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# Understanding How Generation X and Millennial Entrepreneurs Manage Organizational Conflict

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Understanding how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord, Jesus Christ. Also my younger siblings, nieces, nephews and Godchildren. We can do anything through Christ who strengthens us.

Acknowledgments

There have been many people who have walked alongside me in this journey. For this, I am forever grateful. But, I owe a special acknowledgement to my mother Beverly Briggs and my father Owen Price. Both have been a driving force behind me staying the course and completing this degree. I would also like to thank all of my sisters and friends for being there when I needed them the most. Last but certainly not least, I most certainly have to thank my dissertation chair for believing in me when I did not believe in myself.

Table of Contents

## List of Tables

Abstract

As the United States prepares for a generational shift in leaders, there is a lack of

literature adequately examining how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage

organizational conflict about leadership and change management. The scope of this

problem should concern individuals who are stakeholders in any organization. In

preparation for the coming shift in generational leaders, the subject study explored the

management of organizational conflict regarding leadership and change management for

Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs. Supported by a theoretical foundation built

on theory of generations and realistic group conflict theory, this qualitative study

analyzed the interviews and narratives of six Generation X entrepreneurs and six

Millennial entrepreneurs. The analysis outlined specific themes of the management of

organizational conflict by participants from both generations. This study revealed that

Generation X cohort members tackle contemporaneous or emerging conflict via formal

dialogue and compromised reconciliations, in the service and advancement of the

organization, while Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates

to leadership and change management by employing conversations rooted in fundamental

company values, orchestrating team meetings, and establishing a goal-aligned yet

collaborative work culture. The subject study also disclosed that Generation X and

Millennial entrepreneurs both incorporate conversations to manage organizational

conflict as it relates to leadership and change management, but they contrast on

prioritizing creating a collaborative work culture versus focusing on company growth. At

an organizational level, the instant study impacts stakeholders by enabling positive social

changes informed by evidence-based insights about how Generation X and Millennial

entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

**Introduction**

This study focused on understanding how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. When training employees, managers should consider the individuality of each generation and should modify their strategic approaches based on their respective learning styles (Eisner, 2005). These distinctions are especially important to the subject inquiry, as there exist actual work value differences amongst generations (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Existing research on Generation X and Millennials is currently limited to their individuality, work values, culture, and subculture. However, this literature is exclusive of how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managed organizational conflict. It is significant to understand the differences between generational entrepreneurs, as the business sector of the United States is experiencing a generational shift in leadership styles (Price, 2013). This chapter will provide a background to the study, highlight the identified problem statement, and describe the purpose of the research, the research questions, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks applied.

**Background**

As Generation X prepares to transition out of organizations and into retirement, Millennials are considered the future entrepreneurs, decision makers, thought leaders, and business owners (Price, 2013). With this change, organizations face a variety of issues when they consist of both Generation X and Millennials (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). The scope of this problem mainly concerns individuals who are stakeholders of organizations. Bacal (2004) has explained that organizational conflict can become

harmful to a company if managers are not aware of how to manage it in an intergenerational workspace. To inform this lack of awareness, stakeholders of organizations must first gain an understanding of how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs address organizational conflict.

The need for the described research is significant because Millennials are those to whom the U.S. will be looking to lead the country into the next era. A study conducted by Gelfand, Leslie, Keller, and Carsten (2012) determined that organizations had separate conflict cultures, based on how generations differently managed conflicts. If these cultural differences were not acknowledged, generational entrepreneurs would not have been aware of what structures could be implemented into their organizational design, in order to manage organizational conflict efficiently. It has also been shown that addressing these issues within organizations has the potential to increase labor productivity and establish attainable organizational goals for employees and the departments (Harber, 2011).

## Problem Statement

The intent of a research problem according to Creswell (2013) "is to provide a rationale or need for studying a particular issue or problem"(p.130). The research problem for this study was:

> As the United States prepares for a generational shift in leaders, there is a need for literature that examines how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs differently manage organizational conflict about leadership and change management.

There are limited resources on how organizational conflict is managed by Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs. This study's findings produced insights that will valuably inform generational entrepreneurs about how their peers have handled organizational strife as it pertained to leadership and change management. This research will also assist human resource departments to develop and implement corporate strategies for training, and knowledge about how they may manage emerging issues within their organizations.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of a research study according to Creswell (2013) should be inclusive of "the topic, the research problem, the evidence from the literature about the problem, the deficiencies in the evidence, and the importance of the problem for selected audiences"(p.131). The purpose of this study was to explore the control of organizational conflict about leadership and change management for Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs in the United States. This research aimed to fill the knowledge gap regarding how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. The research paradigm used for this study was interpretivism, from an epistemological standpoint. This research paradigm permitted the revelation and analysis of the underlying meanings of the research phenomenon.

This research paradigm also prescribed how the research phenomenon should be addressed and understood (Kuhn, 1962). Uncovering three primordial points of the study, that all supported the phenomenon of interest. The three points were listed as follows:

- To understand the management of organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management for Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs in the U.S.

- To identify the differences in how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict related to leadership and change management.

- To identify and conceptualize strategies that entrepreneurs could use to manage organizational conflict within their businesses.

**Research Questions**

Research questions in the narrative study focus on "the social role of stories and how they were connected, to the flow of power in the wider world" (Riessman, 2008, p.8). They impose a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected (Riessman, 2008). Narrative research questions illustrate the story at the forefront of the research and produce a story-based response. The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

2. What do narratives say about how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management?

3. What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs leading organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation of this study includes the theory of generations and realistic group conflict theory. The theory of generations was developed by sociologist Karl Mannheim, and discusses how problems of generations shed light on matters that should be addressed in an intergenerational society. The theoretical foundation of theory

of generations illustrates the importance of generations and the influence they have on history. Realistic group conflict theory explains that competition exists between groups for symbolic resources, and this competition eventually breeds hostility. The theoretical foundation of realistic group conflict theory hypothesizes that the success of an intergenerational organization depends on employees of all ages working efficiently and respectfully as a team. Further discussion of theoretical foundations is presented in chapter 2.

**Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was to extend knowledge on how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict, specifically relating to leadership and change management. Shedding much light on conflict resolutions strategies that can be used by within organizations. The research method used for this study of how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict deriving from leadership and change management was qualitative. Marshall and Ross (2016) explicitly note that "qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (p.2).

Previous studies with close content similarities to this research also have applied a qualitative approach. Within this frame, the specific methodology of qualitative research selected for this study was narrative research. Narrative research gathers and assesses the stories from individuals, based on their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). It focuses on interpreting these stories from the interviews gathered through data collection (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative research was an appropriate research methodology for this study, as it allowed the lived experiences and stories of both generations of entrepreneurs to be collected and interpreted. Narrative research focuses on the content or structure of the individuals lived experiences (Flowers, Larkins, & Smith, 2009). For this study, I was not interested in the structure of the participants' lived experiences but rather their content. It therefore was important for this study to have access to gathering precious data, and using narrative research can assist with this. Narrative research allows for a considerable amount of data to be collected. This in turn strengthened the validity of the study and helped to eliminate potential biases.

**Definitions**

Throughout the study, there were important terms that were consistently used. It is essential that said terms be defined to avoid confusion or any misunderstanding of the study. Applicable definitions of the keywords are:

- Entrepreneur –individual who creates a company to produce a product or service with a new and innovative style

- Generation X-individuals born between 1964-1979

- Millennials -individuals born between 1980-1995

The development of each definition is presented below in chapter 2.

**Assumptions**

Certain aspects of this study may be assumed just through the context of the title. Some of these assumptive elements include:

- Generation X entrepreneurs not being flexible in their approach to manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management.

- Millennial entrepreneurs not being able to manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management.

- Vast differences exist between how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and changed management.

The foregoing aspects were assumed but have not been demonstrated to be true. However, these assumptions were of vital importance as they supported a foundational need for this study. In the midst of speculation about how generational entrepreneurs manage their companies, this study followed insights and provided data to address the verifiability of said assumptions.

**Scope and Delimitations**

This research study was chosen to help provide an understanding for how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management, and to close the identified gap in the literature on the subject. The scope of the study encompassed details that would help to solve the research problem, specifically:

- What do the stories of Generation X entrepreneurs explain about how they manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management?

- What do the stories of Millennial entrepreneurs explain about how they manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

- What do said stories explain about the similarities between how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

- What do the stories explain regarding the differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs in controlling organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

The delimitations of this study were the year of births of the groups of entrepreneurial participants and the research paradigm chosen for the study. This allowed for the study be able to accurately, gather the data needed to answer the research question. A further delimitation was only using open-ended questions to interview the participants of the study. This ensured that data collection process was properly being administered through semi-structured interviews. These delimitations prohibited the transferability of the study to the populations outside of this focus.

**Significance**

The contributions of the study are significant due to advancement in knowledge in the discipline. "When trying to implement organizational change, there will be hidden factors that impact our ability to recognize the need for planning appropriate responses, aligning people and resources and the successful implementation of new initiatives" (Marshak, 2006, p.1). Reporting the findings of this research study, using a narrative thematic analysis process rooted in the Ewick and Silbey model (Riessman, 2008) allowed this researcher to be the curator of a new story stemming from this research. Contributions of this study to knowledge in the discipline include:

- Providing current data via inquiry into the management of organizational conflict by Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs;

- Determining if differences persist between how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict; and

- Providing conceptualized themes that generational entrepreneurs can use to manage organizational conflict within their businesses.

**Summary**

This chapter provided an introductory insight and overview of the scope of the study, alongside the social implications. Through relating the study's background, this chapter revealed relevant facts that supported the need for the study, identifying and describing the problem statement, research paradigm, research questions, and an overview of the theoretical frameworks. Relevant definitions and assumptions of the study were additionally noted to support the rationale of the study. Lastly, delimitations and limitations were discussed to support the selected research methodology and the contributions of the study. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical foundations with further precision and provide an in-depth literature review related to the scope of the study and its key variables.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

As the United States prepares for a generational shift in leaders, there is a lack of understanding and gap in the literature examining how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict about leadership and change management. In preparation for the shift in generational leaders, the purpose of this study was to explore the control of corporate strife on leadership and change management for Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs in the United States.

This chapter provides a review of theoretical foundations and relevant literature considered for this study. The theoretical underpinnings discussed in this chapter are the theory of generations and realistic group conflict theory. The review of the literature for this study will consist of a discussion revolving around the concept of organizational conflict, followed by a review of institutional disputes concerning leadership and change management. Second, entrepreneurship is then discussed, followed by a detailed explanation about how Generation X and Millennials are known to perform in organizations. The final section below concludes by summarizing current significant findings as well as identifying gaps in the literature that this study seeks to address and fill in or bridge.

**Theoretical Foundations**

**Theory of generations**

A social theory that was selected and utilized for analysis in this research is the theory of generations. Sociologist Karl Mannheim developed the theory of generations and discussed it in his *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*(1952). In this theory,

Mannheim explains that there are problems to be addressed within an intergenerational society. He saw this as necessary as he recognized that each age influences history.  He further explains, "The best way to appreciate which features of social life result from the existence of generations is to make the experiment of imagining what the social life of man would be like if one generation lived on forever and none followed to replace it" (Buss, 1975, p. 438).

According to the theory of generations, each generation is defined by the previous generation's historical situation. Generations change swiftly in response to significant and past events. Mannheim explained that changes in a generation host characteristics such as the emergence of new participants in the cultural process, the continual disappearance of former participants in the process, and transmission of accumulated cultural heritage. This change in generation discussed by Mannheim in 1952 is currently evident as many philosophers, publishers, and authors address it in a variety of ways.

When you have an intergenerational workforce, it is essential to recognize that different generations have separate values (Smola& Sutton, 2002). Hence, this means that as generations transition within the workforce, conflict can sometimes become inevitable inside of an intergenerational organization. Generation X will begin transitioning out of the workforce within a few years. Meanwhile, "Millennials represent the future generation of our workforce, as well as our future thought leaders, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and business owners" (Price, 2005).  However, the context remained open about how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs will influence an organization, based on how they manage organizational conflict deriving from leadership and change management.

Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations shows how conflict centered on leadership and change management may occur in an intergenerational organization. It explains that members of the younger generation have a gap in knowledge between the values they have learned from older generations and the realities they experience. The theory of generations further outlines that generations may suffer the same historical events at the same time because of age and previous experiential differences, and the historical development will have differential effects on different generational cohorts. However, older generations will assimilate and interpret reality regarding previously well-formed structures and categories of experience, while youth does not" (Buss, 1975, p.439). Each generation thus has a unique way of dealing with occurrences, based on its collective societal experiences.

