Kiyonaga (2004) emphasized employees working in the government sector may have professional and technical expertise that is critical for operational stability.

As previously described, over 50% of the labor force can be attributed to the Baby Boomer and Veterans generational cohorts (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006). The authors argued that progressive organizations will engage in workforce planning, training (e-learning, bilingual courses, etc.), and succession planning driven by the need to close competency gaps, and ethical considerations for setting the moral compass for the organization.

Competencies

In recent years, the emphasis of HR on training and development has revealed the significance of establishing core competencies with several studies confirm that the concept of core competencies has been extensively applied throughout HR management activities (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002). According to Yang, Wu, Shu, & Yang (2006), the term *competency* has been broadly examined by Lado and Wilson; their work and theory regarding learning concepts are well–known and were carefully assessed as early as the 1970s (Chisholm; Knowles; McClelland; all as cited in Yang et al., 2006). Prahalad and Hamel described core competencies and competitiveness as positively correlated, and Kim stratified in greater detail the connection of core competencies through various levels (Yang et al., 2006). Lahti (as cited in Yang et al., 2006) asserted that core competencies stem from individual level and are closely related with to the organization's competitive culture, adjusting academic consideration of core

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competencies from a micro- to macroperspective. Additionally, resource-based theory concisely explains the connection among competencies and competitiveness from organizational and individual levels (King; Wright et al.; all as cited in Yang et al., 2006).

According to Heffernan and Flood (2000), the U.S. competency approach is associated with the job competency assessment method from McClelland's 1971 research where he was able to successfully predict one's performance on the job or their success in life. The authors reported that McClelland, using his own terminology, found that by evaluating individual's *competencies*, you could predetermine if a person's performance on the job would be superior, or just effective.

The GAO (2003b) stipulated it is imperative to identify the competencies and skills that are vital to agencies successfully accomplishing their goals and missions. Competency assessments of particular interest as changes in national security, technology, budget constraints, and other environmental changes.

The GAO (2007) also provided further direction on strategic workforce planning which delineated the following concepts:

> [a] involving management, employees, and other stakeholders in the workforce planning process, [b] determining critical skills and competencies needed to achieve results, [c] developing workforce strategies to address shortfalls and the deployment of staff, [d] building the capabilities needed to address administrative and other requirements important in supporting workforce strategies, and [e] evaluating and revising these workforce strategies. (p. 13)

M. W. Anderson (2004) stipulated that in order to assess workforce demand, organizations need to consider the competencies necessary to accomplish strategic objectives. M. W. Anderson (2004) contended that core competencies are identified by analyzing the work of high performers and distinquishing the characteristics that separate

them from the rest of the workforce. The author explained information is collected several ways which include, facilitating focus groups, interviewing managers and workers, and administering employee questionnaires. M. W. Anderson (2004) further identified two fundamental factors in identifying competencies which include a workforce skills analysis and a job analysis. The workforce skills analysis identifies the skills necessary to complete each task. Completing a workforce skill analysis can enable an organization to predict how the organization's work will change, as well as identify future HR needs. The analysis examines both the supply and demand characteristics of workforce planning. M. W. Anderson (2004) explained that job analysis involves the collection of information, such as tasks, responsibilities, knowledge and skills related to successful job performance. The data from the job analysis are then used by the organization to identify the compentencies needed for the job (M. W. Anderson, 2004).

The resource-based theory of organizational performance infers that the sustained competitive advantage obtained through production capacity is unique and very difficult to duplicate (Clardy, 2008). Clardy (2008) argued that under certain conditions such capabilities evolve into core competencies; however, no standard protocol has been developed for core compency research. The author further contended that superior performance is produced for the long-term based on acquisition, development and maintenance of core competencies which is the basis for the resource approach to strategy. The author further contended that this apprach may be most appropriate for organizations managing their business under volatile and uncertain conditions.

Thompson et al. (2005) emphasized a similar viewpoint asserting that managers must remain diligent, even after core competencies are in place, to ensure capabilities and

competencies are maintained, modified or even replaced, if necessary, to keep up with changes in the market, and shifts in the company's strategic direction.

Competency-based management (CBM), as explained by Greengard (1999), helps organizations manage human capital gaps. The author contended that in an age where knowledge is so important from an organizational perspective, CBM becomes critical to organizational success by ensuring employees are developed with certain skills and competencies that enhance career opportunities as well as benefit the organization. As organizations tackle cultural and technical challenges, accountability is shifted towards employees for self-direction and responsibility. The process includes an assessment of employees' skills and capabilities which serves as the basis for a CBM program and enables the organization to strategically align the goals of the employees as well as those of the organization. Interviews of high performing employees are conducted which generates a record of critical competencies needed for successful performance. The competencies are then used to set the strategic course of the program, which includes identifying systems and resources vital to the organization. The author emphasized that it is critical to understand the fundamental elements of a CBM program, which include developing descriptions for the critical competencies and the acquiring of assessment and feedback systems. Additionally, development plan guides must be correlated to the competencies, along with training, competency-based pay structures and customized programs, such as recruitment initiative designed to support the model (Greengard, 1999).

Competency management is key to talent management strategies and is critical for combating the emerging skills shortage (Kahane, 2008). Competencies allow

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organizations to set standards that drive effective performance and help to ensure workers are able to execute the organizations' goals and objectives, while managing the challenges of skill readiness, skill shortages, and effective leadership. The author asserted that the organizations that understand the importance of competency management may have competitive advantages in acquiring talent, and also reputations as employers of choice.

Kahane (2008) stipulated that in practice, many organizations have difficulty implementing the use of competencies because they fail to develop basic guidelines. The author further contended that the key to effective competency management involves assessing requirements from a people perspective for organizations to be successful. Planning often begins with taking into considerations the competencies that employees need for today and for the future, and understanding the roles they will take on to execute on the organizations' strategy. In order to drive the organization's competetive advantage, high performers must be identified, and a process must be developed for modeling behaviors, particularly leadership skills, which may in turn increase productivity throughout the organization. For an organization to effectively compete, the organization must increase customer loyalty by providing superior products and services. Kahane argued that customer service can be improved by developing competencies within employees that can be demonstrated in day-to-day operations through effective job models. The author asserted that organizations can effectively execute on competency management strategies by understanding current plans, and focusing on the critical competencies needed to increase productivity and brand loyalty. The organization should be acutely aware of the specific methods they are deploying to improve current

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performance levels, as well as future performance levels which ultimately increase the organization's value. Kahane (2008) emphasized that achieving competetive advantage involves distinquishing between high performers and average performers to the degree that the organization's values, belief and engagement models can influence productivity and brand identity.

The emergence of competencies as a fundamental resource should assist HR professionals in understanding talent acquisition, and developmental initiatives from a strategic perspective (Robinson, Sparrow, Clegg, & Birdi, 2007). The authors suggested that the emergence of a competency can be identified and targeted for development based on the imporance it will have in the future. While the emerging competencies can be considered for inclusion in the HR managment systems, the authors contended it is not likely that they would influence the performance management or total rewards components of the system. The authors further contended that the pace at which the competencies should be incoporated into the resource systems should coincide with the forecasted change in the significance of the competencies to the organiazation.

Lawler and Ledford (as cited in Lindgren, Henfridsson, & Schultze, 2004) distinguished between job-based and skill-based approaches to HR management, and stipulated that HR departments need to adopt a skill-based approach in order to support organizational development of core competencies. The authors contended the traditional, job-based approach requires the development of job descriptions and then attempts to identify and mold employees to conform to them. They argued the process is ineffective in modern organizations because job descriptions are typically based on the organization's operational history without acknowledging future requirements.

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Additionally, the job-based approach does not reflect an individual's capacity to impact organizational success beyond the scope of the employee's current position.

> By incentivizing and evaluating employees within their job description boundaries, capabilities such as learning, flexibility, communication, collaboration, and innovation across organizational boundaries, all crucial in an organization that seeks competitive advantage through core competencies, are generally neither acknowledged nor developed in the job paradigm. (Lindgren et al., 2004, p. 435)

Athey & Orth (1999) determined "a competency is a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage" (p. 215). The authors stipulated competencies might consist of a myriad of individual, organizational or team capabilities, such as (a) skills or knowledge affiliated with current performance on the job, (b) emerging skills or knowledge necessary for success in the future (c) behavioral or intellectual best practices amongst high performance teams, or people (d) process capability that improves an organization's performance, and (e) innovations in behaving or thinking that generate unique competitive advantage. Athey and Orth (1999) further asserted that as competency methods evolve to fulfill the volatile needs of organizations, the definition of competencies will also be redefined. The authors explained that the typical approach to competency modeling is not only costly, but very time consuming which may be problematic for some organizations. The process requires resources for facilitating behavioral interviews of high and average performers. The approach is considered to yield valid results, and is reliable in determining which behaviors distinquish high performing employees from average performers in the

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workplace. However, Athey and Orth (1999) suggested that this approach may not be suitable for organizations that are continually experiencing significant organizational changes related to job structures and performance standards. The importance of competency modeling is also supported by Argyris (as cited in Athey & Orth, 1999), who contended that competency methods provide HR professionals the resources they need to gather and communicate actionable learning in concise, behavioral expressions that can be readily interpreted and put into practice.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the unique ability to understand, sense, and effectively manage human energy, influence, and information (R. K. Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). Many organizations have embraced the theoretical concepts behind the emotional intelligence discussion because they believe leaders are accountable for managing emotional behavior. Summarily, leaders acknowledge what makes them emotional as they interact with employees throughout the workday. When leaders understand their emotions, they are then able to understand the emotions of others, and determine if the emotions expressed are genuine (Riggio, Murphy, & Pirozzolo, 2001). The leader's ability to recognize what motivates him, and others, helps foster meaningful relationships that add value the organization. Bielaszka-DuVernay (2008) asserted in as much as managers accomplish their work through other people, the ability to understand employee's emotions and detect what opinions they may have can determine failure or success. The author emphasized that managers should be aware of how others are influenced by their behavior, and further contended that individuals who have a high EQ are skillful at

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pursuasion and motivating others because they have the ability to read the cues of others, and as a result, alter in response what they say and do.

Increasingly, organizations have an interest in measuring leaders' emotional intelligence. Goleman (1998) contended that competent people lead by example by inspiring others, and hold individuals accountable for their actions. Researchers and practitioners conduct emotional intelligence assessments through a myriad of techniques that are readily available and accessible on the market. However, diverging opinions have emerged about the validity of some of the techniques, and their values in helping organizations accurately assess leaders.

Rodriguez et al. (2002) argued that an integrated approach to HR management using competency assessments based in part on emotional intelligence factors can assist employers in workforce planning by identifying target areas of improvement. The authors also discussed how succession planning models can be developed using the same competency-based approach for leadership development training. The research was conducted assessing the effectiveness of competency models within the federal sector (Rodriguez et al., 2002).

Organizational Leadership

In order for any organization to grow and prosper, it is necessary to have effective leadership in place to ensure proper management of employees, and to facilitate the ongoing change process. Today's organizations face fluctuating economies, increases in operating costs, and increases in the demand for enhanced products and services (Leban & Zulauf, 2005). One approach leaders take to gain competitive advantage is by being forthright, and by taking compelling courses of action to change the organization's

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culture (Thompson et al., 2005). This means competent leaders do more than the planning, budgeting, and forecasting that they routinely manage on a daily basis (Landale, 2007). When sharing visions, leaders also motivate others into action with energy, drive, and enthusiasm.

Additionally, Ferres and Connell (2004) found that organizations that develop leaders in emotional intelligence skills yield competitive advantages because employees have better relationships with those leaders and are more receptive to organizational changes. Leaders have the capacity to positively or negatively influence the individuals responsible for helping the organization succeed based on the leader's emotional responses. Positive relationships between organizational leaders and employees produce positive results.

Goleman (1998) argued that leadership is a role which in essence is the ability to get others to perform their jobs more effectively, and that emotional competence is a central factor to making that happen. The author further contended that leaders which lack interpersonal capabilities lower the performance of everyone which in turn fosters acrimony, hostility, and apathy among employees. To this end, Book (2000) argued that organizations that lack emotional intelligence, and do not encourage open and honest communication, are at risk of losing their most valued talents. However, leaders have to be proactive in establishing the relationships with employees, and savvy enough to understand how to maintain them. Leaders are confronted everyday with situations that warrants the need for being emotionally adept at handling problems. Leban and Zulauf (2005) emphasized that leaders need to exercise behavioral discretion when dealing with complicated or tenuous situations. If a leader does not handle a difficult situation

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properly, the employee might be left feeling emotionally bankrupt and resentful. Therefore, organizations that are rich in emotional intelligence, and understand the importance of employees' feelings are more apt to retain employees and reach strategic goals.

R. K. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) contended an approach leaders use to establish credibility is by managing situations where they convey that they understand the feelings of the group, and the leaders engage in courses of action that reflect a climate of understanding. For example, retaining new hires and seasoned knowledge workers is more challenging if the organization is not demonstrating concern about the issues that affect employees. In today's fast-paced work environment, employees no longer adhere to a standard of working for an organization with a lifetime commitment in mind. Leaders that understand the need to be flexible in the workplace and work toward building trust among employees, increase employee morale and retention (Book, 2000).

These soft skills help leaders manage workforces in productive and efficient manners. Leaders can adopt several basic concepts to help develop emotional intelligence skills. Goleman (1995) described what he called the ABC's of emotional intelligence, which suggests in part that individuals should be aware of what makes them angry, worried, or sad and learn how to control how they respond to those emotions. In addition, beyond controlling negative emotions, effective leaders also exhibit positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, passion and competency (Acton, 2002).

However, leaders also have to be mindful that what they say and do has a significant impact on how others respond to them (Abrahams, 2007). The author argued leaders with high emotional intelligence and who welcome constructive criticism are

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empathetic to subordinates' feelings and create working environments where employees can succeed.

The importance of modeling the appropriate behavior and reflecting the proper emotions for a given situation is critical to every leader's success. Sy, Saavedra, and Cote (2005) promoted a theory of mood contagion that suggested leaders should become knowledgeable about the role of moods and the consequences. The researchers contended the effects of moods are contingent upon what is taking place and who is involved with the situation. Leaders should make a concerted effort to ensure that they are exhibiting the proper moods to yield the results they are looking for when working with subordinates. The researchers indicated that those leaders who lack this skill set could negatively affect their teams, but those who are adept in managing their moods will be more effective.