Reviewing Mannheim's theory as the theoretical background for this study shows that there are generalized differences amongst generations. This research sought to explore how generational entrepreneurs within an organization manage organizational conflict regarding leadership and change management. It was essential to examine how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational discord in a society where there is a continuous emergence of new participants in the cultural process (Buss, 1975).

**Realistic group conflict theory**

Another social theory used for analysis in this research is realistic group conflict theory. Realistic group conflict theory explains that different groups will compete for resources and that this can cause conflict. As the world undergoes an intergenerational workforce change, younger and older generations are currently working together in

organizations, and this will continue over time. For companies with multiple generations to be successful, individuals within the different generational cohorts must be willing to function as a team.

However, sometimes this can be difficult as members of each generation have different views and opinions about their work ethic, workplace value, communication, and definition of loyalty to the organization (Harber, 2011). Realistic group conflict theory explains that these differences may lead to organizational conflict about symbolic resources, such as pay grades, time off, and job duties within an intergenerational workforce. Over time a decline in the organization's functioning will occur, stemming from competition over resources and communication problems due to conflict heightened by in-group solidarity and devaluation of the out-group (Brief, et al., 2005). Realistic group conflict theory embraces both in-group favoritism and out-group denigration as possible causes of discrimination (Jackson, 1993).

Realistic group conflict theory focuses on eliminating group conflict and ridding the group of unfavorable stereotypes. Both Generation X and Millennials have hostile stereotypes that can cause friction within an intergenerational workforce. A recent academic study reviewed the behavioral patterns of Generation X, based on reports from practicing managers. The managers described Generation X employees as difficult to manage, not trustworthy, and overly independent (Yrle, Hartman, & Payne, 2005). In a separate study, identified negative personality traits of Millennials were: disloyal, having a lack of respect, and lack of motivation (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Realistic group conflict theory suggests that in order to eliminate these unfavorable stereotypes from both groups, we must focus on their respective positive values and work ethics.

For example, identified positive personality traits of Millennials are: great team workers, being determined to make an impact, being technology savvy, and having excellent communication skills (Myers &Sadaghiani, 2010). Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both generations will help to rid the unfavorable stereotypes from both groups, therefore eliminating group conflict. The findings from Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) imply that realistic group conflict theory can provide an understanding of conflicts that occur in intergenerational workplaces, and that can be resolved through intergroup cooperation.

Realistic group conflict theory proposes that animosity amongst opposing parties in conflict can only be resolved through intergroup cooperation (Jackson, 1993). Consequently, until both generations realize the strengths they have, and use them to manage and address organizational conflict, it may be difficult to see intergroup cooperation. Realistic group conflict theory meticulously makes clear that without addressing the needs of an intergenerational workplace, disputes will be difficult to manage by Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs.

This research identified how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict within their intergenerational workplaces. Long-term combined results from this study can contribute to the reduction of intergroup tensions and production of intergroup cooperation under the leadership of Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs (Jackson, 1993, p.402). This research thus illustrated how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict in an intergenerational workplace while aiming to eliminate group conflict.

**Literature Review**

**The essence of organizational conflict**

Organizational conflict is a disagreement with an interaction, process, product, or service within an organization (Costantino & Merchant, 1996). This contention typically is a result of multiple factors, which are not limited to: differing expectations, competing goals, conflicting interests, confusing communications, or poor interpersonal relations. Organizational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with colleagues within their work, members of other collectives or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or, products of the organization (Roloff,1987). This type of conflict focuses on the issues that arise between one or more individuals of a group that has a specific function with affiliated stakeholders.

Organizational conflict is unavoidable and is most likely to occur in all types of organizations regardless of size, scope, industry, or private or public sector setting (Thomas & White, 2011). Conflict typically stems from different perceptions and goals of the members of the organizations. While numerous conflict types may arise in a formal structure, there are three types of conflict more prominent within an organization, as explained by Pondy (1967). These three types of organizational conflicts(with examples of typical venues)are:

1. Bargaining conflict-This conflict is amongst interest groups in competition for scarce resources. For example, labor-management relations, budgeting processes, and staff line conflicts.

2.  Bureaucratic conflict- This strife is amongst parties in a superior-subordinate relationship who have internal power struggles. For example, police departments, the military, correctional facilities.

3.  Systems conflict- This conflict is amongst parties in a group in which one side depends on the other to function. In other words, they have a parallel or working relationship. For example, child care facilities, restaurants, and hospitals. (Pondy, 1967, p. 297-298)

Regardless of the type of organization conflict, it can only be destructive or constructive. Destructive conflict can be a disservice to an organization, through causing hostility between members of the body and a decrease in productivity of members (Pondy, 1992). Constructive conflict can be a benefit, as it might help to progress the organization to expand its creativity and innovation (Pondy, 1992). Disputes within a firm are commonly managed as individual events; however, if these conflicts are closely examined they will reveal patterns (Costantino & Merchant, 1996). Models thus exist that can help to determine a positive or negative resolution for the organization.

The responses to an organizational conflict should be based on the situation and should be a direct reflection of the organization's leadership (Costantino & Merchant, 1996). Individuals in roles and groups within organizations may have fight-or-flight responses to the conflict, which are typically governed by the organization's culture. However, this is normal, as organizational reactions to a disagreement do not occur separately from the corporate "culture" or the attitudes, practices, and beliefs of the system and its members. Most members of an organization view their responses to conflict as 'the way we do things around here.' This analogy can be used as a collective

lens through which the group and its key players view internal disagreement or external threat (Costantino & Merchant, 1996, p.7).

Resolving organizational conflict can carry repercussions of unproductive time, loss of a valued employee or, even worse, litigation (Thomas & White, 2011). An effective strategy for conflict management can "save time, money and mitigate the chances of losing employees" (p.147). Managers can spend up to 20-25 percent of their time to manage and resolve conflict in their organization (Lynch, 1997). However, time can be saved if proper leadership and change management procedures are at the forefront of the organization (Lynch, 1997).

**Organization conflict & leadership**

Leadership is influencing a situation and directing the situation using communication systems to attain specific goals (Limbare, 2012). It is a fundamental component of every organization as it provides direction and facilitates the development of a group to meet their goals and productivity levels (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Leadership is the core of an organization and without direction, a team will consistently face several types of conflicts and can even be at risk of failure (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Leaders of a group should be prepared to manage various disputes when they occur, as a conflict is inevitable (Thomas & White, 2011).

Efforts to manage organizational conflict can be hindered should there be an absence of leadership within the organization. Without proper administration, there is risk of the development of corporate strife. However, organizational conflict can be prevented or efficiently resolved with good leadership "using human relations, techniques involving an understanding of human factors, communication processes, interpersonal and

intergroup behavior, and organizational dynamics" (Limbare, 2012, p.172). Therefore, it is necessary for organizational leaders to possess specific skills and traits to manage organizational conflict. Mostly, they must have strong leadership traits, which can lead to effective resolutions when organizational conflicts occur (Thomas & White, 2011).

The actions of those in leadership roles could, directly and indirectly, influence the overall health of the organization based on what they encourage, reward, and demonstrate (Lee, 1986). Ergo, this has caused leadership and organizational conflict to become a focal point for organizations throughout the United States. Said organizations have most recently begun to recognize the significance of how leaders conduct themselves while responding to conflict and what is acceptable or unacceptable (Grojean, et al., 2004).

Those in leadership roles have the responsibility and power to institute ethical conduct and moral values that guide the behavior of followers (Mautz & Sharaf, 1961). Therefore, proper leadership can guide an organization to its peak, while the poor administration will take it to its valley, which may be, unfortunately, organizational conflict (Thomas & White, 2011). Leadership and those that hold leadership positions can shape the attitudes and behavior of their fellow corporate members by "mobilizing and directing their efforts towards specific goals and attain these aims through them" (Limbare, 2012, p.174).

Organizational conflict and leadership are within direct correlation of each other. Therefore, leaders should be aware of their leadership styles as they influence not only their interactions with employees but can also affect the entire organization (Gelfand,

2012). Researchers have identified eight styles of leadership, in which they have also labeled the manager behavior model (Reddin, 1970) The eight styles of leadership are:

1. Deserter leadership: this style of leadership is uninvolved and passive.

2. Missionary leadership: a style of leadership primarily focused on building peace.

3. Autocrat leadership: a style of leadership that lacks trust in others and is solely focused on getting the job done. These types of leaders also delegate tasks to others but keep decision making to themselves.

4. Compromiser leadership: a style of leadership that comes with poor decision-making and is profoundly affected by the pressures of work, yet still minimizes the stress.

5. Bureaucrat leadership: a method of administration that is only focused on implementing policies and procedures for the sake of maintaining control.

6. Developer leadership: a style of leadership that trusts people and is primarily concerned with developing them as individuals. This form assumes that individual members of a group who take part personally in the decision-making process will have a more significant commitment to the objectives and goals of the organization.

7. Benevolent Autocrat leadership: a style of leadership that knows is wanted for people and how to get these things completed without causing conflict.

8. Executive leadership: a form of command that is good with motivation, sets high standards, treats everyone differently, and believes firmly in team management.

The leadership styles displayed by leaders within an organization develop and set the tone for the conflict culture within an organization. Additionally, leadership styles

shape organizational outcomes, including creativity, customer service, and viability (Grojean, et al., 2004). Since leadership style heavily influences an organization, the possibility that it affects organizational conflict should not be ruled out. To refrain from organizational strife stemming from leadership, agencies need influential leaders who can convey messages to their employees (Gelfand, 2012).

These concerns from organizations have shown leaders that conflict should be managed productively, and cultures in which members consistently work against one another, sabotaging each other in and out of the boardroom, should be eliminated (Limbare, 2012). Leadership should be consistent with an organization's values and mission, and those in a leadership position should establish trust with their employees (Grojean, et al., 2004). With this established confidence, employees will allow themselves to operate under the leader of the organization and help the group to meet its goals. Mainly, it will aid in how employees respond to the management of change from their leaders.

**Organization conflict & change management**

When changes occur within an organization, not all individuals may be receptive. The indicator of resistance to the change happening is organizational conflict (Costantino & Merchant, 1996). Change management is defined as "the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers" (Moran & Brightman, 2011, p. 111). Change within an organization is continually happening on a variety of levels (Burnes, 2004), and change can be the product activated by internal or external factors (Todnem-By, 2005).

Limbare (2012) looked more closely into organizational conflict stemming from change management. He posits that heightened competition in the marketplace, corporate restructuring, downsizing, the increasing rate of change, a more diverse workforce, and poorly designed reward systems are all potential factors that can ultimately create conflict. These types of changes within an organization will more than likely cause anger and frustration and typically result in organizational disputation (Limbare, 2012). Organizational conflict usually develops from difference when it is not managed, correctly failing. Factors that can potentially lead to corporate feuds stemming from change management includes the leader, what is being changed, the type of change being made, individuals being affected, and how the change process is being evaluated (Certo, 2010).

Organizational conflict stemming from change management can occur planned or unplanned. Therefore, it is without a doubt that organizations should focus on their visions and have knowledge about how to manage the changes that will be required to help them meet their long-term goals (Levasseur,2005). Additionally, organizational change can happen at any time and therefore managing the difference may become reactive instead of proactive. Due to the level of risk, which comes with implementing change within an organization, it is imperative to have change management procedures or protocols outlined in a group. Change management practices need to be performed within an organization to avoid conflict when leaders see opportunities to enhance the way things are done, when unions are formed, and when employees raise concerns with the quality of the organization, new laws and regulations are created, or changes occur in economic trends (Certo, 2010).

Organizations should implement strategic change processes to manage change efficiently and to prevent the development of organizational conflict. "Participation in strategic change processes is frequently assumed to have some positive consequences for decision quality, effective responses to change, and success of strategic change implementation" (Lines, 2004, p.193 ).Costantino and Merchant (1996) suggest that managing organizational conflict and change should incorporate processes that identify inefficient outcomes and attempt to resolve them, allowing for better management of organizational conflict.

To avoid organizational conflict stemming from change management, the leader of the organization has to manage the process (Levasseur, 2005). While leaders do not always decide whether changes are made to a group, they still have to determine how to make changes work, mainly if it is unplanned (Certo, 2010). These efforts will give organizational leaders an opportunity to develop skills of their employees to ensure their optimal performance. Regulatory changes have become a constant thing, which has influenced managerial skills to now include change management (Senior, 2002). Successful change management is necessary if organizations intend to be sustainable in a highly competitive and changing environment (Okumus and Hemmington, 1998). A highly competitive and changing environment such as entrepreneurship is optimal for exceptional leadership and change management to further avoid organizational conflict.

**Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is an intricate venture typically executed by people living in a particular cultural and social condition (Kew, Herrington, Litovsky, & Gale, 2013). Entrepreneurs are risk-taking individuals who cause economic progress by finding new

and better ways of doing things (Dees, 1998). The foregoing were described by Joseph Schumpeter, a distinguished economist of the 20th century who was popularly affiliated with the emerging term, entrepreneur. He described entrepreneurs as the innovators who drive the 'creative-destructive' process of capitalism. In his own words, "the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production" (Dees, 1998, p.2).

By serving new markets or creating new ways of doing things, entrepreneurs move the economy forward and are the "engines of economic growth" (Baron & Shane, 2008). Entrepreneurs change economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and higher yield to create value (Dees, 1998). Some of today's most popular entrepreneurs are Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, Jeffrey Weiner, CEO of Linked In, and John Mackey, co-CEO of Whole Foods Market. For this research, an entrepreneur is defined as *an individual who creates a company to produce a product or service with a new and innovative style.*

Entrepreneurship has become a new pathway for economic development and job creation (Kew, et al., 2013): there is a growing global problem of employability for college graduates, and many are beginning to take on the venture of entrepreneurship as a solution to this issue. Entrepreneurship is also becoming a popular alternative career choice for students globally (van Gelderen, et al., 2008). Lastly, entrepreneurship has become a key focus of research over the past three decades (Kew, et al., 2013). Since enterprise is a new field of study, more research is needed to understand how different generations manage organizational conflicts that may arise along the journeys of their new ventures (Kobia & Sikalieh, 2010).

**Generations**

Generation is defined as "a group of people who share common experiences and a common collective memory based on the main events that occurred during a lifetime" (Patota, Schwartz, & Schwartz, 2007, p.3). Strauss and Howe (1991) also define a generation as "a group of people or cohorts who share birth years and experiences as they move through time together, influencing and being influenced by a variety of critical factors" (p. 430). Generations share similarities in experiences, memories, and values, and bring a group of people within a given period together (Patota, et al., 2007). They also explain that these fundamental generational similarities and other generational differences are neither good nor bad, they just merely exist.

There is no definitional timeline for generations or significant factual parameters for different generational cohorts, such as beginning and ending dates (Giancola, 2008). However, an estimated schedule for each generation varies by about two to three years, based on the source of the research (Price, 2013). The Society for Human Resource Management (2007) classified the last four generations as: Veterans, those who were born before 1945; Baby Boomers, those born between 1945-1964; Generation X, those born between 1965-1980; and last, the Millennials (Generation Y), who were born between 1980-2000.

Each generation has "distinct values, attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits, motivational buttons, views of authority, and expectations of leadership" (Crampton & Hodge, 2007, p.18). These precise differences also cause each generation to think about work differently. Understanding and learning how to appreciate the influences and differences of generational factors will assist in a more productive organization when it

comes to organizational development, diversity awareness, and recruiting and retention strategies of employees (Weston, 2001).

The flow of resources, power, and responsibilities between older and younger generations is separated (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). This separation stems from "changes in life expectancy, increases in longevity, health, and changes in lifestyle, technology, and knowledge base"(Zemke, et al., 2000, p. 49). The focus of this study will be on Generation X and Millennial because, according to Hershatter and Epstein (2010) and Price (2013), Generation X is transitioning out of organizations and will be transitioning into retirement in a few years, while Millennials are the future entrepreneurs. Additionally, with this change organizations can address a variety of issues when they consist of both Generation X and Millennials.

**Generation X**

In 1997, Tulgan categorized Generation X also referred to as *'GenXers,'* as being born between 1963 and 1977. During 1997, the stereotypical attributes of Generation X included disloyalty, arrogance, having short attention spans, being reluctant to pay societal dues, and desiring instant gratification (Tulgan, 1997). In 2000, Zemke, et al. categorized Generation X as being born between 1965-1980. During 2000, Generation X was described as being "very clear about the meaning of the word 'balance' in their lives. They work to live, not live to work, are more personable, adaptable, and comfortable with change" (Zemke, et al., 2000, p. 21). Generation X can be seen as willing to implement change, independent and tech-savvy (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). There is no consensus on the dates within which Generation X individuals were born, nor

on their personality traits. For this study, *Generation X will be referred to as individuals born between 1964-1979.*

**Millennials**

Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) categorized Millennials, also referred to as *'Generation Y,'* as being born between 1979 and 1994. They found that the stereotypes commonly associated with Millennials are: self-centered, unmotivated, disrespectful, and disloyal (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Levit and Lucinda (2011) categorized Millennials as being born between 1980-1995. They identified the preferred communication methods of Millennials to be emails, text message or instant messages (Levit& Lucina, 2011). For this study, *Millennials are referred to as individuals born between 1980-1995.*

Other studies have also identified other stereotypes of Millennials. A 2010 survey, identified that Millennials find value in spending time outside of work and are not typically concerned with keeping a stable job (De Long, 2010). However, this study also determined that Millennials find value in job titles and having a high-quality manager while on the job, thereby making it evident that they are more enterprising and refuse to be stagnant in chasing their dreams (Boudouris, 2013). Millennials are armed with the tools and inclination to drive toward a better future in a world facing economic, geopolitical, and environmental crises (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

Other studies claim that Millennials are complainers and describe them as young people who are protected so much that they are incapable of handling even the most mundane task without guidance or handholding (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The established literature on Millennials shows that they are a generation with distinct traits of creativity and knowledge. As of 2004, Millennials began entering the workforce, and

they will continue to do so until around 2022 (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). However, there is a concern with how the communication techniques of Millennials will affect organizations and the relationships between its members (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

**Organizational conflict between generations**

An organizational conflict between ages occurs primarily because of differences in work styles, values, and techniques (Carr-Ruffino, 2005). Corporate leaders should approach employees with an awareness that people in each generation think about work differently (Weston, 2001). Carr-Ruffino (2005) found it imperative for organizational leaders to learn and understand the traits of each generation. Based on her studies, she explained that generations typically experience communication gaps, which stem from intergenerational differences of experience and values and cross-cultural communication differences. "Cross-cultural communication occurs when a person from one culture sends a message to a person from another culture. Cross-culture miscommunication takes place when the person from the other culture does not receive the sender's intended message"(Adler, 1991, p.64).

This communication gap is just one of the causes of organizational conflict between generations. The different traits of generational cohorts will not only affect a Millennials' ability to perform productively in organizations, but they may also contribute to their capacity to develop effective organizational relationships (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). An organization's conflict resolution practice is a direct indicator of how the organization will manage organizational conflict (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008). Organizational leaders may need to step in and mediate the intergenerational conflict occasionally. Weston (2001) explains: "as people from different generations

interact, their generational paradigms may influence them to interpret the same behavior in different ways" (p. 19). Therefore, an organizational conflict between generations is inevitable in any intergenerational workforce, and it is essential that regulatory leaders are knowledgeable about how to manage conflicts. Accordingly, this will help organizational leaders to improve communications and the effectiveness of work teams (Weston, 2001).

**Organizational conflict management**

Organizational conflict management requires the implementation of distinct group processes for the conflict to be resolved efficiently between groups of people. "Group processes must undergo modifications which will, in turn, enable the team to have more alternative ways to solve problems" (Berkowitz, 1974, p.311). Organizational conflict can be functional or dysfunctional for both the individual and the organization (Pondy, 1967). The management of organizational conflict should be based on resolving the root of the battle, and the approach in the conflict resolution process must be made with caution (Pondy, 1967).

Conflict must be resolved with this technique because it is "intimately tied up with the stability of the organization" (Pondy, 1967, p.298). It follows that the organizational conflict management process poses a threat to the sustainability of an organization due to its complexity. Pondy (1967) provided three theoretical models designed to manage the three major types of organizational conflicts in groups. These models are:

1. Bargaining model: Designed to address conflict among interest groups in competition for scarce resources. This model is particularly appropriate for the

analysis of labor-management relations, budgeting processes, and staff-line conflicts.

2. Bureaucratic model: Applicable to the study of superior-subordinate disputes or, in general, conflicts along the vertical dimension of a hierarchy. This model is primarily concerned with the problems caused by institutional attempts to control behavior and the organization's reaction to such control.

3. Systems model: Directed at lateral conflict or conflict among the parties to a functional relationship. This model focuses on coordinating the analysis of the problem based on the regions in which the problems exist.

The management of organizational conflict has to include the diagnosis and intervention in conflict (Rahim, 2003). The determination of the battle will determine the type of response needed to resolve the dispute. Implementing interventions to manage organizational conflict will also help to eliminate the causes of the conflict, preventing the likelihood of the conflict reoccurring. Using responses to manage organizational conflict is designed for three reasons: to attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive strife in non-routine tasks at various levels; to reduce friction at all levels; and to enable the organizational members to select and use appropriate styles of handling conflict so that multiple situations can efficiently be dealt with (Rahim, 2003, p.229).

While it is important to understand general organizational conflict concepts, it is also essential to know how to manage organizational conflict. Conflicts that affect an organization can act as a hindrance to progress, creativity, innovation, and productivity, and could even potentially contribute to the demise of an organization (Kiitam, McLay &

Pilli, 2016). This research will aim to understand how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

**Generation X &Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict**

Thomas and White (2011) explain that "managing and resolving conflict is a central theme in much of the literature on organizations and organizational behavior, and managerial effectiveness is often linked to successful conflict resolution" (p. 147). However, that focus is absent as it pertains to how generational entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Past literature, studies, and current literature are still failing to explore how particular generational entrepreneurs lead during organizational strife, specifically within an organization they initiated and launched. We know how the generations work but have not yet managed to explore their unique approaches to the groups they lead.

## Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provided a review of theoretical foundations and relevant literature for the subject study. Theoretical foundations and their principles as applied to the study were concisely described. Review of theoretical foundations further explained how the study's research questions relate to theory. Major themes in the literature highlighted a division in the subject matter, as there was a lack of consensus about how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational strife deriving from leadership and change management. This study fills the gap in the literature by providing insights and peeling back the layers about how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict on leadership and change management. The next chapter will

discuss the research design and rationale, alongside other strategies, as well as ethical

issues addressed throughout the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

**Introduction**

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to explore the management of organizational conflict about leadership and change management for Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs in the United States. This chapter will discuss the research methodology that was used to conduct the study, my role as the researcher, and the procedures and instruments that were used to perform the study. There also follows a discussion of the data analysis plan and ethical processes used.

**Research Design and Rationale**

As mentioned previously, the research questions for this study were as follows:

**Research question 1**

What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Research question 2**

What do narratives say about how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management?

**Research question 3**

What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs leading organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

This research was designed using qualitative research, which is dedicated and committed to exploring and interpreting theoretical facts and concepts producing descriptive results for specific issues. Qualitative research demonstrates the truth and

substance of the world while "viewing social worlds as holistic and complex" (Marshall, 2016, p.2). This study was suitable for qualitative research as it focused on delivering contextual data and specific themes around the management of organizational conflict by Generation X and Millennials. Using qualitative research to conduct this study brought to light an in-depth overview of the differences and similarities of Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

With these strengths, the study was able to provide rich data and offer a fresh perspective on organizational conflict being managed by Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs. Aiming to emulate this particular outcome, the decision to use qualitative research was carefully selected. Previous studies engaged in a variety of qualitative approaches, such as case studies and phenomenology. However, it was essential to recognize that there are no previous studies done on the contextual concepts. Therefore, this study was a leader in its research design of narrative research, a form of qualitative research. Some of the previous studies with relevant and similar research content include:

1. Mary Price's (2013) qualitative study titled: Cultural Attributes and Retention Strategies within Millennial-founded and Millennial-run Companies. This purpose of this study was to identify the cultural characteristics of, and retention strategies used at, companies founded and run-by Millennials. The research was conducted using the qualitative research method of interviews. After interviewing ten Millennial managers and employees, the study found common retention strategies that had underlying factors, such as collaboration and connectedness. Price (2013) recommended that organizations incorporate these principles into their organizational design as supporting structures for

Millennials. However, the researcher determined that further studies were needed on issues around or concerning this topic.