IQ, Abilities, and Competencies

In groundbreaking research, Salovey and Mayer (as cited in Chan, 2007) perceived emotional intelligence as consisting of four areas of abilities that include perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. This body of work was the foundation for the expanded research on emotional intelligence undertaken by Daniel Goleman. Goleman (1995) emphasized that IQ and emotional intelligence are distinct competencies, contrary to the widespread perception that the two competencies are highly related to one another. Goleman's position implied that a paradigm shift is needed with respect to human assessments. Recently, Leban and Zulauf (2005) contended that new leadership models have developed over the past 2 decades with less emphasis on rational and cognitive processes. The outpour of

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competency models and assessments has increased the options available to organizations

for measuring employee performance. The development of some of these models has

overshadowed much of the original thinking in the area of assessment.

In his research on mental abilities, Thurstone (as cited in Seymour, 1998)

Found the following seven different kinds of mental ability, which he referred to as the primary abilities: [a] verbal comprehension: the ability to understand and define words, [b] word fluency: the ability to think rapidly of words, as in making an extemporaneous speech or quickly finding the words for a crossword puzzle, [c] number facility: the ability to do numerical problems, [d] spatial ability: the ability to visualize objects and draw them from memory, [e] memory: the ability to memorize and recall information, [f] perception: the ability to notice details and detect similarities and differences, [g] reasoning: the ability to find general rules" (Seymour, 1998, p. 29)

The implications here are Thurstone (as cited in Seymour, 1998), Salovey and

Mayer (as cited in Chan, 2007), and Goleman (1995) all attempted to distinguish between

IQ and emotional intelligence in various ways. Many of the new instruments for

assessing intellect focus more on assessing intellect or emotional intelligence, as oppose

to assessing intellect and emotional intelligence simultaneously. Seymour (1998) argued

that researchers have become more sophisticated in design creation, and independently

assess for various attributes, competencies, emotional intelligence, or IQ. Emotional

intelligence consists of two primary elements, which include personal competence and

social competence (Lubit, 2004). The author contended personal competence assesses

one's capacity to relate to one's feelings, whereas social competence assesses one's

capacity to relate to the feelings of others.

- Personal competence involves

  Self-awareness: aware of your emotions and their impacts, aware of your strengths and weaknesses [and] self-management: emotional self-control, adaptability–flexibility in adapting to changing situations and obstacles,

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integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, drive to grow and achieve, achievement oriented, continuous learner, willing to take initiative, optimistic. (Lubit, 2004, p. 2)

- Social competence involves

Social awareness: empathy and sight, understanding other's perspectives and feelings, appreciation of others' strengths and weaknesses, political awareness [and] relationship management: respect for others, conflict management skills, collaborative approach, sense of humor, persuasive: visionary, diplomatic, able to leverage diversity. (Lubit, 2004, p. 2)

In his research on measuring emotional intelligence, Epstein (1998) discovered that individuals that scored high on IQ tests, and did exceptionally well in school, did not perform as well in the workplace. The participant's performance in the workplace was average, despite them attending a prestigious college (Boston College). Insights from the study showed a different set of competencies are required at school than at work. The results imply that while IQ is an effective measure for academic settings, it is not sufficient for assessing leadership competencies needed in the workplace.

Seymour (1998) who found a considerable amount of misinformation about IQ particularly as it relates to the workplace also confirmed this position. IQ is a superior predictor of school performance; however, it is not a reliable predictor of performance in the workplace. Seymour (1998) discussed the decisions made by many individuals who chose not to pursue certain careers or educational pursuits based on personal IQ scores. The author emphasized the importance of other abilities that are equally important as IQ in determining critical success factors. Creativity, motivation, emotional adjustment, and practical intelligence are some of the attributes identified (Seymour, 1998). Interestingly, several of these attributes are the same attributes that individuals with high emotional

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intelligence posses. Seymour's work in this area has led to further research that demonstrates how these attributes are interrelated to one another and other variables.

The Emotional Intelligence Consortium (as cited in Rai-Lewis & Lash, 2001) compiled a list of competencies, such as trustworthiness, emotional awareness, self-confidence, self-control, accurate self-assessment, and consciousness; this list of competencies expands from the work of Salovey and Gardner (as cited in Goleman, 1995) who described abilities with five domains. The domains included (a) understanding your emotions—which is self-awareness, (b) managing emotions—those of yourself and others, (c) self-motivation (d) recognizing the emotions of others—as well as responding to them, and (e) handling relationships (Goleman, 1995). These abilities are the basis for the design of many of the emotional intelligence competency profiles that organizations use to assess leaders. Collectively, the abilities represent an individual's ability to understand feelings, respond appropriately to various situations, exercise self-control, be empathetic, and successfully develop relationships (Goleman, 1995).

R. K. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) also identified several values that leaders exercising emotional intelligence could embrace to manage more effectively situations dealing with discontent. Among others, the values include (a) awareness, (b) problem exposure, (c) applied empathy, (d) trust, and (e) inclusion and participation. The authors believed management should confront problems, and not view all disagreements as adverse. The 10 values of discontent highlight the benefits from handling difficult situations with a strategy in place to handle the emotional confrontation.

Assessment and Measurement

The problem with measuring emotional intelligence is that no empirical evidence to account for the intangible variables exists (Cassiani, 2001). Goleman (1995) conceded that while IQ tests were prevalent, tests for measuring emotional intelligence in a comprehensive way were not available. Goleman (1995), however, contended that certain aspects of an individual's emotional intelligence, such as empathy are assessable using specific exercises and techniques. The capacity to accurately assess emotional intelligence is problematic for researchers and practitioners that question the validity of the research on emotional intelligence based on its reputation of lacking a scientific foundation.

Humber (2002) asserted that even if a reliable method to precisely measure and assess an emotional intelligence score existed, it might not be useful because it is impossible to predict all of the various circumstances that confront leaders. The implications suggest that a researcher could test a person for the level of emotional intelligence they posses, at a particular time with no problem. However, they would not be able apply that same measure to address how the respondent might react, for example, in a life-and-death situation. Ironically, the same principles that make emotional intelligence theory widely acceptable, also places the theory's validity and reliability at risk of further scrutiny.

Critiques of emotional intelligence research, most notably, Antonakis (2004) argued that it was inappropriate for organizations to base selection, promotion, or retention strategies on emotional intelligence models. Antonakis indicated that scientific support for the models to consider them as valid is insufficient. The author described

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Goleman's work as nebulous and asserted the research lacked the scholastic peer review that the scientific community expects.

However, other researchers and practitioners had contrary opinions to this assertion. Book (2000) argued organizations do have the ability to assess competencies using scientific measures The EQ-i, for example, is a valid and reliable, self-reporting questionnaire that leaders assess 15 distinct components that make up the emotional intelligence profile. Providing feedback to the leaders is the next step in the assessment process, and requires a skilled consultant to follow-up to properly interpret and report the results. However, researchers and practitioners should note, not all assessments are appropriate for every organization. Organizations that use ability-based models for assessing emotional intelligence should use performance measures instead of self-report measures because they are more reliable (Riggio, Murphy, & Pirozzolo, 2001). For example, the EQ-i assessment referenced would be not the best assessment tool for an organization that uses an ability-based model because of the self-reporting feature.

The Constructive Thinking Inventory is another assessment tool developed for measuring emotional intelligence. The three key areas of the tool are constructive thinking, emotional coping, and behavioral coping (Epstein, 1998). Many other emotional intelligence tools are available to organizations for assessing leaders. Assessment options include 360 feedback assessments which are very popular because they provide the participant with candid feedback about performance from peers, subordinates, superiors and other stakeholders. Leaders are able to take the feedback and develop plans of action for managing organizational performance.

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Jackson and Lash (1999) explained organizations should administer 360 assessments over several weeks, and then follow up with participants by conducting an extensive feedback session. The feedback sessions provide participants an opportunity to ask questions, explore feelings, and close any information gaps they might have related to the subject of emotional intelligence.

The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA) is an example of a 360 survey developed to measure the emotional intelligence of managers (Vrba, 2007). The EIA tool works in conjunction with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire that assesses managers' leadership profiles. Vrba (2007) found in sampling a group of South African insurance managers that it might be beneficial for organizations to target individuals with high emotional intelligence for leadership positions. The findings suggested that regardless of whether the managers with high emotional intelligence currently hold leadership positions, they would do well in a leadership position in the future. This body of work implies that succession planning using measures from emotional intelligence scores can be an effective strategy for organizations to deploy. Organizations can use assessment resources to identify high potentials within the ranks that may be suited for a leadership role.

Similarly, findings from a study based on the work of Mandell and Pherwani (2003) revealed there a relationship exists between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. The research shows individuals who rank high on emotional intelligence tests, are excellent candidates for becoming transformational leaders. Robbins (2005) described transformational leaders as individuals who look beyond their own self-interests and have an indelible effect on those who follow them. The researchers

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suggested that knowing that a relationship exists between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence can be a benefit to organizations as they recruit for talent. In his research on leadership styles and employee generational cohorts, DeClerk (2007) asserted that because relationships are more highly valued among younger generations, it is reasonable to expect that employee tenure and productivity will be more strongly correlated with transformational leadership initiatives than with their older counterparts. DeClerk (2007) also found that transformational leadership skills are used by management to enhance employee satisfaction.

Development of Emotional Intelligence

In order to facilitate the development of emotional intelligence within an organization, HR professionals can play an active role in designing a development strategy. Jackson and Lash (1999) stipulated HR professionals should first educate themselves about emotional intelligence, and then work with senior leadership to develop a model for implementation. The authors suggest that the emotional intelligence development plan be included in the organization's succession plan, performance management plans, and recruitment plans. By pulling all these plans together, the organization enhances its ability to align its strategic goals and objectives with its performance goals.

Researchers should note that certain psychological problems could affect an individual's ability to develop emotional intelligence. An individual's troubled past or inability to get beyond stereotypical thinking can inhibit the learning process (Lubit, 2004). The body's physiological response to emotional stimuli can sometimes become

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unstable causing our emotions to spiral out of control (Abrahams, 2007). Professional coaching may be required to help the individual overcome the barriers.

Many organizations invest extensive amounts of resources in acquiring leaders, and they are willing to provide the additional support necessary for leadership development. However, regardless of the level of support the organization provides, it is critical for the leader to buy into the development process in order for the initiative to be a success (Humber, 2002). Many senior executives developed to be heads of organizations during the sixties are not responding to the urgent need to connect with people (Wieand, 2002). The author contended a relationship linking exceptional leadership and authenticity is notable and asserted that the correlation between exceptional leadership and authenticity is quite important in that emotional intelligence can be increased most through authenticity which is described as the most advanced state of identification. Leaders who do not embrace self-development in the area of emotional intelligence are at competitive disadvantage.

For years, organizations like Procter & Gamble have been hiring candidates with emotional intelligence competencies, which they call *in-touch capability* (Burke, Hajim, Elliott, Mero, & Tkaczyk, 2007). The organization has recruiters that look for candidates with diverse backgrounds and leadership experience. Once hired, Proctor & Gamble sends the employees through various training programs for further skill development (Burke et al., 2007). In addition, the company has taken an integrated approach to strategic hiring which includes the global HR officer being involved in the recruitment and selection process. Proctor & Gamble serves as a practical example of how 21st-

century organizations use emotional intelligence to develop leaders and gain a competitive advantage.

Conclusion

In order to identify implications for workforce planning with respect to the Generation Y cohort, the following subjects were discussed: workforce planning, generational differences, the Baby Boomer retirement problem which included a discussion of succession planning, knowledge transfer, competencies, and emotional intelligence. As organizations develop workforce plans to prepare for the mass exodus of Baby Boomers, their understanding of generational differences with respect to productivity, innovation and competitiveness is imperative. Each of these subject areas is integral to identifying solutions to the complex problems facing today's workforce.

According to Trinkle (2005) in order to successfully retain and protect tacit knowledge, human interaction is required which adds complexity to organizational planning. The author further contended that it is important that initiatives to ensure tacit knowledge is shared are strong enough to withstand natural barriers that may exist in the organization. Having a savvy command of emotional intelligence may also serve the organization well as senior leaders and managers navigate through implementing succession planning strategies that ensure knowledge is transferred and competencies critical to the organization are successfully developed. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective to conducting this research enhanced the researcher's ability to contribute to the body of knowledge in all of these areas, but particularly, in the areas of workforce and succession planning.

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CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This research provides the baseline data for supporting a formal enterprise workforce plan that addresses the needs of the state and Generation Y employees as the Baby Boomers retire. The exploratory mixed design case study identified among the state's most critical jobs, how many Baby Boomers are leaving, and how many Generation Y employees are currently holding those same jobs (staffing gap analysis).

The following research questions were addressed.

Part 1

Five research questions were based on the analysis of records-based data to develop a descriptive demographic profile of the Generation Y cohort. Staffing and diversity gaps were identified. The following research questions were addressed.

RQ 1. Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest need to be filled by Generation Y employees due to the exodus of Baby Boomers (high turnover)?

RQ 2. Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest number of retirement eligible employees occupying them? Are these critical jobs most prevalent in a particular occupational industry, such as health care, public safety, education, and so forth?

RQ 3. Where (geographically) are staffing gaps most prevalent among Generation Y employees where Baby Boomers are retiring or resigning (rural vs. inner-city)?

RQ 4. What is the ratio of Generation Y employees currently in critical state jobs versus Baby Boomers who are retirement eligible in critical jobs?

RQ 5. What is the turnover rate of Generation Y employees in critical state jobs?

Part 2

The remaining 11 research questions were addressed based on semistructured interviews with state HR professionals.

RQ 6. Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are comfortable reporting conflicts they have with their manager(s) to HR?

RQ 7. Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are concerned about career opportunities within their agencies?

RQ 8. Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence?

RQ 9. Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of generational differences between employees?

RQ 10. What concerns do HR professionals have regarding their capacities to fill critical positions with Gen Yers?

RQ 11. Is work–life balance a significant factor in addressing high turnover among Gen Yers?

RQ 12. Are compensation and benefits an effective resource for recruiting potential Gen Yers?

RQ 13. Does job location impact filling critical vacancies among Gen Yers?