2. Dr. Jeffery Harber's (2011) narrative study titled: Generations in the Workplace: Similarities and Differences. The purpose of this study was "to evaluate the different generations from the traditionalist to the Millennials in the workplace for both management and employee" (Harber, 2011, p.11). The researcher found it essential for hiring managers to know the characteristics of each generation so that they could determine the best positions for them within their companies. The research was conducted using the qualitative research methods of case studies, interviews, and surveys. The research found that each generation has its strengths and weaknesses, and that managers will benefit from knowing how employees interact within organizations. However, the researcher determined that further studies were needed on issues around or about this topic.

3. Dr. Patrick Khor and Dr. Gido Mapunda's (2014) study titled: Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of the Generation X and Y Entrepreneurs. This purpose of this study was to examine Generation X and Y entrepreneurs regarding their lived experiences during the entrepreneurial journey. This study was conducted using the qualitative method of phenomenology, sampling 15 Generation X entrepreneurs and 15 Generation Y entrepreneurs who identified their involvement in starting a business and its daily operations. The research found that both generations of entrepreneurs have similar work attitudes, values, and behaviors. However, the researcher determined that further studies were needed on issues around or concerning this topic.

**Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher of this study, my part involved acting as an instrument of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This allowed me to collect the data without posing any threat of power over the participants. There were also no personal or professional relationships with any of the participants. Additionally, I took on the role of an outsider looking in, allowing objectivity to be maintained throughout the study. Furthermore, this approach reduced ethical concerns, conflict of interest or power differentials, through addressing issues of credibility and trustworthiness. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

<p align="center">**Methodology**</p>

**Narrative research**

As previously mentioned, the branch of qualitative research employed in this study was narrative inquiry. Using this methodology allowed stories from the lived experiences of the participants to be collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2013), allowing for emphasis to be placed on interpreting the stories collected through interviews with participants (Riessman, 2008). Narrative research was an appropriate research methodology for this study, as it allowed the narratives of both generations of entrepreneurs to be gathered and analyzed in contribution to this study.

Narrative research has the flexibility to focus on the content or structure of the participant narratives (Flowers, Larkins, & Smith, 2009). This study was solely interested in the content of the participants. Seeking this type of content would aide in efficiently answering the research questions. Narrative inquiry was therefore the appropriate branch of qualitative research to be applied to this study in efforts to analyze the data. Narrative

research allowed for a considerable amount of data to be collected throughout the study, strengthening the study's validity and eliminating potential biases.

**Ewick and Sibley model**

Within the narrative inquiry of the study, the Ewick and Silbey model was utilized (Riessman, 2008, p.59). Riessman (2008) explained that the Ewick and Silbey model would root the data analysis primary focus on "complex and fluid relations of power, which help individuals and groups understand their situations, and engage in subversive actions to disturb social structures, or impede the routine exercise of power" (p.59).

As it relates to this study, complex and fluid relations of power between the generational entrepreneurs and their employees are what leads to organizational conflict. Understanding the subversive actions to disturb social structure is the focus of this study. Each of the research questions for this study was analyzed mirroring the approach of Riessman (2008). She explained that throughout the data analysis process "events perceived by the speaker as important should be selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience"(p.8).

**Participant selection logic and procedures for recruitment and participation**

The population used for this study was Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs within the United States who can account for information regarding the lived experience of managing organizational conflict about leadership and change management. The sampling of the population for this study was not completed at random and focused on this specific community. In narrative research, it is essential to select a sampling strategy that focuses on information sources that can provide the story of the subject matter.

Creswell (2013) stressed the importance of "selecting one or more individuals who have stories or life experiences to tell and spending considerable time with them gathering their stories through multiple types of information" (p. 55). Therefore, this population and sampling strategy for the study was ideal for ensuring the study's credibility. Creswell (2013) also stated that narrative stories are collected through many different forms of data, including interviews, which were the primary form of data collection employed in this study.

The sampling methods and strategies deemed appropriate for this research were purposive as the primary method, and snowballing as the secondary method. Both methods of sampling focused on recruiting human subjects of Generation X entrepreneurs in the United States and Millennial entrepreneurs in the United States. Participants of this study were sampled from LinkedIn and Facebook, based on their available profile information. Once identified on LinkedIn and Facebook, a participation invitation was sent via private message. Should the invitation be accepted, the invited participant would then schedule an interview phone call to review their qualifications for participation in the study. During the phone call, the criteria were reviewed with the participant to ensure their qualifications.

Selection criteria for the recruitment of participants for this study were as follows:

1. Participants had to be from Generation X (born between 1964-1979) or from Millennials (born between 1980-1995).

2. All participants had to be an entrepreneur. (Defined by Joseph Schumpeter 1965 as an individual who creates a company to produce a product or service with a new innovative style).

3. All participants must have had a minimum of five active employees in their organization. Must have a United States based company.

4. Must be English speaking.

In total, twelve participants were used to conduct the research, six Generation X participants and six Millennial participants. Additional delimitations of the study included using only the two generations of entrepreneurs and only participants within the United States. Having this small sample size avoided threats to the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. This created the possibility for the study to be validated using triangulation. Triangulation was applied through the usage of two sampling methods, purposive sampling and snowballing. Triangulation was also applied through examining the data of the different participants within the study.

**Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Strategies were established to ensure trustworthiness during the study. Credibility and transferability were used to guarantee integrity. Member checks were conducted by sending the participant the transcribed interview to allow them an opportunity to review the responses from their meeting. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to address the study's transferability. Both credibility and transferability are standards of trustworthiness during this study.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The platforms used for data collection were a researcher-produced interview protocol and Zoom Video Conferencing. The interview protocol consisted of semi-structured interview questions. Semi-structured interviews allowed the interview conversations to flow naturally, and encouraged better quality through extended narration

(Riessman, 2008). Additionally, having a semi-structured interview helps to establish trust with the research participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed the meeting to be focused on eliciting question-specific responses; it also allowed for flexible dialogue and prompting the participants for more detailed answers.

This flexible dialogue between the researcher and the participants developed trust. Since the research interview was conducted as a conversation, rules of everyday conversation were applied such as turn taking, and entrance and exit talk (Riessman, 2008). The semi-structured interview prompted more authentic story-based responses from the participant. For further review, the interview protocol used for data collection can be found in Appendix A. Collection of data for the study involved interviews being recorded via Zoom Video Conferencing, based on a prescheduled interview time of 60-90 minutes between the research participants and myself.

The data collection process enabled flexibility of the research participants and locations throughout the United States. The data collection instruments used were sufficient for the data collection process. The instruments warranted excellent recordings on Zoom Video Conferencing that were then later transcribed ensuring the accuracy of the participants' stories. The data collection process was repeated with all participants of the study. A follow-up plan was not needed in this study as the results were sufficient.

**Data Analysis**

To remain consistent with the research paradigm and methodology of this study, the data collected were analyzed using narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is a method for interpreting texts from a story (Riessman, 2008), thereby giving the analysis process the ability to develop themes in an effort to produce descriptive results. Analyzing data

from these interviews included highlighting "brief bounded segment of interview text" (Riessman, 2008, p. 61). Highlighting these sections in the data analysis process allowed for the originality of the stories to be maintained and not diluted or altered in the process.

As previously mentioned, I was interested in the content of the stories and conducting a thematic narrative analysis was selected appropriate. A thematic narrative analysis allowed this researcher to "extract themes that are in stories" (Creswell 2013, p.71). Thus, with much suitability, a thematic narrative analysis allowed this study to identify specific topics and patterns within the stories of the entrepreneurs, enabling my retelling of the social events that occurred within the organization. Additionally, Creswell (2013) identified restoring as the process" in which stories are reorganized into a new framework"(p.73). Each of the research questions were analyzed as follows:

**Research question 1**: What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Research question 2**: What do narratives say about how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Analysis process**

1. Read all data collected for familiarity.

2. Selected stories within the narratives, which relate to the organizational conflict being managed by the generational entrepreneur.

3. Assigned a unique code to the stories within each narrative, using pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were randomly assigned to the participants to protect their identity. The pseudonyms used for the Generation X participants were: Gen X #1, Gen X

#2, Gen X #3, Gen X #4, Gen X #5 and Gen X #6.  The pseudonyms used for the Millennial participants were: Mill #1 Mill #2, Mill #3, Mill #4, Mill #5, and Mill #6.

4. Read data again, highlighted, and categorized stories based on organizational conflict being managed by the generational entrepreneur as it related to leadership, and organizational conflict being managed by the generational entrepreneur as it related to change management.

5. Grouped the accounts based on organizational conflict being managed by the generational entrepreneur as it related to Generation X entrepreneurs or Millennial entrepreneurs.

6. Developed themes related to the social issue identified, to organize data based on coding the stories, a process of analysis advanced in the Ewick and Sibley model. For example, a few of the specific categories that emerged from the data during the analysis process for Generation X participants were: accepts conflict, problem solver, and uncompromising. For example Gen X #2 stated:

"Occasionally there will be someone who them and I bump heads with or don't see eye-to-eye things and you have to just try and resolve the situation as best as possible. The outcome may not always be what you want it to be but you have to be able to make peace with that and continue move on. But my thing and my philosophy in all things whether personal and professional is that you don't take it as an opportunity to belittle anyone to berate them or to talk about them to anyone."

During the analysis process, this segment of the story was coded as: accepts conflict and problem solver. Another example was Gen X #6 expressing persona as uncompromising. Gen X #6 voiced:

"The only other leaders of my company are the business managers. They take and process orders. They are okay with my leadership as I do not have to work with them directly. The only issues that arise is when I start to make an order and they never told me that the order was cancelled. Now we have wasted ingredients. This does cause me to want to be very authoritarian and I sometimes have to apologize, and reiterate that these mistakes cannot happen as they are costing the company."

As the narratives of the Millennial participants were examined specific categories were equally identified. Some of the categories uncovered included: communication, structured, and goal oriented. For example, Mill #1 stated:

"With 10 employees, there are a lot of times I have to use my leadership skills. One time in particular, I had an employee that was continuously missing deadlines. Each deadline she missed there was another excuse. I was extremely frustrated. While I wanted to be sympathetic of her situation I still wanted my work."

During the analysis process, this segment of the narrative was coded as goal oriented. Another example is Mill #5 disclosing character as structured and finding value in communication. Mill #5 asserted:

"Changes within my company are best expressed via a private internal newsletter, as well as individual and group team member meetings. The process goes as follows: First, I conduct individual meetings with each team member and then I

schedule group team member meetings to collectively discuss any changes and how these will affect the team, as well as the organization."

7. Extracted themes that were in the various classes of organized data as stated above and developed a narrative response to the research question.

8. Notated relevant quoted texts to be used as support for themes while reporting evidence.

**Research Question 3:** What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Analysis process**

1. Compared the themes that were developed from research questions one and two above, to identify how the groups of entrepreneur manage organizational conflict.

2. Established similarities and differences between both groups of entrepreneurs to provide a response for the research question.

3. Notated relevant quoted texts to be used as support during the data reporting

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

Issues of trustworthiness did not occur at any stage of the study. To protect the study's credibility, member checks were conducted throughout the analysis process. Member checks were accomplished by creating an opportunity for participants to review the responses that were recorded from their interview. This ensured all translation of data was accurate. Implementation of the strategy of transferability required that a description of the interview settings be provided, alongside other details of accounts that occurred during the data collection process.

To supplement this information, the conditions under which the study occurred is relevant. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants. All participants were innovative leaders of their organizations. Ergo, this meant that all participants of the study did not have to be concerned about the risk of job loss. In other words, there were minimal risks involved, mainly since the names of the entrepreneurs will remain confidential.

All interviews were conducted by me in a private and secure room with no one else present besides the participant who was on the other end of Zoom Video Conferencing. Additionally, headphones were used to conduct the interviews to assure confidentiality. Lastly, the names of the participants were not used in the written document nor were participants asked their names in the video/audio tape.

**Ethical Procedures**

Throughout the study, ethical procedures were put in place to ensure the validity of the research and continue to eliminate any issues of trustworthiness. These ethical methods were also implemented to ensure compliance with the Institutional Review Board. The ethical techniques that were applied in this study are as follows:

- Received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the investigation. The IRB approval letter received for this study can be found in Appendix B.

- Ensured that recruitment materials and the process were approved by IRB.

- Conducted the study on a voluntary participant basis and continuously informed all participants that they were not required to participate in this study and could leave the research study at any time. This was earlier mentioned in the recruitment

script, which can be found in Appendix C; the recruitment flyer (Appendix D);

and the consent form for the study, which can be found in Appendix E.

- At the beginning of each interview session, I read the consent form and discussed
  it with the participant to assure their confidentiality, and encouraged and
  addressed questions from the research participants about the study.

- Acknowledged the participants' understanding of the totality of the study and
  confirmed their voluntary participation. All the participants of the study were
  asked to sign a written consent form. The consent form issued to participants of
  this study can be found in Appendix E.

- Remained objective throughout the data collection process..

- Ensured that all data from this study will be kept for a minimum of 36 months,
  after which all digital recordings will be deleted and all research data will be
  destroyed by burning.

- Used pseudonyms for all participants of this study to avoid ease of their
  identification. The digital recordings, transcripts, and notes that were taken during
  the interviews were locked in a file cabinet in my home located in Florida.

- Kept my computer password-protected and accessible to only me, the password
  holder.

- Informed all participants of the limits of their confidentiality, as the recordings
  may be shared with the IRB personnel and my committee chair if requested.

**Summary**

This chapter presented the methodology, participant selection process,

instrumentation and other data collection methods that were used throughout the study.

The described data collection process established the level of credibility and

trustworthiness for the study. The data analysis plan was discussed in great detail to show

the connection of the data to the research questions and the procedures employed for

coding, as well as to thoroughly highlight ethical procedures applied to the study. The

next chapter will review the results of the study and respond to the research questions

posed.

Chapter 4: Results

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the management of organizational

conflict on leadership and change management for Generation X and Millennial

entrepreneurs in the United States. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the

narratives collected during the interviews with study participants. It presents the

responses to each of the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. This

chapter is structured to discuss the demographics of the participants, data collection steps,

and the narrative thematic analysis process. Moreover, it presents the results of the study

-- organized by research questions -- that supported the themes gathered from the

narratives of the participants.

**Demographics**

The demographics of the Generation X participants involved in this study are as

follows:

Table 1.

*Demographics of Generation X Participants*

| Name | Gen X #1 | Gen X #2 | Gen X #3 | Gen X #4 | Gen X #5 | Gen X #6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Birth year** | 1974 | 1971 | 1961 | 1973 | 1975 | 1977 |
| **Year company founded** | 2010 | 2012 | 2006 | 2009 | 2011 | 2011 |
| **Company location** | Atlanta Georgia | Riverside California | Kissimmee Florida | Seattle Washington | Plantation Florida | Los Angeles California |
| **No. of active employees** | 17 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 5 |
| **English Speaking** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Company title** | Founder/ Owner | Founde/ CEO | CEO | Founder | CEO | CEO |

After further review of the demographics of the Generation X participants, I recognized that this group of entrepreneurs had different founding dates for their companies. They also had a variety of company locations. This offered reassurance that the Generation X participants were selected at random to share their stories. The demographics of the Millennial participants involved in this study are as follows:

Table 2.

*Demographics of Millennial Participants*

| Name | Mill #1 | Mill #2 | Mill #3 | Mill #4 | Mill #5 | Mill #6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birth year | 1988 | 1983 | 1984 | 1989 | 1983 | 1981 |
| Year company founded | 2015 | 2013 | 2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2010 |
| Company location | Orlando Florida | Houston Texas | Chicago Illinois | Atlanta Georgia | Orlando Florida | Houston Texas |
| No. of active employees | 10 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| English Speaking | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Company title | CEO | CEO | Owner/CEO | Founder | CEO | CEO |

The demographics of the Millennial participants of the study showed a variation in their birth years and the number of active employees within their respective companies. This was an interesting finding as it offered reassurance that the Millennial participants were selected at random to share their stories.

**Data Collection**

Data for this study data was collected from a total of six Generation X participants and six Millennial participants. Data was collected using the interview protocol designed for this study and was collected via Zoom Video Conferencing for approximately 60-90minutes per participant. The data was recorded on Zoom Video Conferencing and later

transcribed by the researcher. During the data collection process, there was no data collection variation from that mentioned in chapter three, and there were no unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection process.

**Data Analysis**

To analyze the data collected, the process of narrative thematic analysis was implemented to move from smaller coded units to themes. With a focus on the content of the stories from Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs, a thematic narrative analysis rooted in the Ewick and Sibley model was the most suited to interpret the data and extract themes from the accounts of the participant. Using the Ewick and Sibley model allowed the data analysis process to consist of real narratives. These models protect the quality of the stories and the accuracy of the themes being developed and reproduced from the analysis process.

<div align="center">

**Results**

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While the traditional narrative research provides results across all the data, this research was non-traditional as it studied two generations and offered a comparative view. Subsequently, the results of this study have been organized and presented per research question. This presentation provides an outline of the narrative thematic development process and is supported by excerpts of the participants narratives, which show how the themes were developed. Using the edited excerpts of the narratives and categorizing them based on each social issue supports the Ewick and Sibley model, which goal is to protect the cultural productions of stories. The Ewick and Sibley model, furthermore, recommends editing of the narratives for understanding the ideologies being

expressed by the Generation X and Millennial participants. The results of the study are as follows:

**Research Question 1**

What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

To understand and answer this question, six Generation X entrepreneurs were individually interviewed and asked open-ended questions that prompted a narrative response about how they managed organizational conflict pertaining to leadership and change management. After conducting a narrative thematic analysis, two themes emerged. Each theme will now be further discussed with supportive quotes from the participants' interviews.

**Theme 1: Fundamental value in formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations.** Narratives posit that Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict, as it pertains to leadership and change management, by tackling the realities of said contemporaneous or emerging conflict, countering such disputes via formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations. This theme was prominent amongst Generation X participants throughout the interviews. Generation X entrepreneurs frequently made references to their need to host meetings, have conversations or establish a stream of dialogue to manage organizational conflict when it comes to leadership and change management as it developed. The following narrative explains how conflict stemming from leadership is managed with formal dialogue when a team member reacts negatively to leadership style.

**Gen X #1:** I have an open discussion, as I realize we sometimes will disagree, and that is ok. It's not personal and does not matter. I had one employee who had issues with my style of leadership. She likes to be micro-managed and thinks her way of doing things is better. But there are many ways to get to the same destination and, if you allow others the ability to discover their commitment, that would be great.

These next narratives from Generation X entrepreneurs also explain that they communicate company changes through formal dialogue.

**Gen X #3:** When I have to, I conduct meetings with the entire team, often including my two installers. I will generally invite them all over for a lunch or dinner and then go right into the topic at hand. We are a family operated and owned business; therefore, keeping that sense of family is important to me.

**Gen X #4:** Communicating changes with the company normally happens during our staff meeting. We meet 1-2 times per meeting. If for any reason, we can'tmeet then, depending on the urgency of the issue, I will send an email. So, I will say the two common ways I communicate change is during meetings and through email.

**Gen X #6:** I communicate changes within the company through staff meetings. We don't have them regularly. But the staff is aware that when I call a meeting, it is for a change or something happened. So, yea, they are pretty used to changes being communicated this way, and their antlers are already up as to what they can expect during the meeting. Most times if they even know what the changes are, they will come with questions prepared to ask during the meeting. For me this works well as it eliminates any confusion once the change is being implemented.

Generation X participants of the study all told stories which supported the theme of their

value in formal dialogues. This formal dialogue varied in how it was executed. Some of

the Generation X entrepreneurs preferred their formal dialogue to occur via dinners,

email, texts, one on one meetings while others preferred the traditional form of staff

meetings. However, the fact remained that they appreciated the formal dialogue as their

means to manage organizational conflict. The next narrative presents stories of how an

employee reacted negatively to leadership of a CEO and how the conflict that followed

was managed and resolved, not only using formal dialogue but also compromised

reconciliations.

**Gen X #1:** A new employee reacted negatively to my leadership style. She

thought I was micromanaging her, even though she came to me with an issue and my

goal was to support and guide her as the clinical lead. Instead of coming to me with other

work-related issues she could not resolve, she built up this resentment and made up what

she thought my reaction would be, as in her mind I was now a micromanager. She then

went to the VP of operations to discuss her issues. However, he came to me and informed

me of her concerns. I then realized there was a lack of conflict management, and it was

important that I fix it or resolve the issue. I later sat down with her and listened to her

concerns, provided no excuses to my part. I requested from her how she wanted to

communicate with me. I developed clear expectations of my role and what she can expect

from me when she brings up a client or case. I also identified my communication style

with her and recognized she had issues being directed and how I can refrain from doing

this, so she does not feel micromanaged or believes she has to problem solve on her own.

We discussed also what to do if a conflict arises between us again.

If Generation X entrepreneurs lacked the ability to manage conflict within their organizations, as it pertains to leadership and change management, they would resort to compromised reconciliations as they were deeply rooted in finding middle ground commonalities that would work for both them and the members of their organizations. The following narrative elucidates how compromised reconciliations are used by a Generation X entrepreneur to manage conflict with other leaders who react negatively towards her leadership style.

**Gen X #2:** While I'm more open in trying new ways of doing things, there are one or two things that normally happens when leaders and I come together. We either come to a common ground and I am trusted to do something, or we cannot come to a common ground. One of us then has to make the decision, and we both have to agree to it. It's either one of us going to take this piece of the project, and that's what I'm going to focus on. For instance, my finance manager might be looking at things that we need to cut budgets on while I am looking at investments for the business. I will say we need equipment for a production, and he will say why do you need two cameras. That is an example of us not coming to an agreement. He will then say ok you take X amount of money and do what you have to do. That's the way we as leaders handle that kind of conflict.

**Gen X #1:** Dealing with other leaders that react negatively to change, I sit down and discuss their concerns. I provide them clear rationale and explanation for the change and request their feedback and ideas. I set clear expectations on how they communicate with staff their issues so that as leaders it's clear we may differ but ensure this does not affect the work environment.

The following narratives describe how compromised reconciliations are used to manage employees who react negatively to company changes.

**Gen X #5:** We once had to implement a change to how our contracts were going out. A change in the contract also meant a change in pay scale and appointment intake. While delivering this message to the employees in our quarterly meeting, I noticed that 2 of the employees rolled their eyes during the meeting. After the meeting, I pulled them to the side and asked what was wrong. They explained to me that they were not okay with the pay, so I negotiated a pay scale increase with them to secure a raise over time. They then apologized for their actions, and we moved forward.

**Gen X #4:** There was once when an employee was not happy that a change had to rush through and be made. The employee was actually quite upset and walked into my office and expressed how she felt. I was more than open to explain my side of things honestly as I had to make an executive decision. The talk the employee and I had definitely smoothed things over. Believe it or not, it was just a small change that was made to an internal process of doing things. However, I have learned that internal surveys to the team can definitely eliminate these feelings and help us to maintain our unique work culture.

Throughout the study, Generation X participants disclosed repeatedly that they held fundamental values in formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations. There were various accounts and recollections of narratives. These stories supported this theme, as one of the ways in which Generation X manages organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. They clearly explain how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict stemming from leadership and change

management using formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations. The following narratives offer concluding support for this theme.

**Gen X #1:** Meet with senior leadership. Develop target margins that will permit increasing hiring asset mapping of the work. The meeting normally helps to deal with challenges. Essentially, it opens the lines of communications to getting the problem resolved.

**Gen X #2:** I work in a creative industry. I often times have to collaborate with other business owners, and the kind of work I do is fun, so it is easier for other people to get distracted in the work because it is that type of work. I encourage the fun, but there are times when you have super tight deadlines to meet. So, it is very important to understand that fine line for when you need to step into the leadership role This way you can command the situation and make sure your timelines are on point and everyone understands their roles and responsibilities so that we can collectively work together, and no one has to do someone else's job because they are not present doing what they need to do. So, a lot of it is communication. I think communication is at the foundation of anything. You cannot be a great leader if you are not willing to communicate, but you also need to listen to the opinion and input of others.

**Gen X #5:** In order for me to take my company to a place of success, I have to be able to lead my team. This comes with leadership skills. Each day within my company I have to display a variety of leadership skills. Reason being is that my Make Up Artists have to be dispersed to different locations every day. So, I have tobe able to lead them accordingly by telling them about our new contracts, clients, and events. This type of leadership is at high demand because as Make Up Artistswe are always on the go going

to video shoots, weddings, cruises, photos etc. I have to be accountable for the number of

clients that they all get. With that also means that I have to exercise great communication,

so none of the team members feel as if they are being told of clients at the last minute. So

yes, my story would be that every day I have to use these types of leadership skills with

my entire team.

These quotes and this theme accurately describes the narratives of the Generation

X entrepreneurs and how they manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership

and change management, allowing the social issue of the management of organizational

conflict to be further understood and illustrating the actualities of the social events. These

quotes and them explain that Generation X entrepreneurs find it convenient in using

conversations as one of their expedients to managing organizational conflict as it pertains

to leadership and change management.