RQ 14. Among critical jobs, what areas of competency development do Gen Yers need most?

RQ 15. Have state managers been trained in the area of understanding generational differences?

RQ 16. Have state managers been trained in the area of emotional intelligence?

The semistructured interview instrument was used to conduct interviews with the state's HR professionals in an effort to assess the impact of generational differences particularly among Generation Y employees. Questions addressing benefits, work–life balance, career opportunities, and so forth, were assessed. The semistructured interview also gauged the level of understanding of emotional intelligence among management and HR professionals which is important for sustaining healthy employee relationships.

In addition, the instrument identified competencies needed by agencies to fulfill their missions. Feedback from HR professionals specifically provided meaningful data with regard to what concerned them most about their abilities to fill the state's most critical positions with Gen Yers. As a result of the research, statewide workforce trends can be analyzed in conjunction with HR professionals' perceptions and opinions about how to effectively attract, and retain Generation Y employees. Finally, the outcome of this research provides greater insight for organizations in the future as they target Generation Y employees to fill critical positions through strategic workforce planning.

Research Design

The research design for this study was an exploratory mixed research methodology which included quantitative and qualitative data and techniques in one case study. Methodological pluralism is a principle aspect of mixed methods research, which often results in further study which affords more expansive viewpoints than those

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proposed through monomethod designs" (Azorin & Cameron, 2010). Bryman (as cited by Fielding, 2010) suggested that mixed-method research should not be thought of as a technique, but rather an approach to inquiry which includes an implicit theory of what constitutes quality, and what determines a sufficient understanding of social phenomena. Additionally, Creswell and Clark (as cited in Azorin & Cameron, 2010) identified essential factors in selecting a mixed-methods design which included determining how and where to mix qualitative and quantitative strands, as well as determining the interaction levels, priority, and timing of the qualitative and quantitative strands.

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2010) developed guiding principles to conduct, evaluate, and report mixed research studies. Their standards for reporting were derived from the original work of Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Sutton. The following 13 steps delineated below include

> (a) determining the goal of the study, (b) formulating the mixed research objective(s), (c) determining the rationale of the study and the rationale(s) for mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches, (d) determining the purpose of the study and the purpose(s) for mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches, (e) determining the mixed research question(s), (f) selecting the mixed sampling design, (g) selecting the mixed research design, (h) collecting quantitative and/or qualitative data, (i) analyzing the quantitative and/or qualitative data using quantitative and/or qualitative analysis techniques, (j) validating the mixed research findings, (k) interpreting the mixed research findings, (l) writing the mixed research report, and (m) reformulating the mixed research question(s). (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2010, p. 61)

The subcomponents of the reporting standards consist of three primary areas which include formulating the research, research planning, and finally implementing the design.

Abowitz and Toole (2010) asserted that by using multiple methods to study the same problems, it is possible to identify recurrent patterns or consistent relationships among variables. The authors further attested that triangulation is the simplest form of a

mixed-method approach which allows more visibility of the facets of the phenomenon in question. In surveys, this can involve both close-ended, forced choice, and open-ended questions to measure a key construct, behavior, trait, or attitude.

> Providing the exact wording for survey questions (or completely specifying the measures used from archival data) and explaining how we interpret the answers insures consistency on our parts as researchers and provides clarity to readers. Moreover, with careful operationalizations, we can assess measurement validity and reliability and replication studies (another aspect of triangulation) become feasible. (Abowitz & Toole, 2010, p. 111)

Aligned with philosophic assumptions of mixed-method design, the research began with a descriptive quantitative study, as described by Arbnor and Bjerke (1997), comprised primarily of employees categorized as Generation Y and Baby Boomers. Sixteen research questions were addressed in this study based on the development of a demographic profile of the Generation Y cohort (and Baby Boomers) where staffing and diversity gaps were identified for the state's most critical jobs.

The descriptive analysis identified the attributes of the state's current workforce in terms of age, gender, tenure, pay grade, salary, ethnic group, job title, job code, and retirement eligibility. The review also revealed how many Gen Yers are in critical jobs, and how many Gen Yers need to be readily available to fill the remaining critical jobs of the retiring Boomers. The researcher identified the state's most critical jobs based on a review of the largest five agencies' workforce plans (largest, based on employee population) submitted in 2011. Agencies typically identify up to three critical jobs during each workforce planning cycle (annually). Therefore, the researcher anticipated the identification of approximately 15 critical jobs. Staffing and diversity gaps were identified using standard workforce planning practices (gap analysis, as described in the

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literature review) among Baby Boomers and Gen Yers working in critical jobs. Turnover rates were determined for Gen Yers and Baby Boomers in critical jobs. The data was obtained using the PeopleSoft database and importing data into Excel spreadsheets for analysis.

The analysis of quantitative data is managed through a process which encompasses ensuring the problem is defined, a model is developed, input data is obtained, a solution is developed and tested, and the results are analyzed and then implemented (Render & Stair, 2000). A similar process has been described by D. R. Anderson, Sweeney, and Williams (1991), emphasizing the importance of representing the problem in mathematical terms in order to enhance the decision-making process. Researchers are cautioned by Eysenck and Frith (1977) who indicated that it is possible to have a quantitative element in place; however, a congruent qualitative counterpart may not be correlated to the data. The authors' warning provided insight regarding the importance of careful planning during the research design phase.

In order to strengthen the research approach, a second phase of the study included a qualitative component in which the researcher interviewed HR professionals in Georgia state government. The semistructured instrument contained both open-ended and close-ended questions, which were carefully analyzed using coding techniques. Competency gaps among Gen Y employees (were identified in Phase 2) based on survey results. Study results were also used to assess the HR professionals' perceptions of generational differences, particularly among Generation Y employees. Levels of awareness with regard to emotional intelligence among management and HR professionals were gauged, as well.

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The researcher carefully reviewed the qualitative and quantitative data collectively. Robson (2002) stipulated qualitative research interviews are particularly suitable when quantitative studies are conducted, and qualitative data are necessary to explain and demonstrate the significance of the results, or validate certain data points. Qualitative research consists of a myriad of interpretive methods that attempts to decode, translate, and describe the meaning versus the frequency of phenomena which occurs naturally in the social world" (D. R. Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Brewerton (2001) stipulated quantitative data can be generated from qualitative methods such as interviews where information can be assessed to determine if various themes exist and those themes can be assessed for frequencies by using surveys.

A significant amount of research shows many benefits to conducting a case study. Zikmund (2000) supported this position and contended that the main benefit is that the whole organization can be studied thoroughly with a great deal of emphasis on capturing even the minutest details. Researchers are then free to further analyze exactly what took place, when, and why. Through this discovery process, researchers are then able to recognize important associations that exist between various functions, people or organizations. Similarly, D. R. Cooper and Schindler (2006) found that the intense focus on detail helped organizations in their decision making, and it also enhanced their abilities to become more strategic. The authors assert that the information comes from a myriad of sources, which ensures its validity and safeguards against important data being omitted from the records. The researcher deployed these practical research techniques throughout the study to effectively evaluate the real-life problems facing the state. Based on the findings, the researcher provided clear insights regarding the gravity of the current

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staffing, competency and diversity gaps among the state's most critical jobs, and provided best practice recommendations for recruiting and retaining Gen Y employees for filling those positions.

Sample

The records-based data was used to answer Part 1, Research Questions 1–5. The target population for the records-based research consisted of state of Georgia employees entered in the HR management system (PeopleSoft) with birthdates ranging from January 1980 through January 2000. The date range only included full-time employees ages 18–32 which encompassed the oldest members of the Generation Y cohort (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006), and the youngest of those just entering the workforce who were most likely right out of high school or working college students. A census was taken and queried on various demographics, including age, ethnicity, gender, tenure, pay grade, job code, salary, job title, turnover, and job location. The same process was conducted for the Baby Boomer cohort where the birthdates range from January 1946–January 1964 (Bridgers & Johnson, 2006; McDonald, 2008b).

During the second phase of the study, interviews were conducted with HR professionals from four geographical regions across the state. A random sample was used to gain understanding of the various perspectives the HR professionals have regarding probable causes, and possible solutions for addressing recruitment, retention, and development strategies for Generation Y employees. A population of 800 HR professionals, working in approximately 75 state entities, was invited to participate in the semistructured interviews. The researcher anticipated interviewing 80 employees,

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reflecting a 10% response rate. Forty-three participants responded and participated in the study.

<div align="center">**Setting**</div>

Records-Based Research

The research was conducted onsite at the researcher's employer which is the SPA of Georgia. The researcher used a prevalent form of nonbehavioral observation research known as record analysis. According to D.R. Cooper & Schindler (2006) a scientific inquiry can qualify as an observation whenever it is used to specifically address a research question, proper controls are used, it is planned systematically and executed, and produces a valid and reliable account of what took place. The authors further contended that because observation is so versatile, it is an essential primary source methodology which also supplements other methodologies.

Historical and current records primarily consisted of printed and written records. Key records selected for review included (a) 2011 Workforce Plans, (b) Human Resource Management System (PeopleSoft) data of employees, particularly Generation Y and Baby Boomer data, and (c) Job Descriptions and Competencies for jobs used by the state for performance management and salary compensation. These documents were selected because they allowed the researcher to build a generational profile that reflects the most prevalent workforce trends impacting the state's ability to fill its most critical jobs.

Semistructured Phone Interviews

Telephone-based surveys are turning out to be quite prevalent in that they offer ways to benefit from interview-based surveys, and at the same time significantly decrease

the resources and time required to conduct interviews face-to-face (Robson, 2005). The researcher conducted phone interviews to gather the workforce planning data. The interviews were taped, transcribed, and coded by the researcher. Phone interviews took place Monday–Friday during the business hours of 6:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. at the SPA from the researcher's office. A log of all the calls was made recording their outcomes (e.g., date and appointment time) and the notes were recorded. The researcher rehearsed before conducting the telephone interviews by ensuring the appropriate tone of voice was practiced, and the appropriate speed.

The researcher followed best practices prescribed by Robson (2005), which included sending correspondence before calling, providing a brief description of the researcher, discussing the purpose of the research and expectations of the interviewee. The researcher also confirmed she was talking to the appropriate person at an appropriate time, established rapport, and kept the questioning within the interviewing timeframe based on the field tests results. D. R. Cooper and Schindler (2006) argued that it is in the best interest of researchers conducting telephone surveys to attempt to enhance the level of satisfaction derived from the interview. Groves (as cited in D. R. Cooper & Schindler, 2006) expressed the importance of the interviewing experience, and insisted that researchers should experiment with various methods to enhance the participant's satisfaction with the interview, reduce the number of response errors on particular measures, and increase the overall rate of completion. The author further stipulated that visual cues, such as, frowns, smiles, raised eyebrows, and eye contact typically encountered through face-to-face interaction could be translated into verbal messages.

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The author also suggested to foster trust among participants, interviewers can intentionally select cues they deem essential for maintaining the quality of data.

Instrumentation

Many organizations use surveys to gather their workforce data because they believe that the information will provide them with competitive advantages. This premise is supported by Thompson et al. (2005) who asserted ensuring the suggestions and ideas of employees are respected and valued is a best practice that increases employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity.

Semistructured interviews were conducted using an 11-item instrument. Robson (2002) asserted semi-structured interviews have questions that are predetermined, however, the way the questions are ordered can be changed based on the perception of the interviewer and what appears to be most suitable. The author further contended that the interviewee has the discretion to modify the wording of the questions, provide explanations, and add or delete questions as they deemed appropriate for certain interviewees.

The instrument was used to identify key factors impacting the recruitment, development and retention of Generation Y employees for critical jobs in Georgia state government. D. R. Cooper and Schindler (2006) asserted that semistructured interviews typically start with a small number of targeted questions, and then yield to the interviewee's thoughts as the interviewer seeks to look further into the responses. The authors further contended that the questions generally have an open-ended response format. The researcher followed the aforementioned interviewing principles.

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A Likert scale was used for nine items, one open-ended question was asked, and one question required the participant to select one out of five items. This approach was used to discover new information. Arbnor and Bjerke (1997) stated,

> To discover is either the same as developing researchable/consultable/investigable problems or the characteristics and the behavior of objects in reality. This can be called discovery because the problems or the characteristics or behavior might be unknown (at least in this format) until the creator of knowledge reveals them. (p. 103)

The analysis of the results of the study also identified the most critical competencies that Generation Y employees needed in terms of development for successfully performing in critical jobs. HR professionals were given the opportunity to select the competencies from the five core competencies currently assessed in the state's performance management program.

HR professionals were sent an e-mail inviting them to participate in the semistructured telephone interview. The invitation encouraged participation, but also assured the potential participant that participation in the study was completely voluntary, and consent would be acknowledged based on the participant's reply e-mail. The interview questions were sent 2 weeks in advance by e-mail to potential interviewees. The interviewees were asked to review the instrument prior to the phone interview. The researcher responded by e-mail to those HR professionals that responded by coordinating the date and time for the phone interviews (through e-mail or by phone). Phone interviews were conducted for each of the four geographical regions. The researcher conducted all the interviews within a 4-week time period. The interview responses were taped, transcribed, and coded. The data was analyzed by the researcher and a report was written.

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Table 2. *Research Matrix*

Research question	Records-based data	Interview question
1	X	
2	X	
3	X	
4	X	
5	X	
6		1
7		2
8		3
9		4
10		5
11		6
12		7
13		8
14		9
15		10
16		11

The questions on the instrument were independently developed by the researcher. Participants were informed that research results would be sent to all respondents in an aggregate reporting format. Results would include frequency distributions, cross tabulations, and correlation significance of all responses.

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Data Collection

Demographic workforce trends were identified, with descriptive analysis and various charts, graphs and descriptors. The researcher developed a list of the state's critical jobs that were identified during the 2011 enterprise workforce planning process which is accessible through a shared (but secured) Word files. A query was completed by the researcher of the job codes and location codes for both Baby Boomers and Generation Y employees in the critical jobs. A list, derived from the descriptive analysis, was then generated of which critical jobs have high turnover among the Baby Boomers, and where they are geographically located. An analysis of Baby Boomers eligible to retire within state government (based on current legislative criteria), with 30 or more years of service, or 60 years of age was also conducted (Employees' Retirement System of Georgia, 2009).