**Theme 2: Focused on service and advancement of the organization**.

Narratives posit that Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it

pertains to leadership and change management as the focus is on the service and

advancement of the organization. This theme was central amongst Generation X

participants throughout the interviews as the entrepreneurs consistently spoke of how

they were focused on moving their company forward through quickly solving

organizational conflict. The narratives below describe how Generation X entrepreneurs

manage organizational conflict by staying focused on the service and advancement of the

organization.

**Gen X #3:** The only time I can think of has to do with uniforms. As a small

business owner who wants to carry her business with the utmost professionalism,

uniforms were important to me. When I had custom golfing style shirts created for our team members to wear during installations with basic denim jeans or black leggings (for the ladies), this was met with a lot of frowns. However, as more and more clients began to comment at how professional we looked upon arriving to installations, my team members began to understand that this is not done to belittle their appearance or individuality, but rather to create unity and consistency within our organization.

**Gen X #5:** I once had a Make Up Artist who was furious because she went to do makeup at a client's house. However, when the Make Up Artist got to the house, she had to do makeup for four additional people. The client that originally placed the appointment called me and begged me to help them out. I spoke to the Make Up Artist privately and asked her to please do the additional people. In the end the Make Up Artist stayed and did the makeup for the other people. But the client had to pay more. From this I realized that I have to stop and learn to say no when clients ask for last minute appointments. But it's a process that we are working through.

**Gen X #6:** I was with working with a junior baker. This baker wanted to do everything in completing the order. So, this baker was spicing up recipes, taking out things and making things just the way he wanted. There was no teamwork. Half way through the order, I had to pull the baker to the side and remind him that this was my kitchen. I know it sounds rude, but I really needed to take control of the kitchen to make sure that the order was completed to our company standards. I later realized that sometimes when new bakers come on they are set in doing things in one particular way, and it's up to me to retrain them on our company's standards.

While unwanted and unexpected conflict may sometimes arise, Generation X entrepreneurs are primarily focused on the service and advancement of the organization. This requires them to become conflict embracers, have formal dialogues and compromised reconciliations to safeguard the organization. The following narratives describe how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict by focusing on the service and advancement of the organization.

**Gen X #5:** There are times when Make Up Artists feel overburdened. I don't believe it is my fault directly; rather, there is a high demand for our services and as team there is only so many of us. So, because I have to sometimes ask a Make Up Artist last minute to do a client's face, they sometimes get aggravated. I try my hardest to apologize. But that is the most I can do based on the industry we are in. It's almost as if a celebrity called last minute, why would you not go?

**Gen X #4:** For the most part my employees feel very comfortable with me, so it's very rare that we have issues within the workplace. If I was to think of one incident where an employee reacted negatively, it would be with a temp employee that we had. This employee wanted to defend himself as to why he chose to develop a particular system the way he did. I was trying to enforce what the policies said, but the employee would just not understand. The employee ended up yelling and disrespecting me and another staff member. The employee had to be terminated sooner than expected. However, I know it was best as it was not safe to our work culture. The employee just could not understand how to follow protocol.

This theme showcased the stories of the Generation X cohorts of the study. The narratives provided were able to act as classifications for how they manage organizational

conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management, making clear that while

Generation X entrepreneurs are managing organizational conflict as it pertains to

leadership and change management, they are yet to lose focus on the growth of their

company. Subsequently, they are more prone to embrace conflict to protect the

advancement of the organization. The following narratives offer concluding support for

this theme.

**Gen X #2:** Honestly it just flows because I am fortunate to work with people who

just get it. I enjoy working with the people I work with. Occasionally there will be

someone with who I bump heads or who doesn't see eye-to-eye and you have to just try

and resolve the situation as best as possible. The outcome may not always be what you

want it to be, but you have to be able to make peace with that and continue to move on.

But my philosophy in all things whether personal and professional is that you don't take

it as an opportunity to belittle anyone or to berate them or to talk about them to anyone.

**Gen X #6:** The employee actually told me that he was not aware of what he was

doing. He said he was doing it sub-consciously because that is what he was used to doing.

He recognized that he needed to make a conscious decision to do the things the way this

company expects and not how another company did it. The employee actually

apologized, accepted the correction very well, and we quickly returned to the kitchen.

Through conducting a narrative research and thematic analysis, I was able to

sufficiently answer research question one. The underpinning themes amongst the

Generation X entrepreneurs of this study and how they managed organizational conflict

as it pertains to leadership and change management are the following. (1) Fundamental

value in formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations and; (2) focus on service and advancement of the organization.

**Research Question 2**

What do narratives say about how millennial entrepreneurs manage organizationalconflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

For this research question, six Millennial entrepreneurs were individually interviewed and asked open ended questions, which provided a narrative response regarding how they managed organizational conflict pertaining to leadership and change management. After conducting a narrative thematic analysis, three themes emerged. In the following section, each theme will be discussed with supportive quotes from the participants' interviews.

**Theme 1: Employ conversations rooted in fundamental organizational values.** Narratives present that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by employing conversations rooted in fundamental organizational values. Throughout the study, Millennials explained how they lead their teams through having constant conversations and constantly providing clarity by explaining their point of view to their team members. They explained that these actions were how they best managed conflict within their organization regarding leadership and change management. The following narratives share stories of Millennial entrepreneurs and how they manage organizational conflict with other company leaders. The narratives demonstrate how they employ conversations rooted in fundamental organizational values to manage organizational conflict that arise when other leaders react negatively towards their leadership style.

**Mill #1:** I typically have conversations with them. I like to understand their point of view and explain to them where I am coming from. This way we can meet in the middle. However, sometimes it can be really difficult. I once had one of my team leaders not be receptive to how I was going about changing the company. She was negative and was really ruining the work culture and becoming a negative influence on other employees. This team leader had to be terminated. I really felt as if this leader was not receptive to my leadership style.

**Mill #2:** We have a conversation. I haven't experienced it just blatantly in front of employees. But we do have a conversation that is not pleasant. Everything is not roses and cupcakes. There is tension. So, what I have learned as the leader is to put some parameters around how we manage the tension. Tension is necessary once you have someone that is passionate at what they do. Especially when they are good at what they do, it comes across as passionate. If they don't agree with what you're doing because it is kind of stepping on their toes, then it comes out as passionate. So, there are arguments but when that comes we bring in mediation. We find other owners who come in to mediate this. So, we have this pact between all of us that you can be made today, but tomorrow we need to kiss and makeup. We try not hold grudges.

Throughout the study, the Millennial participants presented themselves as being aware of the need for conversations as a preventative measure to organizational conflict. This theme continued to be evident as they told their stories of how they sought to manage present or future company conflict. The Millennial participants of this study used these stories to explain how managing organizational conflict through employing conversations helps them to lead their companies and administer change. However, it was

foundational that they employed conversations rooted in fundamental organizational values. One Millennial entrepreneur shared a story of how they had a conversation with an employee that was deeply rooted in organizational values.

**Mill #6:** Last year was my very first time hiring other leaders. Well, my agents are whom I would consider managers, and that was actually a very emotional experience because I put my blood, sweat and tears into building the company and, once they actually learn the ropes, they say oh I'm going to go work for another company. You have some agents that are lazy, and they don't want to work. They want you to hand feed them and give them leads. I had to tell them yes, you're working on the team, and I can give you leads but if you can't convert them there is no purpose. You can have leads, but the most important thing is converting them.

Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict through having conversations fixed on the organizational values, allowing the Millennial entrepreneurs of this study to develop suitable resolutions to organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. These quotes and this theme established a typology, which reinforces this social issue and how it is addressed, helping to bring awareness as to how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. The following narrative offers concluding support for this theme.

**Mill #5:** Thankfully this (negative reaction to leadership) has yet to be the case with our organization. However, if this were to occur I'd sit down with the employee and discuss their concerns and do my best to answer any questions they may have as well as to provide ease in any transitions as they occur.

**Theme 2: Orchestrator of team meetings.** Narratives present that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by orchestrating team meetings. The Millennial participants were repetitive and continuously reinforced their company needs and values in team meetings. Orchestrating team meetings are important for the Millennial participants of the study. Their narratives discuss how it enables them to structure their companies through formal and timely conversations, causing current or future organizational conflict relating to leadership and change management to be addressed effectively. The narratives below explain how Millennial entrepreneurs orchestrate team meetings to communicate company changes to their employees.

**Mill #2:** We have a meeting. We meet monthly as a big team. It is exactly for that reason to talk about performance, things that have not been working, anything upcoming and any changes that might be going into effect. So, the first part of that is a group meeting where we talk about all of those things; once the meeting is over my administrator will send out an email communication letting everybody know about the change. They have to sign it, and we place it in everyone's filet make sure they acknowledge the date when the change goes into effect. Just like marketing externally, you send out an email reminding of the change and on the day of the change, you send out another email saying don't forget today is the big day for the change. We just want to make sure everyone is aware of it because just like everything else, we get caught up in the day to day operations of what they got going on then things could slip their mind. So, we try to keep those changes at the forefront of thought so that, if it is a change in employees or if it's a change in status, it doesn't matter. We are very open in what

happens, and we have tried it both ways where we don't communicate change and we just kind of do it without giving much notice of what's happening, and it didn't go to well. So, we just try to prepare them as much as possible.

**Mill #3:** I am a big supporter of having weekly meetings. It is important to get in touch, catch up, and be in tune with what is happening with employees and to also update on what is happening in the organization. Meetings- direct face-to-face is the best way to go about communicating new ideas because it creates closeness with employees and it also signals respect.

**Mill #6:** Changes within my company happens on a regular basis. Reason being is that I can be representing a seller or a buyer at any time. If I represent a seller, I'm a seller agent and if I represent a buyer, I'm a buyer agent. But this also requires you to work with your staff and, they have to be quickly adaptable to remembering what procedure is for the seller agent or buyer agent. The communication of changes is fairly simple for my team. I typically discuss them during staff meeting or email. The goals are to just let them know as soon as possible by having a conversation with them.

Additionally, the narratives of the Millennial participants position team meetings and open dialogue about change within the company. The open dialogue, whether it is via individual or group meetings, fosters a unique group dynamic, which addresses and prevents organizational conflict. Orchestrating team meetings sets the tone for a collaborative work culture. The narratives below pinpoint this creation of a collaborative work culture using orchestrated team meetings.

**Mill #1:** I typically try to show the importance of the change and positive benefits in the change. I once had a leader that was not receptive to the changes being

implemented and contemplated leaving the company. We had to sit down and meet 1/1 so I could explain the changes and why I felt she was an integral part of the team.

**Mill #4:** Every decision I make the managers agree with me because we have a conversation and make sure we are all on the same page. Most recently, I had to meet with the managers, as I need to change the vendors we were using. I knew this would affect our pricing and not everyone would agree to it. At the same time, I know I could have made an executive decision, as it is my business. But I do believe strongly in teamwork. So, we met, and I explained it the best I could and to my surprise, the managers understood and there wasn't really any much conflict about it.

The Millennial entrepreneurs of this study favor team meetings as a strategy to managing organizational conflict. These narratives support and uncover how Millennial entrepreneurs orchestrate their team meetings to resolve conflict regarding leadership and change management. The quotes and theme provided strengthens the discovery made for the social issue of organizational conflict. They assist in bringing comprehension as to what narratives say on how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. The following narrative offers concluding support for this theme.

**Mill #6:** Changes within my company are best expressed via a private internal newsletter, as well as individual and group team member meetings. The process goes as follows:

First, I conduct individual meetings with each team member, and then I schedule group team member meetings to collectively discuss any changes and how these will affect the team, as well as the organization.

**Theme 3: Goal and collaborative work culture.** Narratives presume that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by creating a goal and collaborative work culture. The work culture creates a positive atmosphere for how the Millennial entrepreneurs in this study manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. When the Millennial entrepreneurs of this study discussed having a goal-oriented work culture, they frequently narrated the value they had in meeting company deadlines, what they would tolerate within the workplace and how they set boundaries within their organization. This can be viewed as dealing with organization conflict relating specifically to leadership but also to change management.

The upcoming stories recount how the Millennial entrepreneurs use a goal and collaborative work culture to manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership.

**Mill #3:** Meeting deadlines is always a common issue where the need for leadership skills is important. Deadlines tend to cause tension among employees. My skills come in by delegating. However, delegating begins with first calling a meeting to access employee readiness, willingness and ideas. Having done that, it was easy to then access individual employee skill sets, and then assign tasks accordingly. With that came following up and ensuring to encourage employees.

**Mill #6:** Often being a leader you have to commit to something. I have learned to lead from the back, especially in my line of work because we deal with all different kinds of people. In real estate, people see the great part about it, but they don't see the stress. Real estate is the most stressful job I have ever had because you're dealing with people's money and property and their emotions. You aren't paid until the job is complete, so if

you want to be paid you have to be a leader for the transaction or you won't get a

paycheck no matter whom you represent.  So sometimes, you have an agent who half

does their job and you have to go back and make sure all your ducks are in a row. It's just

like taking a holiday family photo, and you have to get all these people to take this photo

all at the same time. The realtor is the photographer; that's exactly what my job is. When

it comes to this particular agent, I was having a hard time because I am young; I look like

I am 17yrs old, and I am a young successful black woman. So, staff typically has a hard

time respecting me when I demand something for my client. I just can't take any short

nothing and so the negotiation process got really emotional when I had to ask for tasks to

be done last minute in order to secure the deal.

When the Millennial entrepreneurs of this study told stories about collaborative

work culture, they discussed inclusiveness, personal development, and team

development. These underlying factors seemed to pierce through their stories. The stories

from the Millennial entrepreneurs of this study posited that, through creating a goal and

collaborative work culture, it would be easier to then manage organizational conflict

stemming from leadership and change management. The next stories explain how exactly

the Millennial entrepreneurs can do this in their companies.

**Mill #1:** There was this one time I was changing the business model and didn't

ask the opinion of my marketer. She was very reluctant to implement the change, as she

felt not included. This was not my intention, so I always strived from there on out to

include everyone's opinion.

**Mill #2:** We have to use leadership all the time, primarily when we are bringing

in new people as we have an intern program.  So, it not just that we have interns, but we

have a program that trains and certifies them for 6 months before releasing them to the

workforce. With that, well because they are junior or seniors in college, there are

different personalities and different point of views. So, we have to make sure we are not

only operating as their boss, but also helping them to develop life skills such as

responsibility and making sure that they are accountable to themselves and also their

teammates as it is a teamwork environment where they will have to accomplish their

projects. They must feel accountable to their assigned leaders in the company. As me as

the CEO, I am very hands on, but there are other leaders in the company that they are

responsible to reporting to and just making sure they are adhering to rules and being

respectful to one another. And not anything personally but just making sure everybody is

carrying a fair load. So, we do a lot of team and development training; we take a day to

do teambuilding, and we also do a lot of professional development to make sure that

when they leave they are ready to go into the workforce not just from a marketing

standpoint but also from a professional standpoint.

  **Mill #4:**The biggest challenge I face is being taken seriously. You want to be that

cool leader, but you also want to know that once you tell an employee to do something

they're able to do it with no problems. So, the need for balance is always there, as I desire

to create a work environment in which my employees can thrive in.  I want us to almost

be like a family at work and accept that conflict will happen, but still love and respect

each other.

  Establishing a goal and collaborative work culture was very prominent within the

narratives of the Millennial entrepreneurs. They have confidence that having this work

culture sets the tone of how they manage organizational conflict as it pertains to

leadership and change management. The stories of the Millennial entrepreneurs reveal how they use this work culture to manage organizational conflict.  The quotes and theme provided supports the unmasking of these organizational realities and how the internal conflicts are resolved, assisting in bringing comprehension as to what narratives say on how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. The following narrative offers concluding support for this theme.

**Mill #5:** Since creating a more streamlined process for hiring my team members, I am able to identify the needs of my organization and create strategies for hiring additional team members according the goals we have. The key is to plan strategies and make decisions based on growth potential.

Through conducting a narrative research and a narrative thematic analysis, I was able to sufficiently answer research question two. The underpinning themes amongst the Millennial entrepreneurs of this study, and how they managed organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management, are the following. (1) Employ conversations rooted in fundamental organizational values; (2) Orchestrate team meetings and;  (3) Implement a goal and collaborative work culture.

**Research Question 3**

What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

To respond to this question, the themes that we developed from research question one and two were compared. After comparing the similairities and differences between

both groups of entrepreneurs, two themes emerged. In the following section, each theme will be discussed with supportive quotes from the participants' interviews.

**Theme 1: Similar on incorporating conversations.** Contrasting narratives reveal that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs are homogenous on incorporating conversations to manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. In reviewing the themes developed from research question one and two, it became evident of where Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs aligned in how they manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. The following stories show how Generation X and Millennials are homogenous on incorporating conversations into their companies to manage organization conflict regarding leadership and change management.

**Gen X #1:** Have a frank conversation about their power and how it comes off to others and reflect on the company. I had a discussion with one of the other leaders about managing her emotions in the work environment.

**Mill #1:** I communicate changes within the company by having a meeting. In fact, we normally have monthly team meetings. These meetings are normally run by an agenda. The agenda outlines all that is for discussion including any changes. Now if the change is big, then we normally have a meeting just focused on the change. This way everyone's input is placed on the table. But it is very important for me to do this way, as I want my employees to feel involved and a part of the business, almost like a family; that's what families do; they talk about things that are happening.

The above statements are a small example of how both generations of entrepreneurs find value with incorporating conversations for managing organizational

conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. The following statements will also be reiterating the same concept to further provide descriptive quotes of how both groups of generational entrepreneurs are similar.

**Gen X #2:** It is very important to understand that fine line for when you need to step into the leadership role. This way you can command the situation and make sure your timelines are on point and everyone understands their roles and responsibility. That way, we can collectively work together, and no one has to do someone else's job because they are not present doing what they need to do. So, a lot of it is communication. I think communication is at the foundation of anything. You cannot be a great leader if you are not willing to communicate, but also to listen to the opinion and input of others.

**Mill #2:** In the past when we haven't communicated the change, it just brings many questions. And I don't want to spend a whole day answering questions. So, we try to get in front of the questions and try to anticipate what people's questions will be. But the change is communicated in open forum, and we always encourage them to ask questions. We have even done external surveys just to make sure and get their feedback and it has all been positive. I know how I like to be treated. I am very people centric, so I try to always think from that perspective. I try to not treat people the way I was treated in my corporate career, I do not want them to experience the same with my company.

The conversations of Generation X entrepreneurs of the study center on formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations. The conversations of Millennial entrepreneurs of the study focus on fundamental organizational values. However, it remains consistent that both groups of generational entrepreneurs are homogenous on incorporating conversations. The following narratives offer concluding support for this theme.

**Gen X #3:** When I have to conduct meetings with the entire team members, often including my two installers, I will generally invite them all over for a lunch or dinner and then go right into the topic at hand. We are a family operated and owned business; therefore, keeping that sense of family is important to me.

**Mill#3:** I am a big supporter of having weekly meetings. It is important to get in touch, catch up, and be in tune with what is happening with employees and to also update on what is happening in the organization. Meetings- direct face-to-face is the best way to go about communicating new ideas because it creates closeness with employees, and it also signals respect.

Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs host similarities of incorporating conversation into their organizations. Both use it as a source of managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. These quotes support the theme, which positions both groups of generational entrepreneurs as being in sync for their approach to organizational conflict. Additionally, the narratives used to support this theme highlight the equivalence of both generational entrepreneurs for how they resolve organizational conflict.

**Theme 2: Contrast on prioritizing creating a collaborative work culture versus company growth.**  Contrasting narratives reveals that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs contrast on prioritizing creating a work culture versus company growth. Subsequently to evaluating the themes developed from research question one and two, it was clear where Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs differentiated in how they manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. The following stories elucidate how Generation X and Millennials contrast on prioritizing

creating a work culture versus company growth to manage organization conflict

regarding leadership and change management. The first narrative shows how Generation

X entrepreneurs prioritize company growth.

**Gen X #4:** For the most part my employees feel very comfortable with me, so it's

very rare that we have issues within the workplace. If I were to think of one incident

where an employee reacted negatively, it would be with a temporary employee that we

had. This employee wanted to defend himself as to why he chose to develop a particular

system the way he did. I was trying to enforce what the policies said, but the employee

would just not understand. The employee ended up yelling and disrespecting me and

other staff members. The employee had to be terminated sooner than expected. However,

I know it was best, as it was not safe to our work culture. The employee just could not

understand how to follow protocol.

The next narrative shows how Millennial entrepreneurs prioritize a collaborative

work culture.

**Mill #4:** The biggest challenge I face is being taken seriously. You want to be that

cool leader, but you also want to know that once you tell an employee to do something

they're able to do it with no problems. So, the need for balance is always there, as I desire

to create a work environment in which my employees can thrive in.  I want us to almost

be like a family at work and accept that conflict will happen, but still love and respect

each other.

The above statements show how  both generation of entrepreneurs contrast on

prioritizing creating a work culture versus company growth for managing organizational

conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. There are succinct differences

between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs. Generation X entrepreneurs of the study focus on service and advancement of the organization. Millennial entrepreneurs of the study focus on creating a goal and collaborative work culture. The following statements will be reiterating the same concept to further provide descriptive quotes of how both groups generational entrepreneurs are different from each other.

The upcoming narratives once more show how Generation X entrepreneurs prioritize company growth.

**Gen X #5**:There are conflicts sometimes when the other Make Up Artists feel overburdened. I don't believe it is my fault directly; rather, there is a high demand for our services and as a team there are only so many of us. So, because I have to sometimes ask a Make Up Artist last minute to do a client's face, they sometimes get aggravated. I try my hardest to apologize. But that is the most I can do based on the industry we are in. It's almost as if a celebrity called last minute, why would you not go?

**Gen X #6:** The only other leaders of my company are the business managers. They take and process orders. They are okay with my leadership, as I do not have to work with them directly. The only issues that arise are when I start to make an order and they never told me that the order was cancelled. Now we have wasted ingredients. This does cause me to want to be very authoritarian, and I sometimes have to apologize and reiterate that these mistakes cannot happen as they are costing the company.

The following narratives show how Millennial entrepreneurs prioritize a collaborative work culture.

**Mill #5:** I've had positive feedback on various changes within my organization. The biggest changes have come not from the decisions I have made within the

organization, but from the steps I have taken as a leader of my company. The journey of entrepreneurship is paved by many mishaps. and ensuring I take proper precautions in navigating my team and the growth of my brand does not go unnoticed. My team is very perceptive to the moves I make and keeping them at ease is primordial.

**Mill #6:** There was an agent that I had to mold a certain way into this new system I had bought. But she didn't act out negatively to it; she was very happy with this change even though it was a big one. I was surprised on how this worked out. I think this worked out because she was trained on what needed to be done. There was a sense of trust that happened, and the agent understood that there was no bad intention. Trust is an integral part of my team, as I want everyone to commit to our goals and feel a part of the company.

Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs have two primordial differences. While Generation X entrepreneurs are focused on company growth, Millennial entrepreneurs are focused on creating work culture. The stories collected, and the quotes mentioned were able to grasp these differential approaches in how they manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. Additionally, these quotes and this theme supports the discovery of their different approaches for this social issue.

Through comparing the themes from research question one and two, I was able to answer research question three. The themes established after reviewing the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management are (1) Similar on incorporating conversations and; (2) Contrasting on prioritizing creating a work

culture versus company growth. Therefore, my completed response to research question three presented at the beginning of the study is as follows:

Contrasting narratives reveal that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs are homogenous on incorporating conversations to manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. However, they contrast on prioritizing creating a work culture versus company growth.

## Summary

This chapter summarized how the study was conducted, described how the data was collected, analyzed, and provided results of the study for each of the research questions. In summary, the responses for each of the research questions are as follows.

**Research Question 1:** What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results:** Narratives posit that Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict, as it pertains to leadership and change management, by tackling the realities of said contemporaneous or emerging conflict. Countering such disputes via formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations in the service and advancement of the organization.

**Research Question 2:** What do narratives say about how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results:** Narratives present that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by employing conversations

rooted in fundamental company values, orchestrating team meetings, and establishing a goal aligned, yet collaborative work culture.

**Research Question 3:** What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results:** Contrasting narratives reveal that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs both incorporate conversations to manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management, but they contrast on prioritizing creating a collaborative work culture versus focusing on company growth.

The next chapter will discuss findings and recommendations and highlight any potential implications of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## **Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this study is intended to assist organizational leaders for preparation for a change in generational leaders. The nature of the study sought to understand how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict when it comes to leadership and change management. The interviews posed three research questions, which have been answered based on the narrative inquiry conducted with participants of this study. The research questions and the findings of the interviews are as followed.