In particular, a turnover query was conducted of both generational cohorts to identify staffing gaps among the critical jobs and to determine the Baby Boomer-to-Generation Y ratio. The locations were segmented using county codes based on the four geographical parameters as described on the state's career website which are Metro Atlanta, North Georgia, Central Georgia and South Georgia (SPA, 2008c). Analysis was conducted on critical jobs from state agencies where high turnover exists among the Baby Boomers (where job codes or titles are clearly identified in the agency's workforce plan—Word document).

Through the state's Performance Management Program, five statewide core competencies are assessed annually that each employee is expected to possess. The five core competencies are Judgment and Decision Making, Teamwork and Cooperation,

Results Orientation, Customer Service, and Accountability (SPA, 2010b). The top three most prevalent statewide core competencies where Gen Yers need development were identified through the semistructured telephone interviews administered to the HR professionals. The interview results (along with the descriptive analysis) provided the baseline data to assist agencies, but particularly the SPA, in creating recruitment, development, and retention strategies for Generation Y employees that impact the enterprise. Proper use of this information maximizes the state's ability to effectively leverage against economies of scale by strategically deploying fiscal and HR.

Data Analysis

As suggested by Robson (2005), this exploratory mixed design study used existing, secondary material to collect data by means of direct observations and interviews during the first phase of the study. The population was defined, and the researcher described the characteristics and/or behaviors to be measured in the population. Data was analyzed by developing frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, histograms, bar charts and pie charts that reflect a descriptive profile of all the interview responses. Turnover data among Generation Y employees in critical positions versus Baby Boomers in critical positions was assessed.

Mean. Strictly speaking, this should be referred to as the arithmetic mean. The average is obtained when all the scores are added together and then divided by the number of scores.

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Median. When all the scores are arranged based on the order of size, the central value is the median (i.e., for 11 scores it is the sixth). It is also referred to at the *50 percentile* (i.e., it has 50% of the scores below it, and 50% above it).

Mode. This is the most frequently occurring value (Robson, 2005).

SPSS statistical software was used to create a data set and reporting outputs. Outliers were reflected in the reporting, but not eliminated from the results. Brewerton (2001) explained in order to produce qualitative data, quantitative data may be used. Nevertheless, the researcher should expect a high price be paid for the conversion process. This point is affirmed by Yin (2003), who argued while it is difficult to convert qualitative data into numerical data the information can be presented in various ways including using categories, attitudinal and perceptual dimensions such as color perception, and real-life experiences. Yin's position implied that while it is possible to convert the data, a great deal of rigor on the researcher's part is necessary to translate qualitative data into a quantitative format.

However, support exists for qualitative researchers to take on the additional work required to increase the level of rigor as a means of verifying strategies. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) argued that researchers should assess investigator responsive, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling, and sampling adequacy to ensure the validity and reliability of the project. Some researchers, however, defend their practice of not focusing in on the empirical measures because they believe they should focus on the underlying principles of cause and effect.

Data analysis for Question 10 reflects the frequency distribution of competencies selected. The competencies were rank ordered based on percentage, and the three

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competencies that reflected the highest percentile were presented as the baseline data for assessing development recommendations for Gen Yers employed in critical positions. The researcher sought to yield the benefits of both methodological approaches.

Confidentiality of Data

The records-based data was accessed by the researcher and initially saved on a secured drive in Excel spreadsheets. The drive was located within a secured network environment and accessible to designated government staff. At the end of the research, the records-based research was deleted from the network environment. The researcher also saved the data on a removable disk (jump drive) and the data was analyzed using SPSS software. The interview data has been stored on paper and on audio tape for 7 years in a safe currently located at the resident of the researcher. Interview responses were kept confidential and were only accessible by the researcher. Seven years after completion of the study, the files on the portable electronic data storage device (CD or jump drive, etc.) will be deleted and then physically destroyed.

Participant Privacy

A participant informed consent letter was sent to each participant by e-mail. All interview responses were reported in an aggregate and were not associated to any individual to ensure anonymity. Interview tapes were maintained by the researcher, and only the researcher has access to participant information, such as name, agency, and geographical region.

Validity and Reliability

Morse et al. (2002) stipulated that researchers should assess the responsiveness of the investigator, the coherency of the methodological approach, the adequacy of the sample, and the sampling theory to ensure the validity and reliability of their projects. Abowitz and Toole (2010) asserted that measurement validity is based on if an indicator measures what it is designed to measure; and if it does not, there will be systemic errors in the process as well as the corresponding results.

Robson (2002) further explained that the reliability and the validity of the survey are contingent upon the development of well-written questions, which ensures internal validity. That is, the information gathered from the survey data will measure and reflect with accuracy the respondent's feelings and opinions.

The one open-ended question (and any follow-up probing responses) in the instrument were coded based on a data mining techniques, such as an affinity analysis. Leu (2007) stipulated, the affinity analysis technique was derived from Kawakita Jiro's (KJ) Method which is common to Japanese industry practices. Further explanation is provided by Spool (as cited in Leu, 2007) who summarized the key steps for performing an affinity analysis include, (a) determining the focus and identifying a topic whereby categories are developed and ideas are ranked, (b) organizing the group and gathering a clear understanding the information, (c) grouping comparable ideas and strategically placing the items together, and finally, (d) identifying each group upon categorizing the information based on how similar it is, and then by giving a title to each group. Winchip (as cited in Leu, 2007) contended that an affinity analysis is generally conducted when there is a very large and complex problem, and new ideas and ways to improve the

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situation need to be examined to resolve the issue. Winchip further recognized that innovation and knowledge management are fostered through affinity modeling. This process was followed by the researcher to facilitate the data analysis.

Missing data or data that could not be readily interpreted was excluded from the results, but clearly reflected in the report. Nine of the semistructured interview questions were developed using a 5-point Likert scale. D. R. Cooper and Schindler (2006) described a Likert scale as a variant of the summated rated scale which asks a rater to disagree or agree with items that suggest either unfavorable or favorable attitudes toward the object. The authors further contend that an assigned score reflects the strength of one's attitude, and the overall measure of attitude can be obtained by totaling all the individual scores.

The response categorization system used the following values: 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *disagree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*. Nonparametric procedures, based on rank, median or range were used, as well as, tabulations and frequencies to analyze the data.

In order to assess differences in responses, the Mann–Whitney *U* test (D. R. Cooper & Schindler, 2006) was used to evaluate participant responses based on the geographical regions they work in:

$$U = n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_1 (n_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1$$

or

$$U = n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_2 (n_2 - 1)}{2} - R_2,$$

where n_1 = number in Sample 1, n_2 = number in Sample 2, R_1 = sum of ranks in Sample 1.

D.R. Cooper & Schindler (2006) stated that the Mann–Whitney U test is "used with two independent samples if the data are at least ordinal; it is an alternative to the t test without the latter's limiting assumptions. When the larger of the two samples is 20 or less, there are special tables for interpreting U; when the larger sample exceeds 20, a normal curve approximation is used" (p. 665). The Mann–Whitney U test can also test unequal samples. In calculating the U test, all observations were treated in a combined manner and ranked from smallest to largest. The largest negative score received the lowest rank. All ties were assigned an average rank. The rank values for each sample was totaled and the U statistic was computed.

Data analysis for Question 10 reflects the frequency distribution of competencies selected. D. R. Cooper and Schindler (2006) defined "frequency distribution as the ordered array of all values for a variable" (p. 710). The competencies were rank ordered based on percentage, and the competencies that reflected the highest percentile were presented as the baseline data for assessing enterprise development strategies for Gen Y employees in critical jobs.

The one open-ended question (Q11), and any follow-up probing responses, were coded based on data mining techniques, such as an affinity analysis. Missing data, or data

that could not be readily interpreted was excluded from the results, but clearly reflected in the report. Qualitative software was not be used to evaluate this question.

A field test was conducted to determine clarity, readability, and deliverability of the 11 semistructured interview questions. Three HR professionals working for the SPA reviewed the instrument, provided feedback, and suggested changes. The HR professionals who participated in the field test are terminally degreed and have similar job functions, but were not included in the remainder of the study. The field test revealed several areas where items needed to be reworded. Based on the feedback, the instructions and the instrument were edited to enhance overall clarity. The field test took place approximately four weeks prior to conducting the telephone interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations included ensuring human capital data were managed in a confidential manner to the extent that employee records were not compromised, and agencies did not feel threatened that the agency's reputation would be damaged by participating in the study. In addition, HR professionals were assured that research results would not include the participant, or the agency's name in the results. Robson (2005) stipulated, when someone participates in research based on some type of incentive, regardless of if it is an implied, financial, or implicit aspect pertaining to their job, ethical considerations are warranted.

In as much as the researcher is an employee of the state, serving in a role related to the job functions of the HR professionals who were interviewed, the consent letter clearly acknowledged both roles of the researcher. The researcher does not serve within

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the same organization as any of the potential participants; however, HR surveys have been administered by the researcher's agency (the SPA) in the past. The participant's consent letter was carefully written to clarify that the research would be conducted on behalf of the researcher as a PhD learner at Capella University, and aggregated research results would also be used to assist the state of Georgia in its future workforce planning efforts. Participants who knew the researcher personally, or had significant professional contact with the researcher as defined, did not participate in the study. Significant professional contact with the researcher was defined as those who worked with the researcher on an ongoing basis (business contact more than twice a month).

The records-based data was accessed by the researcher and data was saved on Excel spreadsheets. The researcher analyzed the data using an Excel spreadsheet. The data was also saved within a secured network environment and access to the files was limited to the researcher and authorized state personnel who maintain and secure the state's network. Immediately after completion of the study, all electronic data was transferred to a portable electronic data storage device (CD or jump drive) and the files on the personal computer were erased and deleted using appropriate software. The interview data was also stored on paper and on audio tape (Olympus digital voice recorder) for 7 years in a safe located at the resident of the researcher. Seven years after completion of the study, the files on the portable electronic data storage device (CD or jump drive, etc.) will be erased and deleted and then physically destroyed. Responses will be kept confidential and only accessible by the researcher.

Interview tapes (using Olympus digital voice recorder) were maintained by the researcher, and only the researcher had access to participant information, such as name,

agency, and geographical region. All interview responses were reported in aggregate and not associated to any individual to ensure anonymity. A participant consent form was sent to each participant by e-mail, whereby the researcher maintained a complete record of all returned confirmations.

The research posed minimal risks to participants. The semistructured interview questions asked of the HR professionals were typical of many HR questionnaires they might receive from other professional HR organizations on a routine basis. The nature of the questions asked should not have caused harm or discomfort in and of themselves greater than those encountered generally in day-to-day life or while conducting routine psychological or physical tests or examinations.

Benefits from the study included exploring the workforce needs of the Gen Y cohort to meet the future demands of the state required to provide services to Georgia's citizens. In particular, the findings are valuable to other state agencies and public sector entities that are faced with similar retirement issues. An analysis of the demographic data and workforce trends was assessed along with generational differences that have been well documented and scholastically profiled. Examining the data from a comprehensive perspective ensures that the appropriate human capital strategies are developed. The most critical jobs were identified, the number of Baby Boomers leaving those jobs, the number of Generation Y employees available (and able) to fill those jobs, and what HR strategies should be deployed for effective workforce planning to sustain a competent workforce. Thus, the body of knowledge for developing targeted human capital strategies for the Generation Y cohort has expanded with specific emphasis on public sector employees.

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The research, therefore, was conducted in a manner that is consistent with observing ethical standards, which include (a) protecting participant confidentiality, (b) ensuring data are not changed to meet a desired objective, (c) interpreting data from a nonbiased perspective, (d) ensuring inclusion of all sections of data analysis and conclusion, and finally, (e) by making sure that recommendations do not go beyond the scope of the data collected (D. R. Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Findings were reported in the aggregate to ensure anonymity. The researcher also remained vigilant in following all protocols related to employer-based research.

Summary

Chapter 3 covered the research methodology and addressed the underlying research traditions and philosophic assumptions associated with mixed-methodology research. The research design, sample size, and setting were discussed. The chapter included an explanation of the records-based research that was conducted, and described the semistructured interview instrument that was used. Data collection and data analysis methods, along with statistical measures of validity and reliability were presented. The chapter closed with a discussion of a myriad of ethical considerations, including how data was kept confidential, and what measures the researcher took to ensure participant privacy.

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CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide baseline data that would be useful in developing and executing an enterprise workforce plan which takes into account the mass exodus of the Baby Boomers and the influx of an emerging Gen Y workforce. A descriptive analysis of critical jobs was conducted with a thorough review of the workforce trends among Gen Yers and Baby Boomers in those jobs. And, through telephone interviews, the researcher investigated the perceptions of HR professionals from across the state that focused on six critical dimensions: talent acquisition, retention, competency development, conflict management, emotional intelligence, and generational differences. This chapter presents the results of the descriptive critical jobs analysis, and the semistructured interview results from 43 HR professionals. The semistructured interviews were conducted based on the method described in the Research Methodology section (Chapter 3) of this study.

The Interview Process

Participants were located across the state of Georgia. A cover letter sent by e-mail to all participants summarized the purpose for conducting the research, confidentiality, and how the study results would be used. The cover letter also emphasized that

participation in the study was strictly voluntary and anonymous. Participants were requested through the e-mail to respond back by e-mail if they wanted to participate. The researcher confirmed receipt of each participant's reply by responding back to the respondent, and then coordinated scheduling telephone interviews either via e-mail or by telephone, when appropriate. Prior to the interview, interview questions were e-mailed to participants using the state's secured exchange network. All participants received their interview questions directly from the researcher prior to their scheduled telephone interview appointments. Forty-nine HR professionals responded to the invitation to participate in the study among 803 potential respondents.. Six of the respondents formally declined to participant, and 43 HR professionals agreed to participate. All 43 participants who agreed to participate were interviewed.

Data Collection

Data collection for the first phase of the research required running workforce queries in PeopleSoft, the state's Human Resource Information System, and exporting the data into Excel spreadsheets for data analysis. The first set of queries was run in November and completed in February. An extensive review of primary and secondary sources was also conducted during the same 4-month period.

The second phase of the research involved conducting telephone interviews and recording responses from the researcher's job site. The first interviews were completed the week of November 14th, and the last the week of December 9th. The entire data collection process for this phase of the research took place over a 26-day period.

Telephone Interview Instrument

The instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher. A field test was conducted to ensure that the instructions, interview questions, and Likert scale items were clear. Three participants took part in the field test. All three participants reviewed the semistructured interview questions and provided feedback. Each of the participants provided corrective feedback, resulting in several changes in the instrument's structure, content and instructions.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for the data analysis addressing all 16 research questions.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest need to be filled by Generation Y employees due to the exodus of Baby Boomers (high turnover)?" Table 3 provides the turnover rates by Georgia state government job in ranked order. The results indicate that the turnover rates ranged from 0% to 21%. The results also indicate that the number of employees varied substantially from one Georgia state government job to the next. However, the total or overall number of employees was 2,633 and the total number of terminations was 430, which resulted in an overall turnover rate of 16%. Finally, these results indicate that those critical Georgia state government jobs with the highest need to be filled by Generation Y employees include protection and placement specialist, working level 14203 (21%) and probation and parole manager, 17506 (20%).

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Table 3. *Overall Turnover Rate by Georgia State Government Job*

Position Title and Job Number	Employees	Terminations	Turnover rate (%)
Protection and placement specialist, 14203 (working level)	1,015	208	21
Probation and parole manager, 17506	51	10	20
Economic support specialist, working level, 14412	973	145	15
Social services manager, 16031	22	3	14
Protection and placement specialist, supervisory level, 14201	380	49	13
Social services midmanager, 16033	17	2	12
Examiner/collector/revenue agent, 41487	98	11	11
Civil engineer/design/construction 1, 19316	67	2	3
Social services midmanager, 16032	10	0	0
Total	2,633	430	16

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, "Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest number of retirement eligible employees occupying them?" and "Are these critical jobs most prevalent in a particular occupational industry, such as health care, public safety, education, and so forth?" The results featured in Table 4 indicate that the retirement eligibility rate ranged from 2% to 41% with an overall rate of 4%. However, when looking at the actual number of retirement eligible workers, the three jobs with the highest number of retirement eligible employees occupying them include economic support specialist, working level, 14412 ($n = 35$), protection and placement specialist, working level, 14203 ($n = 24$), and protection and placement specialist,

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supervisory level, 14201 (n = 12). All three of these positions are within the social services industry.

Table 4. *Eligibility Rate by Georgia State Government Job*

Position Title and Job Number	Employees	Retirement eligible	Eligibility rate (%)
Social services midmanager, 16033	17	7	41
Probation and parole manager, 17506	51	10	20
Social services midmanager, 16032	10	1	10
Social services manager, 16031	22	2	9
Examiner/collector/revagent, 41487	98	7	7
Civil engineer/design/construction 1, 19316	67	4	6
Economic support specialist, working level, 14412	973	35	4
Protection and placement specialist, supervisory level, 14201	380	12	3
Protection and placement specialist, working level, 14203	1,015	24	2
Total	2,633	102	4

Research Question 3

The third research question asked, "Where (geographically) are staffing gaps most prevalent among Generation Y employees where Baby Boomers are retiring or resigning (rural vs. inner-city)?" The results provided in Table 5 indicate that the North Georgia (rural) Baby Boomer turnover rate is 28% for the region and 38% among Generation Y employees, which is the highest among all the regions. The Baby Boomer turnover rate for the South was also 28%, but the turnover rate for the Generation Y employees was

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much lower at 18% indicating a more probable difference in the staffing gaps for North

Georgia. Overall, the Baby Boomer turnover rate is 25% and the Generation Y turnover

rate is also 25%, although much more variability exists between the regions in the

turnover rates for the Generation Y employees when compared to the Baby Boomers.

Table 5. *Staffing Gaps by Region and Generation*

Geographical location	Boomers leaving job (*n*)	Baby Boomer turnover rate (%)	Generation Y leaving job (*n*)	Generation Y turnover rate (%)
Metro Atlanta Region	41	21	27	20
North Georgia Region	55	28	52	38
Central Georgia Region	43	22	34	25
South Georgia Region	55	28	24	18
Total	194	100	137	100

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked, "What is the ratio of Generation Y employees

currently in critical state jobs versus Baby Boomers who are retirement eligible in critical

jobs?" The results presented in Table 6 indicate that the ratio of Generation Y employees

to Baby Boomer employees tended to be larger than one, which means Generation Y

employees outnumber Baby Boomer employees. In addition, larger agencies tended to

have an even greater discrepancy between the two types of employees. The largest

discrepancies were found relative to the economic support specialist-14412, (12.73) and

the examiner/collector/rev agent-41487, working level (12.64). The overall ratio of 8.42

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indicates that for every one Baby Boomer employee, approximately eight Generation Y employees are employed.

Table 6. *Generation Y-to-Baby Boomer Employee Ratio*

Position Title and Job Number	Generation Y (*n*)	Baby Boomer (*n*)	Ratio
Economic support specialist, working level, 14412	280	22	12.73
Examiner/collector/revagent, 41487	278	22	12.64
Probation and parole manager, 17506	43	12	3.58
Social services manager, 16031	43	12	3.58
Protection and placement specialist, working level, 14203	1	1	1.00
Social services midmanager, 16033	1	8	0.13
Social services midmanager, 16032	0	0	N/A
Civil engineer/design/construction 1, 19316	2	0	N/A
Protection and placement specialist, supervisory level, 14201	0	0	N/A
Total	648	77	8.42

Research Question 5

The fifth research question asked, "What is the turnover rate of Generation Y employees in critical state jobs?" The Generation Y turnover rates featured in Table 7 indicate that the Generation Y turnover rate ranged from 0% to 19% with an overall turnover rate of 16%. The results also indicate that larger agencies tended to be associated with higher Generation Y turnover rates.

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Table 7. *Generation Y Turnover Rate by Georgia State Government Job*

Position Title and Job Number	Generation Y employees	Generation Y terminations	Generation Y turnover rate (%)
Examiner/collector/revagent, 41487	461	87	19
Economic support specialist, working level, 14412	467	87	1
Probation and parole manager, 17506	226	27	12
Social services manager, 16031	227	27	12
Social services midmanager, 16033	15	0	0
Social services midmanager, 16032	1	0	0
Civil engineer/design/construction 1, 19316	6	0	0
Protection and placement specialist, working level, 14203	4	0	0
Protection and placement specialist, supervisory level, 14201	0	0	N/A
Total	1,407	228	16

Additional demographic profiling data of Gen Yers working in the
aforementioned critical jobs is described in Figures 2–6. The data includes ethnicity,
gender, pay grades, salary ranges, and tenure. The state's Gen Y population in critical
jobs consists of 57% African Americans, 38% Whites, 19% Hispanics, 12% Multiracial,
and 2% are Asians. The state's Gen Y gender profile of employees in critical jobs
consists of 86% females, 13% males, and1% are designated as *undecided* within
PeopleSoft (the state's HR information system). The average tenure of the state's Gen Y
employees in critical jobs is 3.3 years of service, and 81% of those employees have been
in their positions 5 years or less.

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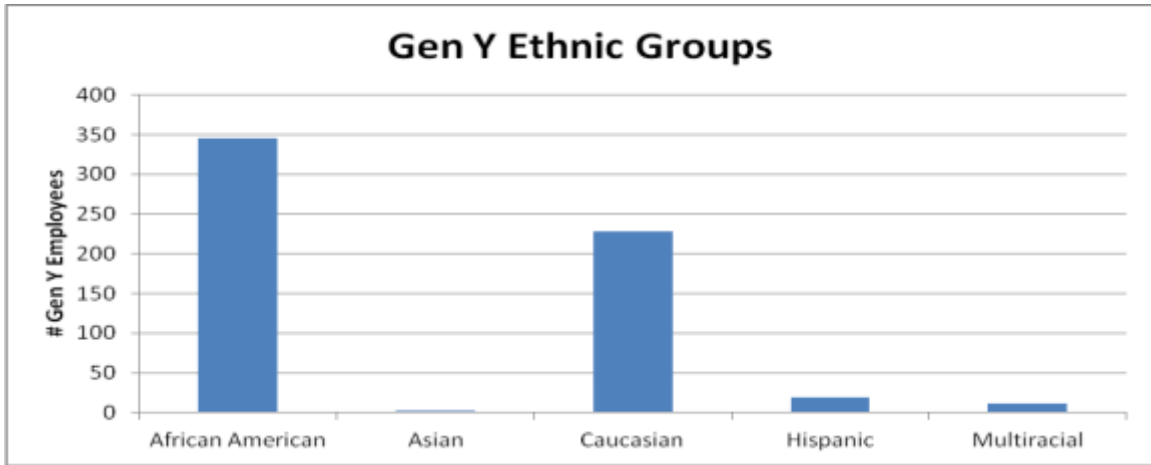
Figure 2. Ethnic groups of Gen Yers in critical Georgia state government jobs.
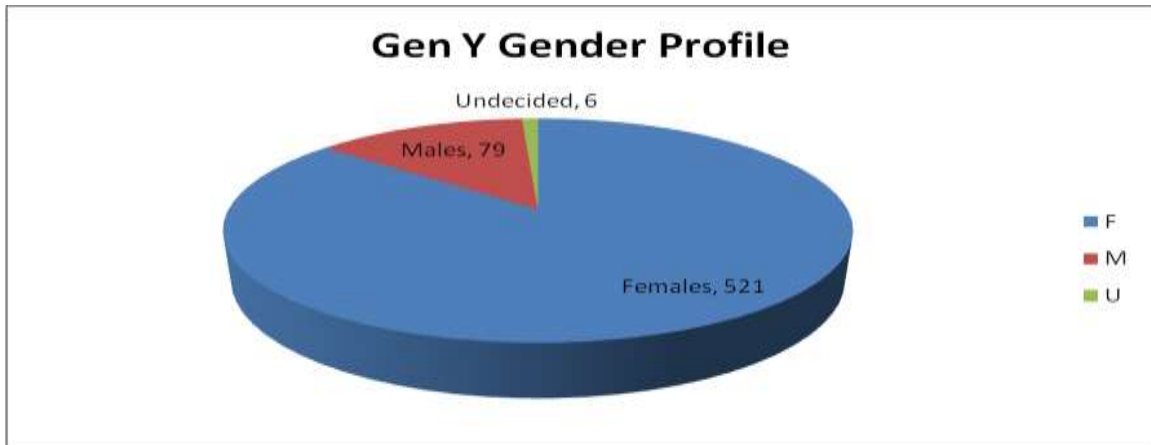
Figure 3. Gender of Gen Yers in critical Georgia state government jobs.

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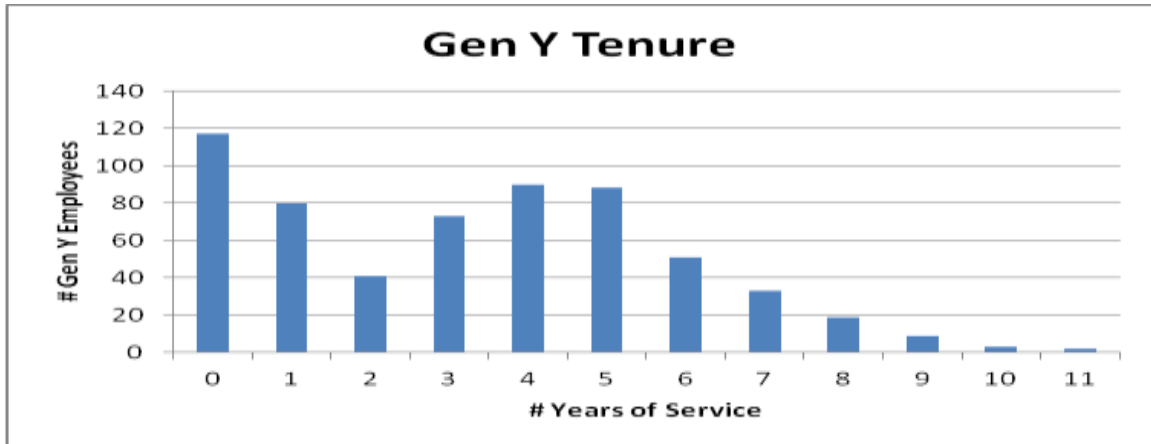
Figure 4. Tenure of Gen Yers in critical Georgia state government jobs.
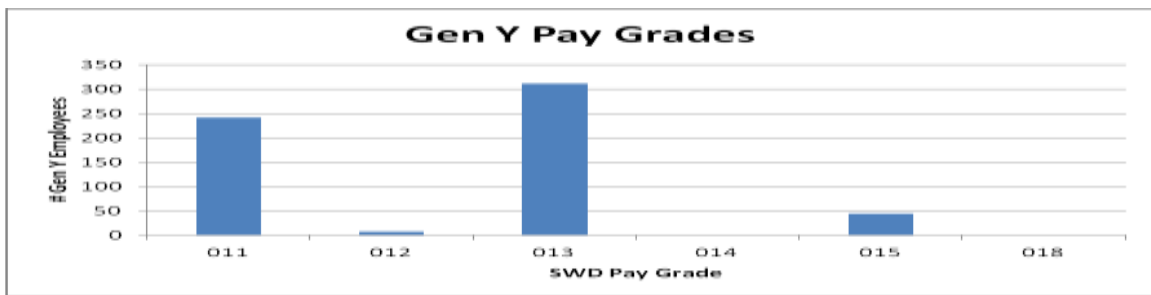
Figure 5. Pay grades of Gen Yers in critical Georgia state government jobs.

More than half of the state's Gen Y employees working in critical jobs are paid on

Paygrade 13 (52%). While another 40% are paid on Paygrade 11. 7% are paid on

Paygrade 15, and the remaining 1% are paid on Paygrade 12. (One employee was paid on

Paygrade 18 and one on Paygrade 14.)

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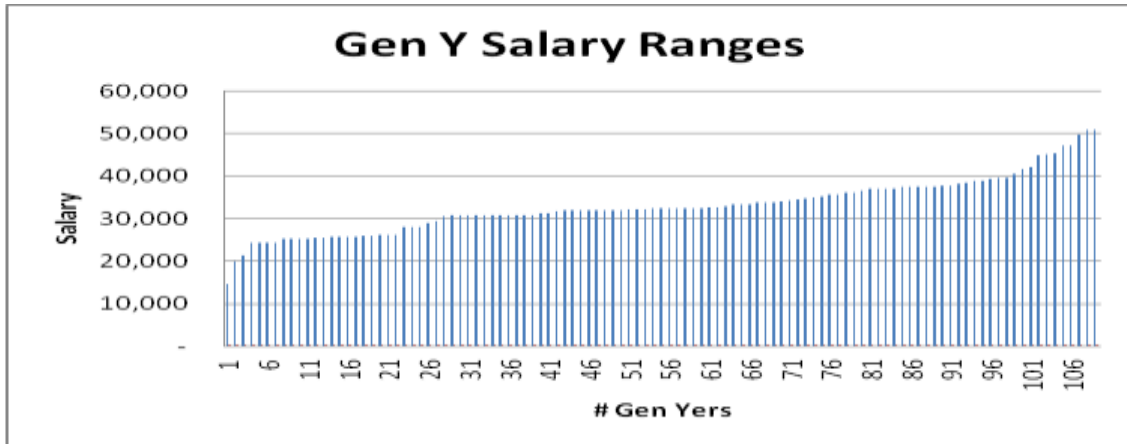
Figure 6. Salary ranges of Gen Yers in critical Georgia state government jobs.

The average annual salary for this group of employees is $33,000.

Research Question 6

The sixth research question asked, "Do state HR professionals believe Generation Yers are comfortable reporting conflicts they have with their manager to HR?" The interview item for this research question stated, "Generation Y employees in my agency are comfortable reporting conflicts with their managers." The descriptive results provided in Table 8 indicate that the most common response was to agree with the statement. However, the responses ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The mean rating of 3.63 and the median rating of 4.0 indicate a tendency for participants to show at least some level of agreement with the statement. Therefore, most HR professionals believe that Generation Yers are comfortable reporting conflicts that they have with their managers.

Table 8. *Generation Y Employees Are Comfortable Reporting Conflicts With Their Managers*

Response	*n*	*%*
1. Strongly disagree	0	0.0
2. Disagree	9	20.9
3. Neutral	4	9.3
4. Agree	24	55.8
5. Strongly agree	6	14.0
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 7

The seventh research question asked, "Do state HR professionals believe Generation Yers are concerned about career opportunities within their agencies?" The interview item for this research question stated, "Career opportunities within my agency are not a major concern for the Generation Y employees." The descriptive results featured in Table 9 indicate that an overwhelming majority of the participants either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement (81.4%). The mean and median ratings of 2.00 indicate a tendency for participants to show some level of disagreement with the statement. Therefore, most HR professionals believe that Generation Yers are concerned about career opportunities within their agencies.

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Table 9. *Career Opportunities Are Not a Major Concern for Generation Y Employees*

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	13	30.2
2. Disagree	22	51.2
3. Neutral	3	7.0
4. Agree	5	11.6
5. Strongly agree	0	0.0
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 8

The eighth research question asked, "Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence?" The interview item for this research question stated, "I have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence." The descriptive results provided in Table 10 indicate that the responses ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. In fact, participants were equally likely to say that they *disagree* with the statement as they were to say that they *agree* with the statement, although the majority either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* (65.1%). The mean rating of 3.60 and the median rating of 4.00 indicate a tendency for participants to believe that they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence. Therefore, the results indicate that most HR professionals believe that they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence.

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Table 10. *Clear Understanding of the*
Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	1	2.3
2. Disagree	11	25.6
3. Neutral	3	7.0
4. Agree	17	39.5
5. Strongly agree	11	25.6
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 9

The ninth research question asked, "Do state HR professionals believe they have a
clear understanding of generational differences between employees?" The interview item
associated with this research question stated, "Within my agency, I have a clear
understanding of generational differences between employees." The descriptive results
presented in Table 11 indicate that the most common response was to *agree*, followed by
strongly agree. In addition, the mean rating of 4.23 and the median rating of 4.00 indicate
a strong tendency for participants to agree with the statement. Therefore, the results
indicate that most HR professionals believe that they have a clear understanding of
generational differences between employees.

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Table 11. *Clear Understanding of Generational Differences Between Employees*

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	0	0.0
2. Disagree	2	4.7
3. Neutral	3	7.0
4. Agree	21	48.8
5. Strongly agree	17	39.5
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 10

The 10th research question asked, "What concerns do state HR professionals have regarding their capacities to fill critical positions with Generation Yers?" The interview question used to address this research question asked, "What concerns you most about your agency's ability to fill critical positions with Generation Yers?" descriptive results presented in Table 12 indicate a total of seven themes (from 144 comments) emerged from this interview question. Originally, 17 theme areas were narrowed down through an affinity analysis using keywords and concepts to comprise the final seven themes.

Table 12. *Concerns About Agency's Ability to Fill Critical Positions With Generation Yers*

	Theme	Comments/concepts (*n*)
1.	Compensation and recruitment	52
2.	Career development and progression	35
3.	Workforce retention	15
4.	Generational differences	13
5.	Emotional intelligence	10
6.	Work–life balance	10
7.	Nature of work/organizational culture	9
	Total	144

Research Question 11

The 11th research question asked, "Is work–life balance a significant factor in addressing high turnover among Generation Yers?" The interview item for this research question stated, "To address high turnover among Generation Y employees in my agency, work–life balance is a significant factor." The descriptive results presented in Table 13 indicate that the most common response was to *agree* followed by *strongly agree*. The mean rating of 3.79 and the median rating of 4.00 indicate that participants tended to show some level of agreement with the statement. Therefore, work–life balance is a significant factor in addressing high turnover among Generation Yers.

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Table 13. *Work–Life Balance Is a Significant Factor in Generation Y Employee Turnover*

Response	*n*	*%*
1. Strongly disagree	4	9.3
2. Disagree	4	9.3
3. Neutral	3	7.0
4. Agree	18	41.9
5. Strongly agree	14	32.6
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 12

The 12th research question asked, "Are compensation and benefits an effective resource for recruiting potential Generation Yers?" The interview item associated with this research question stated, "In my agency, compensation and benefits are effective resources for recruiting potential Generation Y employees." The descriptive results featured in Table 14 indicate that participants' responses were relatively mixed with many showing some level of disagreement and many showing some level of agreement. The mean rating of 3.23 and the median rating of 3.00 indicate that participants on the whole are neutral. In this particular instance, the mean and median are not adequately reflecting the participants' sentiments given that relatively few of the participants were actually neutral. Therefore, the results indicate that some participants believe that compensation and benefits are effective resources for recruiting potential Generation Y

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employees and some participants do not believe that compensation and benefits are effective resources for recruiting potential Generation Y employees.

Table 14. *Compensation and Benefits Are Effective Resources for Recruiting Generation Y Employees*

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	4	9.3
2. Disagree	11	25.6
3. Neutral	7	16.3
4. Agree	13	30.2
5. Strongly agree	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 13

The 13th research question asked, "Does job location impact filling critical vacancies among Generation Yers?" The interview item for this research question stated, "Among Generation Y candidates, job location impacts filling critical vacancies in my agency." The descriptive results featured in Table 15 indicate that while 20.9% of the participants *disagreed* with the statement, the majority of the participants showed some level of agreement with the statement (58.1%). In addition, the mean rating of 3.56 and the median rating of 4.00 indicate that participants tended to show some level of agreement with the statement. These results indicate that job location does impact filling critical vacancies among Generation Yers.

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Table 15. *Job Location Impacts Filling Critical Vacancies Among Generation Yers*

Response	*n*	*%*
1. Strongly disagree	0	0.0
2. Disagree	9	20.9
3. Neutral	9	20.9
4. Agree	17	39.5
5. Strongly agree	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 14

The 14th research question asked, "Among critical jobs, what areas of competency development do Generation Yers need most?" The interview item for this research question stated, "Among Generation Y employees in my agency, the area of competency development needed most is . . ." Participants were given five areas in which to select the most in need of development (judgment and decision making, teamwork and cooperation, results orientation, customer service, and accountability). The results presented in Figure 7 indicate that the two leading areas selected were judgment and decision making and accountability with 37.2% of the participants selecting one of those two competency areas. Teamwork and cooperation was ranked as the third area most in need of development (14.0%), results orientation was ranked as the fourth area most in need of development (7.0%), and finally customer service was ranked as the fifth area most in need of development (4.7%). Based on these results, judgment and decision

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making and accountability are the areas of competency that are the most in need of development by Generation Yers.
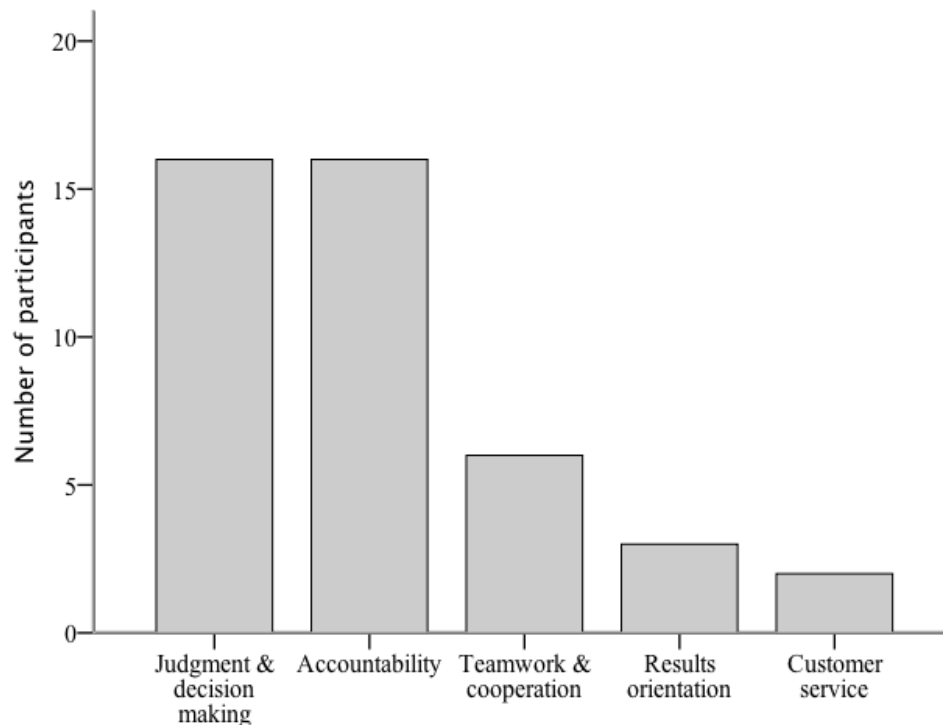
Figure 7. Areas of competency development for Generation Y employees.

Research Question 15

The 15th research question asked, "Have state managers been trained in the area of understanding generational differences?" The interview item associated with this research question stated, "The managers in my agency have been trained to understand generational differences between employees." The descriptive results provided in Table 16 indicate that while the participants' responses ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree,* the participants were most likely to *disagree* with the statement. The

mean rating of 2.63 and the median rating of 2.00 indicate that participants tended to show some level of disagreement with the statement. With that being said, it is important to note that as much as 30.3% of the participants either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement. Based on these results, it appears as if most state managers have not been trained in the area of understanding general differences.

Table 16. *Managers Trained to Understand Generational Differences Between Employees*

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	7	16.3
2. Disagree	18	41.9
3. Neutral	5	11.6
4. Agree	10	23.3
5. Strongly agree	3	7.0
Total	43	100.0

Research Question 16

The 16th and final research question asked, "Have state managers been trained in the area of 'emotional intelligence'?" The interview item for this research question stated, "The managers in my agency have not been trained in the area of emotional intelligence." The descriptive results presented in Table 17 indicate that while the responses ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, the most common response was to *agree* followed by *strongly agree*. The mean rating of 3.86 and the median rating of 4.00

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indicate a tendency for participants to show some level of agreement with the statement. Therefore, the results suggest that most state managers have not been trained in the area of emotional intelligence.

Table 17. *Managers Have Not Been Trained in the Area of Emotional Intelligence*

Response	*n*	%
1. Strongly disagree	1	2.3
2. Disagree	8	18.6
3. Neutral	2	4.7
4. Agree	17	39.5
5. Strongly agree	15	34.9
Total	43	100.0

An analysis of the responses from the nine (Likert scale) interview questions revealed differences in the way the HR professionals responded to the questions based on the geographical areas where they worked. The descriptive results presented in Table 18 indicated no significant differences in the responses, with the exception of Q4. The interview item for this research question stated, "Gen Y employees in my agency (ages 18–29), are comfortable reporting conflicts with their managers." HR professionals from the Metro Atlanta area had a tendency to agree more favorably with this statement. Using a significance level of .05 indicated the result for this question was .037 using the Mann–Whitney *U* test (independent samples).

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Table 18. *Comparison of Responses From HR Professionals Based on Geographical Area*

Group		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Metro ATL	*N* valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	M	3.73	3.20	3.47	3.83	2.07	2.60	4.27	4.07	3.53
	Mdn	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
	Mode	5	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	4
	SD	1.363	1.186	1.042	.913	.980	1.276	.740	1.048	1.167
	Min	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
	Max	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Outside Metro	*N* valid	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	M	3.92	3.31	3.77	3.15	1.85	2.69	4.15	3.38	3.77
	Mdn	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
	Mode	4	5	4	4	2	2[a]	4	2	5
	SD	1.038	1.548	1.013	.987	.801	1.109	.899	1.325	1.301
	Min	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
	Max	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5

[a]Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Table 19. *Summary of Responses From HR Professionals Based on Geographical Area*

Null hypothesis	Test	Significance	Decision
1. The distribution of Q1. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	1.000	Retain the null hypothesis.
2. The distribution of Q2. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.724	Retain the null hypothesis.
3. The distribution of Q3. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.369	Retain the null hypothesis.
4. The distribution of Q4. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.037	Reject the null hypothesis.
5. The distribution of Q5. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.544	Retain the null hypothesis.
6. The distribution of Q6. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.698	Retain the null hypothesis.

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Table 19. *Summary of Responses From HR Professionals Based on Geographical Area* (*continued*)

	Null hypothesis	Test	Significance	Decision
7.	The distribution of Q7. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.782	Retain the null hypothesis.
8.	The distribution of Q8. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.134	Retain the null hypothesis.
9.	The distribution of Q9. Rating is the same across categories of group.	Independent-samples Mann–Whitney *U* test	.436	Retain the null hypothesis.

Note. Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents an examination of this study's findings by revisiting and discussing the purpose of the research with regards to Generation Y employees in Georgia state government and the implications for workforce planning. The study results are fully explored and recommendations for future research are provided. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations, summary, and final comments.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to collect baseline data to support a formal enterprise workforce plan that included addressing the needs of the state and its emerging Generation Y workforce as the Baby Boomers retire. The research began prior to the economic downturn in the United States in 2008, and the results reflect current workforce trends from July 1, 2010, through December 9, 2011, when final telephone interviews with HR professionals throughout the state were completed. Forty-three HR professionals were interviewed, and nine critical jobs (identified through agency workforce plans) were carefully analyzed by reviewing incumbent demographic data for the Gen Y and Baby Boomer cohorts.

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Part 1

RQ 1 asked, "Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest need to be filled by Generation Y employees due to the exodus of Baby Boomers (high turnover)?" Among nine critical jobs identified, turnover among Baby Boomers in the state's most critical jobs was highest among probation and parole managers, 20%. In addition, the social services manager's job had a turnover rate of 14%, and the social services midmanager's job had a turnover rate of 12%. The remaining six critical positions identified through agency workforce plans had turnover rates of less than 6% among Baby Boomers (possible factors include economic climate—exit interviews may be helpful in pinpointing specific reasons contributing to turnover).

RQ 2 asked, "Which critical Georgia state government jobs have the highest number of retirement eligible employees occupying them? And, are these critical jobs most prevalent in a particular occupational industry, such as health care, public safety, education, and so forth?" Notably, all the three critical positions with the highest number of retirement eligible employees were from the Social Services occupational industry. As of July 2, 2011, 35 employees were eligible to retire from the economic support specialist job (working level); 24 employees were eligible to retire from the protection & placement specialist job (working level); and, another 12 were eligible to retire as protection and placement specialists (supervisory level). These critical jobs involve direct and indirect oversight of families and children in distress. Inadequate staffing levels within these critical jobs could result in life and death consequences. Without question, these positions also have the largest number of incumbents, as well; 973, 1015, and 380 respectively. The remaining six critical jobs all have less than 100 incumbents in each job.

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RQ 3 asked, "Where (geographically) are staffing gaps most prevalent among Generation Y employees where Baby Boomers are retiring or resigning? (rural vs. inner-city)." In the North Georgia region (rural), Baby Boomer turnover was 28% for the region and 38% among Gen Yers—the highest turnover for Gen Yers among all the geographical regions. Fifty-five Baby Boomers left the region, while almost just as many Gen Yers left (52) during the same time period, July 2010 to July 2011. Baby Boomer turnover from the South Georgia Region was also 28%, but turnover for the Gen Yers was much lower at 18%. Exit interviews would be helpful in ascertaining why Gen Yers are leaving at such a high rate, and what retention strategies could be deployed to retain high performers.

RQ 4 asked, "What is the ratio of Generation Y employees currently in critical state jobs versus Baby Boomers who are retirement eligible in critical jobs?" The ratio of Gen Y employees versus retirement eligible Baby Boomers varied significantly among all the critical jobs. The research revealed no Gen Yers worked in the social services manager job, or any in the social services midmanager job with the exception of only one incumbent working as a social services midmanager (specifically 16032). It is reasonable to assume that the job social services midmanager is best suited for candidates with significant work experience in the field, in addition to the minimum qualifications required; therefore, more experienced employees may have inherently been selected or promoted into the social services management jobs (as oppose to Gen Yers). Of note, only a small number of incumbents held these jobs; Gen Yers to retirement eligible Baby Boomer ratios were 0:2, 0:6, and 1:1, respectively.

The ratio of Gen Yers to retirement eligible Baby Boomers in the probation and parole manager's job was 1:8. More Gen Y incumbents worked in the remaining critical jobs than retirement eligible Baby Boomers; 280:24 protection and placement specialists (working level); 43:12, protection and placement specialists (supervisor); 197:33 economic support specialist (working level); 5:2 civil engineer/design/construction 1 (entry level), and 14:7 examiner/collector/revenue agents (working level).

RQ 5 asked, "What is the turnover rate of Generation Y employees in critical state jobs?" The overall turnover rate among Gen Yers was 27%. A more in depth analysis indicates turnover was 23% for the protection and placement specialist (supervisor), 30% for the protection and placement specialist (working level), 20% for the economic support specialist (working level), and 7% for the examiner/collector/revenue agents (working level). Zero percent turnover in all other critical jobs among Gen Yers—civil engineer/design/construction 1 (entry level), and probation and parole manager. Additionally, in the following critical jobs, the 0% turnover was derived because no Gen Yer incumbents were in the jobs: social services manager and the social services midmanager jobs (specifically 16033).

Part 2

The remaining 11 research questions were addressed based on semistructured interviews with 43 state HR professionals.

RQ 6 asked, "Is work–life balance a significant factor in addressing high turnover among Gen Yers?" Seventy-four percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (14 participants), or *agree* (18 participants). Participants generally indicated that telework/flexible work schedules were very important to Gen Yers working

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in their agencies. However, due to the nature of some of the jobs, some agencies indicated that telework/flexible work schedules were not an option for employees. The state should encourage agencies to foster healthy work–life balance environments to attract and retain highly competent employees. Leveraging technology, virtual offices, job sharing, enhanced teleworking options, and alternative work schedule programs could significantly enhance the state's ability to attract and retain Gen Yers.

RQ 7 asked, "Are compensation and benefits an effective resource for recruiting potential Gen Yers?" Forty-nine percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (8 participants), or *agree* (13 participants), while 51% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (7 participants), *disagree* (11 participants) and *strongly disagree* (4 participants). Feedback from the HR professionals clearly indicated that compensation is problematic primarily because of funding constraints within state government to pay Gen Y employees at competitive rates—and that is why it is not an effective recruitment tool. While benefits were deemed important, it was evident from the HR professionals' perspective, benefits are less important to Gen Yers than compensation.

RQ 8 asked, "Does job location impact filling critical vacancies among Gen Yers?" Fifty-eight percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (8 participants), or *agree* (17 participants), while 42% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (9 participants), *disagree* (9 participants) and *strongly disagree* (0 participants). Feedback from HR professionals emphasized that some Gen Yers prefer to work in more metro and technically savvy areas as oppose to rural areas. While opposing viewpoints emphasized that Gen Yers are now more portable, and they are willing to go

wherever the job is located. Several HR professionals acknowledged that with some state jobs, location options are quite limited.

RQ 9 asked, "Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are comfortable reporting conflicts they have with their manager(s) to HR?" Seventy percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (6 participants), or *agree* (24 participants), while 30% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (4 participants), *disagree* (9 participants) and *strongly disagree* (0 participants). The sentiment expressed most by the HR professionals was that Gen Yers appear quite comfortable reporting conflicts when needed; however, more often they tend to try to work things out with their managers first. Opposing views to this question indicated that within some agencies, the culture did not lend itself to employees feeling comfortable reporting conflicts because of fear of retaliation.

RQ 10 asked, "Do HR professionals believe Gen Yers are concerned about career opportunities within their agencies?" The interview item for this research question stated, "Career opportunities within my agency are not a major concern for the Generation Y employees." Only 12% of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (0 participants), or *agree* (5 participants), while 88% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (3 participants), *disagree* (22 participants) and *strongly disagree* (13 participants). The HR professionals indicated that Gen Yers tend to want to move up rapidly, and will leave the organization without hesitation should a better career opportunity arise. Sentiments expressed also indicated that many HR professionals believe Gen Yers simply use the positions they hold within their current jobs as stepping stones to further their careers. As a retention measure, it is recommended that state

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continue developing career paths for employees in order for employees to grow and develop professionally. Similarly, state agencies should develop formal communication strategies to emphasize career paths and developmental opportunities during the on-boarding process, and throughout the employee's tenure emphasizing the benefits of a state government career.

RQ 11 asked, "Have state managers been trained in the area of understanding generational differences?" Thirty percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (3 participants), or *agree* (10 participants), while 70% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (5 participants), *disagree* (18 participants) and *strongly disagree* (7 participants). Several comments were made to indicate that some agencies/management had no training at all in the area of generational differences. However, other HR professionals indicated that some discussion on the topic of generational differences (and in some cases some training) had taken place, but more formal training was needed for managers to apply what had been learned in the work environment. In an effort to bridge generational differences, and enhance the state's ability to foster effective knowledge management systems, the state should consider rigorous enterprise training on generational differences, in particular, for management.

RQ 12 asked, "Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of generational differences between employees?" Eighty-eight percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (17 participants), or *agree* (21 participants), while 12% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (3 participants), *disagree* (2 participants) and *strongly disagree* (0 participants). Overwhelmingly, HR professionals indicated that they had clear understanding of generational differences

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based on their work experiences and/or trainings. Opposing comments reflected the sentiment that some HR professionals felt this was an area where they could use more training. Enterprise round tables could be established to further develop HR professionals in this area. The round-table forums would also enable HR professionals to share best practices and challenges amongst their colleagues.

RQ 13 asked, "Have state managers been trained in the area of 'emotional intelligence'?" The interview item for this research question stated, "The managers in my agency have not been trained in the area of emotional intelligence." Seventy-four percent of the participants answered this question as *strongly agree* (15 participants), or *agree* (17 participants), while 26% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (2 participants), *disagree* (8 participants) and *strongly disagree* (1 participant). While 74% of the HR professionals felt their managers had not been trained in the area of emotional intelligence, several divergent comments indicated that it was possible that some managers could have been trained, but the HR professional had no way of confirming that viewpoint. Ensuring that managers are trained in the area of emotional intelligence may yield several benefits to the state. According to Riggio, Murphy, & Pirozzolo, (2001) leaders who are enthusiastic about using emotions can perhaps influence employees to make decisions with an open-mind, plan, and generate ideas by taking into consideration multiple viewpoints. The authors further contended that leaders can also create enthusiasm among employees for a project, provide direction, and enhance the level of motivation and energy within the group, and for themselves.

RQ 14 asked, "Do state HR professionals believe they have a clear understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence?" Sixty-five percent of the participants

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answered this question as *strongly agree* (11 participants), or *agree* (17 participants),

while 35% of the participants answered the question as *neutral* (3 participants), *disagree*

(11 participants) and *strongly disagree* (1 participant). The state has an opportunity to

increase the level of competence in the area of emotional intelligence among its HR

professionals. As HR leaders in the state, additional training and professional

development in this area could enhance the state's ability to retain its most valuable

employees through the leadership of the HR community.

RQ 15 asked, "Among critical jobs, what areas of competency development do

Gen Yers need most?" HR professionals responded by identifying *judgment and decision*

making (16 participants), and *accountability* (16 participants) as the competency areas

Gen Yers need the most development. As the results indicated, many of the HR

professionals commented that this was a difficult interview question, and quite hard to

choose just one competency amongst the five statewide core competency areas. In

addition to developing/offering formal mentoring and coaching initiatives, providing

leadership development classes to Gen Yers may prove to be resourceful in developing

employees in these two competency areas.

RQ 16 asked, "What concerns do HR professionals have regarding their capacities

to fill critical positions with Gen Yers?" A total of seven themes (from 144 comments)

emerged from this interview question.

Compensation and recruitment (includes compensation, recruitment,

competitive/private/public sector/other agencies, benefits, and budget). Participants

emphasized that due to ongoing budget constraints, the ability to acquire talent is quite

difficult. Many agencies are not in a position to offer competitive salaries against the

private sector or public sector; and, in some cases state agencies are not able to compete for talent amongst other state agencies, as well. The HR professionals also noted that Gen Yers did not seem very interested (or impressed) in their benefits, including retirement and pension plans. Particularly, while the economy is rebounding, the state should consider job-sharing programs, and promoting transferring opportunities that emphasize career development and job satisfaction (as oppose to compensation).

Career development and progression (includes development/training, coaching/mentoring/succession planning, and career ladders). Many of the HR professionals emphasized the need for training Gen Yers to be developed to take on greater responsibilities. However, they also stressed that many Gen Yers seem to have taken their jobs as stepping stones for moving on to better job opportunities. Opportunities exists for the state to formally target the Generation Y cohort (particularly high potentials) for development and training, which could include coaching, mentoring, and succession planning among other strategies that would help expedite Gen Yers moving up their Career Ladders. Existing enterprise performance management tools (in PeopleSoft) could be used as one resource to help identify the Gen Y high potentials.

Generational differences. The concept of how diverse the workforce is today kept repeating itself among the HR professionals who noted that Gen Yers are quite different from Xers and Boomers, not only in age, but in behavior and emotions, as well. Enhancing capacity for managing the generational differences among all employees seem to be of importance to the HR professionals. The state has an opportunity to develop an enterprise culture that embraces its diverse workforce by providing additional tools and resources to managers and employees that fosters a healthy and productive work

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environment. At both the enterprise and agency level, strategic initiatives could take the form of classroom training, websites/podcasts, Town Hall forums/discussions, team building activities, and so forth.

Workforce retention. Retention among Gen Yers was expressed as a concern from the HR professionals because they did not feel like they had anything to offer the Gen Yers as an incentive to stay with the agency. Compensation (low) was one issue, while keeping the Gen Yer onboard long enough for them to develop and have the opportunity to move up was another. The sentiment expressed was that some Gen Yers had unreasonable expectations regarding the pace of moving up within an agency. It is recommended that Exit Interviews be conducted among Gen Yers to determine what would make them more willing to stay with their agencies (or within state government).

Emotional intelligence. The research results indicated that while most HR professionals felt they had a clear understanding of emotional intelligence, they conceded that to their knowledge 74% of their managers had not been trained in the area. According to a worldwide study by Goleman of 200 companies, emotional competence contributes to two-thirds of the difference among top performers and average performers, while cognitive abilities and technical skills contributed to only one-third of the difference (McLaughlin, 2007). The state has a clear opportunity to close perceived competency gaps in the area of emotional intelligence among its managers through coaching, mentoring, training and development.

Work–life balance. Work–life balance provides Gen Yers the opportunity to pursue their personal goals by allowing them to work flexible and alternate work schedules. Ultimately, more time is available for employees to pursue leisure activities,

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educational aspirations, attend family activities, engage in community service, and focus on health and wellness. Many of the responses of the HR professionals indicated that Gen Yers consider work–life balance important and they value that aspect of their employments. While Gen Yers want to do a good job while on the job, they also want the flexibility to be able to do the things that are important to them when they are not working.

Creating a work environment that enhances work–life balance among Gen Yers may prove to be an effective retention strategy. As previously mentioned, various methods exist today to conduct business operations using technology (or updated business processes) while holding employees accountable. Opportunities exist for state agencies to reinvent themselves by researching and incorporating new work–life business models that are appropriate for their specific public sector entity, such as health care, public safety, economic development, or education. In an effort to retain top Gen Y performers, the state should consider comprehensive strategies that would support more work–life balance in state agencies.

Nature of work/organizational culture. HR professionals expressed sentiments that the nature of the work, or their particular organizational cultures, helped push Gen Yers out the door. Some positions were described as very structured in the sense that work schedules could not be modified/flexible, and telework or alternate work schedules were not an option. The fact that Gen Yers tend to be technologically savvy came up several times. However, the HR professionals also indicated that some of the technology they used was rather outdated and not appealing to Gen Yers. The HR professionals also indicated that when new Gen Yers came on board, they often had ideas about how things

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could be changed and done better. But, their enthusiasm was met with skepticism by coworkers and management who responded by emphasizing that the way they were doing things was the way it had always been done, and that is how it will continue to be done. Needless to say, any, or a combination of all of these factors could readily impact employee morale, and perhaps ultimately increase turnover. The state has an opportunity to encourage agencies to work closely with Gen Yers and harness the ingenuity they bring to the organization. Rewards and recognition programs could be enhanced throughout all levels of the state enterprise to provide incentives for improving business processes and technological advances. Process reengineering and change management resources should be allocated to help educate management and senior leaders how to more effectively incorporate technology, and creative work scheduling options into their businesses. Professional development in these areas (process reengineering and change management) may allow leaders to see new avenues of how the same strategic and operational goals can be accomplished with more worker friendly outcomes.

A generational cohort - workforce planning model has been developed as a resource to help organizations successfully implement their human capital management strategies. Strategic workforce planning within the organization is conducted and followed up by generational cohort focus groups (interviews or surveys) for collecting specific generational data. Potential outcomes include seven core areas as identified in the Generational Cohort – Workforce Planning Model as shown in Figure 8. Recruitment, development and retention recommendations and strategies are then developed as a result of the focus group outcomes.
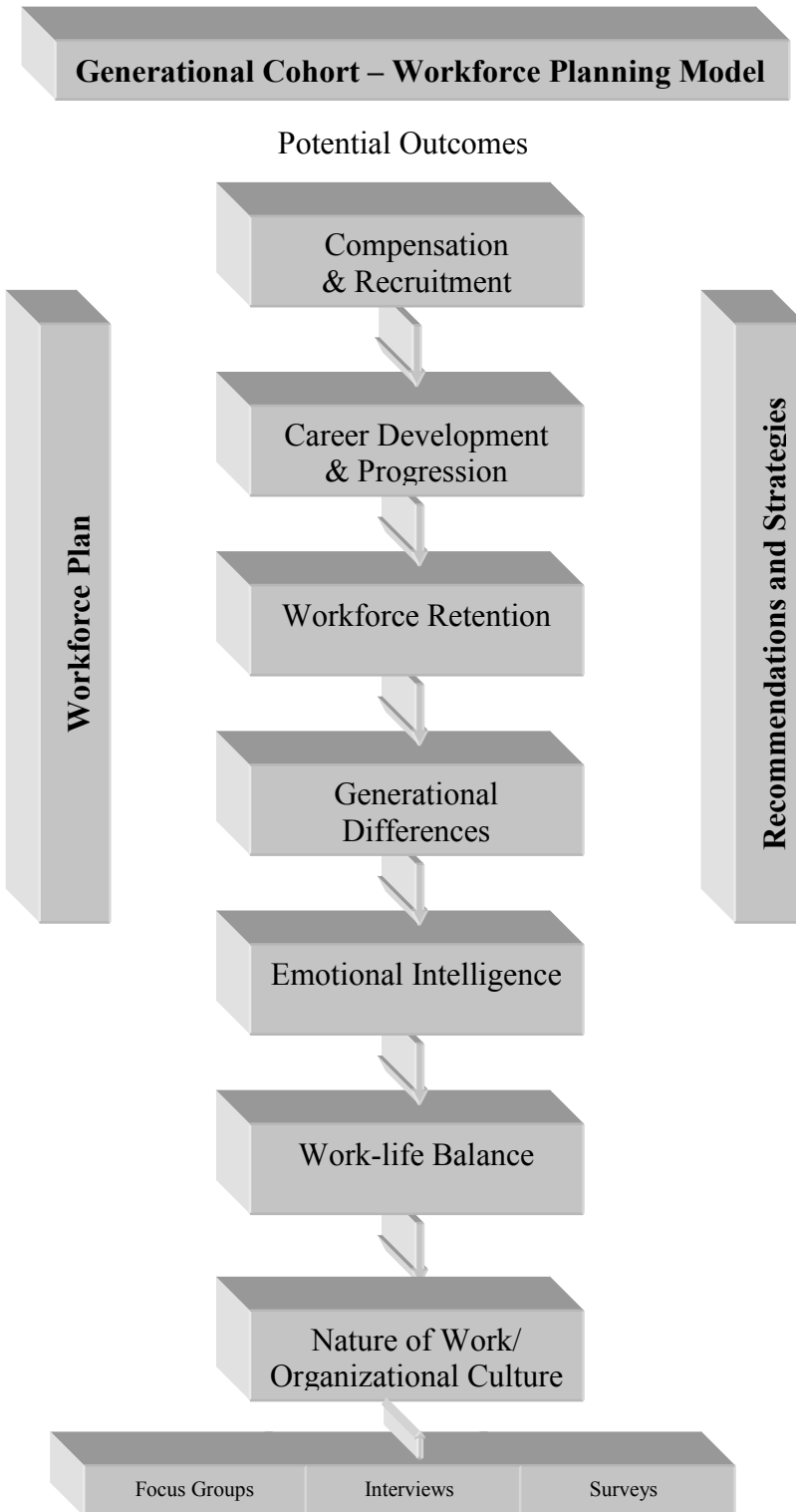
Generational Cohort – Workforce Planning Model

Potential Outcomes

Compensation
& Recruitment

Career Development
& Progression

Workforce Retention

Generational
Differences

Emotional Intelligence

Work-life Balance

Nature of Work/
Organizational Culture

Workforce Plan

Recommendations and Strategies

Focus Groups	Interviews	Surveys

Figure 8. Generational cohort – workforce planning model.

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Conclusion

The findings in this study provide baseline data to support strategic workforce planning initiatives in both public and private sectors. When assessing an organization's workforce, the findings may prove insightful in determining which HR strategy is most appropriate for talent acquisition, development and retention of Gen Y candidates and employees.

The descriptive analysis which had a generational focus within the study revealed which of the state's critical jobs are most vulnerable in terms of the state's capacity to fill those vacancies. Insight has been provided with regard to which geographical areas have the greatest staffing gaps among critical jobs. The state has the ability to develop enterprise strategies that focus on the Generation Y workforce and reduce the turnover within that cohort. Turnover costs are significant to any organization. However, the economic downturn has caused a greater sense of urgency for dealing with this issue, and the state now has the unique capacity and opportunity to facilitate collaboration among state entities to combat the turnover challenge. Creating a more conducive work environment whereby Gen Yers become long-term knowledge workers is a promising goal. Gen Yers are often bright, energetic, thought provoking, and innovative employees that can rejuvenate the work environment, and enhance productivity when given the opportunity and resources. Organizations that target developing these high potential employees, position themselves for ensuring a competent workforce is always in place for succession planning.

Workforce planning requires a strategic outlook that spans across many HR disciplines. Results from this study revealed that clear opportunities abound for the state

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to channel its resources in areas that would help managers become more proficient in the areas of generational differences, and emotional intelligence. The concept of taking an integrated approach to ensuring that managers and HR professionals are trained, and have a clear understanding of *emotional intelligence* and *generational differences* in the workplace is vital. HR professionals would be better equipped to identify competency gaps within their workforces in these areas, and help develop the appropriate training and professional development strategies needed. Similarly, managers, who are often the frontline for interacting with Gen Yers would benefit tremendously by increasing their abilities to manage Gen Yers with less stress and less conflict, while yielding better workplace results.

Similarly, HR professionals identified the need for development among Gen Yers specifically in the areas of judgment and decision making, and accountability. These are core competencies that can be developed through a myriad of ways within an organization; but, perhaps lend themselves particularly to coaching and mentoring strategies. However, with caution, it is reasonable to presume that such efforts would be futile without a culture that has a clear understanding of generational differences and emotional intelligence. A Gen Yer/mentee is not likely to bond with a mentor who is lacking some level of competence in these two areas.

The value in taking a comprehensive approach with regard to this research is that the state can now look more closely at the nine critical jobs assessed, and make very sound workforce planning decisions. The data clearly identifies which jobs the Gen Yers (and Baby Boomers) are in, and provides insight from the HR professionals of what factors may contribute to the state's ability to attract, retain and develop Gen Y

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employees. As Baby Boomers retire, the state's fiscal and HR can be targeted towards HR strategies that ensure staffing, competency and diversity gaps are closed in order to meet state agencies' missions, goals, and objectives.

Limitations

The type of statistical analysis was determined primarily by a segment of the Gen Yer and Baby Boomer population reviewed in PeopleSoft, the state's HR information system. However, a larger sample size would likely strengthen the findings. This study was limited to the review of five agencies varying in size (and nine critical jobs) from one state, and ultimately one perspective, which could be construed as insufficient to support generalizations. Due to the volume of data, a highly qualified PeopleSoft Human Capital Management consultant is warranted.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends that future research in this area include a survey among Gen Yers in state government addressing the same issues discussed through the telephone interviews with the state's HR professionals. A comparison of the results would further confirm the validity of the results, and provide additional insight for enterprise workforce planning. Enterprise exit interviews are also recommended to provide baseline data for identifying why Gen Yers are leaving state government, and to determine what additional retention strategies could be deployed to help retain the high performers among them. In order to specifically address the compensation issue which was ranked the highest among all the recruitment, development, and retention trends

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identified, it is recommended that the state conduct a compensation study for Gen Yers to better understand these constructs.

Finally, the researcher recommends conducting research among additional states governments, and private sector organizations to identify best practices in human capital management and to assess if significant differences exist among those populations.

Summary

Workforce planning involves a comprehensive analysis of current workforce trends while identifying staffing, competency and diversity gaps that exists, and may inhibit, an organization's ability to fulfill future goals and objectives. This research assessed a particular generational cohort, namely, Gen Yers in Georgia state government in critical jobs from five agencies. Baby Boomers (from those same agencies) were also assessed in order to help establish baseline data for assessing workforce gaps. The researcher clearly acknowledged the role of Gen Xers and Veterans simultaneously working in the workplace, but less emphasis was given on these two generational cohorts. The research was based on the premise and conceptual framework that state agencies submitting workforce plans are confronted with workforce challenges that directly impact all four generational cohorts (Gen Yers, Gen Xers, Baby Boomers, and Veterans). And, that the responsibility for implementing their workforce plans relies heavily on Senior Leadership, HR professionals, and state managers. Specifically, the research was designed to enhance the state's ability to develop human strategies that increase capacity for attracting, developing, and retaining a competent and diverse workforce. The research results provided not only a demographic analysis of how many Gen Yers are in critical

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jobs, and how many Baby Boomers are leaving those jobs, but it also revealed through the telephone interviews what specific challenges agencies are facing to ensure effective succession planning can take place.

Competency gaps among Gen Yers were identified, namely, accountability, and judgment and decision making. These two competencies are defined as core competencies in the state of Georgia and all state employees are expected to be adept in these areas. The significance of identifying the competency gaps for the Generation Y cohort is that it allows the state to target training and development efforts at an enterprise level to close these gaps. While the country is no longer technically in a recession, the impact of the economic downturn is still felt heavily throughout states across the nation; therefore, the ability to leverage economies of scale in the professional development arena is vital.

Similarly, building capacity for ensuring managers are emotionally intelligent and understand generational differences is very important. In particular, a manager's ability to share and transfer knowledge to Gen Yers is not only key to the employee's development, but also provides the infrastructure for the organization's succession planning pipeline. While this study began prior to 2008, much has happened to the emerging demographic trends of the retiring Baby Boomers. It is evident Baby Boomers are still retiring. However, Henneman (2012) asserted that Boomers are determining more and more when to leave the workforce based on their individual wealth instead of age; however, as a group they have not acquired sufficient wealth to retire. Henneman (2012) contended that Wells Fargo & Company's seventh annual Retirement Survey reports that 25% of Americans categorized as middle-class indicate they will have to

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work at a minimum to age 80 (while the U.S. Census Bureau reported the average life expectancy is only 78). Fortunately, for some organizations, this trend has provided a wider window of opportunity for organizations to develop and implement desperately needed succession plans.

Henneman (2012) asserted that Baby Boomers are not only working longer before they retire, but the talent pipeline has become congested, as well, because Baby Boomers are not leaving key leadership positions. Unfortunately, this fact may exacerbate state agencies' abilities to retain Gen Yers, particularly, their high performers. If Gen Yers see no opportunity for advancement, it is easier to move on to another job that has more career potential. According to Kranz (2012), research indicates that one in four high-potential workers looked for new job opportunities in 2011 versus only one in seven in 2005. Similarly, results from this study revealed that throughout the telephone interviews, HR professionals indicated that Gen Yers were using positions as stepping stones and could not be easily retained once a more attractive job opportunity came along. Kranz (2012) further stipulated, the notion that employees leave their jobs because of their bosses, not because of their jobs, still prevails in spite of a difficult U.S. job market. The author further contends that over 1 million employees vacated their jobs in October, the most employees in a decade derived from information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Gen Yers are among those leaving, and in order to retain those employees all of the workplace factors identified in this research should be considered, including compensation and benefits, career development and progression, generational differences, emotional intelligence, work–life balance, and the nature of work and the organization's culture.

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