**Research Question 1**: What do narratives say about how Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results**: Narratives posit that Generation X entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict, as it pertains to leadership and change management, by tackling the realities of said contemporaneous or emerging conflict. Countering such disputes via formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations in the service and advancement of the organization.

**Research Question 2**: What do narratives say about how Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results**: Narratives present that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by employing conversations

rooted in fundamental company values, orchestrating team meetings, and establishing a goal aligned, yet collaborative work culture.

**Research Question 3**: What do narratives say about the similarities and differences between Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs managing organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management?

**Results**: Contrasting narratives reveal that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs both incorporate conversations to manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management, but they contrast on prioritizing creating a collaborative work culture versus focusing on company growth.

## Interpretation of the Findings

Findings from the study extend knowledge in the discipline through providing insights on how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Narratives included in this study showed Generation X entrepreneurs as being problem solvers regarding organizational strife created through leadership and change management. The results of the interviews showed them as being advanced and knowledgeable on their conflict resolution approach since they utilized dispute resolution practices such as mediation. Lastly, Generation X entrepreneurs can be seen committed to their organizations as they accept the fact that conflict is inevitable. Both Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs confront three conflict types that may arise in their formal structure, bargaining conflict, bureaucratic conflict, and systems conflict (Pondy, 1967).

The Generation X participants of this research can be seen as devoted to their organizations because of their willingness to manage existing disputes or disputes as they surface. Thus, they appear loyal to their firms and will not allow any strife that may occur

to hinder the mission and vision of the organization. They are conflict competent, open to learning and understanding the perspectives of their employees. Overall, this means that they have learned how to manage organizational conflict, addressing issues that may stem from bargaining conflict, bureaucratic conflict and systems conflict.

Narratives included in this study showed Millennial entrepreneurs as conversationalist when it comes to their chosen method to resolve the organizational conflict. Millennial entrepreneurs are profoundly reliant on these conversations during team meetings. Their team meeting permits them to settle issues within their organizations proficiently. Thereby, interviews indicate that the chosen conflict resolution method is facilitation, as it would allow them to host conversations to manage conflict within their institution, as it pertains to leadership and change management. Conversations would eliminate the possibility for destructive conflict to contribute to hostility amongst the teams (Pondy, 1992). These dialogues also aid Millennial entrepreneurs in setting the tone for a collaborative work culture.

This collaborative work culture might be considered a group dynamic, used as a preventive measure to help manage and reduce conflict.  This collaborative work culture is modernizing how the organizational dispute is controlled and can potentially create loyal employees.  In totality, their approach to managing institutional dissension allows their organizations to achieve their mission and vision. While having a group dynamic, which approaches conflict from a prevention and reduction perspective, like a tightly knit family, Millennial entrepreneurs manage their organizational friction with homogenous aspects, aiming to remain loyal and resolve conflict through dialogue. This method

allows the conflict to be constructive and become a contributor to creativity and innovation (Pondy, 1992).

When comparing how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational disputation, there were two prominent contextual points. The first shows that both groups of generational entrepreneurs are entrenched in organizing a form of dialogue to resolve the institutional conflict. Generation X entrepreneurs value formal conversations such as mediation to manage organizational conflict. Meanwhile, the Millennial entrepreneurs' preferred procedure to managing disputes is less formal dialogue such as individual or group team meetings. However, what remains consistent are their resemblances to using conversations. This similarity of using discussions suggests that both groups of entrepreneurs have a foundational value in using communications to resolve an organizational conflict.

The second contextual point speaks to the differences between how both groups of generational entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Generation X entrepreneurs are focused on company growth, while Millennial entrepreneurs prioritize having a work culture. The differences suggest that Generation X entrepreneurs are reactive to organizational conflict while Millennial entrepreneurs are proactive. The choices of how each manages corporate disputes show the leadership styles of the generational entrepreneurs leading these organizations. Their natural leadership style shapes the conflict culture of their companies. However, it could influence the frequency of organizational conflict regarding leadership and change management, based on the employees present within the company.

Based on this study, Generation X entrepreneurs can be operating with either autocrat leadership or a developer leadership. As previously mentioned in chapter two, autocrat leadership is a style of leadership, which lacks trust in others and is solely focused on getting the job done. These types of leaders also delegate tasks to others but keep decision making to themselves. Developer leadership is a style of leadership, which trusts people and is primarily concerned with developing them as individuals. This style assumes that individual members of a group who take part personally in the decision-making process will have a more significant commitment to the objectives and goals of the organization (Reddin, 1970). However, further studies will be needed to provide insights and make determinations as to the leadership styles of Generation X entrepreneurs.

Based on this study, Millennial entrepreneurs can be operating with either benevolent autocrat leadership or executive leadership. Benevolent autocrat leadership is a style of leadership, which knows what is expected of people, and how to get these things completed without causing conflict. Executive leadership is a style of leadership, which is good with motivation, setting high standards, treats everyone differently and believes firmly in team management (Reddin, 1970).  However, further studies will be needed to provide insights and make determinations as to the leadership styles of Millennial entrepreneurs.

The peer-reviewed literature in chapter two was unable to provide any insights into how Generation X or Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict concerning leadership and change management.  Prior written works were able to describe a variety of personality traits and stereotypes typically associated with

Generation X and Millennials. However, none of the characteristics and stereotypes was consistent enough to be related to the findings of this study. The interpretations and insights of this study uncover new contexts, which go beyond discussions in previous literature.

Theoretical frameworks used for this study were Theory of Generations and Realistic Group Conflict. The social theories used in this study assisted in analyzing and interpreting the findings. For this study, both theoretical frameworks were able to offer a holistic interpretation and explained the cause and effect pattern. According to the Theory of Generations, problems of generations uncover matters that must be deliberated in an intergenerational society. Consequently, it explains the significance of the study and the importance of retrieving insights on how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

The underlying philosophies embedded within this theoretical framework explain why Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs face conflicts in leading their intergenerational workforces. The Theory of Generations demonstrates that it is essential to recognize that different generations have contrasting work values. Therefore, in an intergenerational workforce, conflict is inevitable. Manneheim's (1952) Theory of Generations further explains how organizational strife can develop within these organizations. This theoretical framework is consistent with the study as both agree that each generation differentiates how they manage organizational conflict.

Realistic Group Conflict positions that conflict occurs in groups due to competition over symbolic resources. As it pertains to this study, symbolic resources include those that are created through leadership and change management. The

Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurial participants of the study were interviewed on issues of pay, time off, job duties. These problems were some of the causes of organizational conflict, which stemmed from leadership and change management. Realistic Group conflict explains that these differences which are symbolic resources lead to organizational conflict. Hence, it is another reason how this theoretical framework supports the study.

This theoretical framework further explains why conflict within these organizations developed. However, Realistic Group Conflict Theory explains that it is essential to eliminate this conflict to protect the peace within the organization. Since the success of a company depends on minimal conflict, this theoretical framework suggests that dispute can only be resolved through intergroup cooperation (Jackson, 1993). Therefore, the Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs of this study are applying concepts of this theoretical framework into their organizations. Generation X entrepreneurs are countering their disputes via formal dialogue and compromised interventions, and Millennial entrepreneurs are employing conversations. Both generational entrepreneurs are seeking to eliminate or reduce organizational conflict within their organization.

**Limitations of the Study**

As the study was being conducted, there were not any denoting issues of trustworthiness. The credibility of the research was secured through member checks. Member checks were administered to all participants to ensure that the transcription of their interview was correct. Issues of transferability were addressed through using purposive sampling, which allowed focus on the characteristics of each participant of the

study. These strategies prevented any significant issues limitations to the trustworthiness of the study since they were preventative measures. Limitations of the study that could potentially threaten the trustworthiness of the study would be the sample size and the geographic location of the sample size.

Only two groups of generations were selected for the study due to time constraints and the amount of time it took to interview with each research participants. The sample size of the examination consisted of twelve participants, six Generation X entrepreneurs, and six Millennial entrepreneurs. As for the geographic location of the sample size, it is comprised of only the inhabitants of the United States of America due to the time constraints and the difficulties that could have once more developed from participant recruitment. Further, denoting that the study does not permit generalization as further research on the topic is needed for the finding of the study to be generalized. Future research may be able to overcome these limitations by utilizing a substantial sample size and recruiting research assistance to save time.

**Recommendations**

Recommendations for further research have been recognized because of conducting this study. A suggestion would be to replicate the study with a larger sample size within the United States. In reproducing the study, the goal would be to uncover if there are similar results for how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it correlates with leadership and change management.

A second recommendation would be to replicate the study with a sample size outside of the United States. Since being an entrepreneur is global, it would be another compelling group to study. They could lend a profound influence on how Generation X

and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it correlates to leadership and change management on a global scale. The results can also be evaluated to see comparisons or discrepancies to this existing study or the study discussed as the first recommendation.

Finally, another recommendation for further research would be to analyze and evaluate Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs who have added innovation to their nonprofit organizations. It would be intriguing to peel back the layers and assess how they manage organizational conflict regarding leadership and change management. Hence, this may give pointers to help corporate leaders understand what conflict management processes can be used for their nonprofit organizations.

**Implications**

At an organizational level, the impact of a positive social change of this study will be for stakeholders. Stakeholders of organizations will now be able to have insights of how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs will also know what structures can be implemented to their corporate design for managing organizational conflict. Inevitably this will also increase the potency in which organizational dispute is resolved. There will also be positive social change at a societal level.

While this study is unable to be generalized to the population, it can still provide insights as to how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs lead their organizations, disputing the stereotypes created for each generation in previous literature. Therefore, the study uncovers that all individuals of a particular generational cohort do not fit within the stereotypical boundaries. However, the significant implication of this study will be filling

the gap in the literature on this topic through a contribution of the significant finding of this study, which reveals how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

## Conclusion

This study was able to explain how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Narratives from the participants of this study were able to uncover how each generation manage organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management. The narratives uncover that Generation X tackles the realities of said contemporaneous or emerging conflict by countering such disputes via formal dialogue and compromised reconciliations because the focus as elements of a hold is in the service and advancement of the organization.

The study reveals that Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management by employing conversations rooted in fundamental company values, orchestrating team meetings, and establishing a goal aligned, yet collaborative work culture. Lastly, the study discloses that Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs are homogenous on incorporating conversations to manage organizational conflict as it relates to leadership and change management. However, they contrast on prioritizing creating a work culture versus company growth.

Antecedent to this study, it was common for researchers who study the transitioning of generational change in organizations to focus on managing generational work styles and attitudes within the workplace. However, there was still insufficient existing literature on how Generation X and Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict. Through researching and unveiling how Generation X and

Millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict, this study was able to fill a gap

in the literature as it is an introductory study for this research phenomenon.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions about how you manage organizational conflict within your company as it pertains to leadership and change management. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge. This interview should take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Opening Questions
1. What year were you born?
2. When was your company founded and where is it based?
3. What products or services does your company provide to consumers?
4. How many employees does your company have?
5. What is your role within your company?

Focused Questions: Leadership
6. Tell me a story about a time when you had to use your leadership skills within your company.
7. What were your employees' reactions towards this?
8. Tell me a story about a time when an employee reacted negatively to your leadership style.
9. Do you have any stories on how others leaders such as managers in the company reacted toward your leadership.
10. Tell me about how do you deal with the other leaders within your company who react negatively towards your leadership style?

Focused Questions: Change Management
11. Explain to me how do you communicate changes within your company to your employees?
12. What were your employees' reactions towards this?
13. Tell me a story about a time when an employee reacted negatively to the changes happening in your company.
14. Do you have any stories on how others leaders such as managers reacted toward changes in the company.
15. Tell me about how do you deal with the other leaders within your company who react negatively towards company changes?

Closing Questions
16. Tell me about some of the challenges or roadblocks that you face when leading your company?
17. Explain to me how you handle these challenges or roadblock when they occur.

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

**MEMORANDUM**

To:        **Sidjae Price**
From:      **Pei-Fen Li, Ph.D,**
           **Center Representative, Institutional Review Board**
Date:      **October 23, 2017**
Re:        **IRB #:  2017-611; Title, "Understanding how generation X and millennial**
           **entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict"**

I have reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at the center level.  Based on the information provided, I have determined that this study is exempt from further IRB review under **45 CFR 46.101(b) ( Exempt Category 2)**.  You may proceed with your study as described to the IRB.  As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

1) CONSENT:  If recruitment procedures include consent forms, they must be obtained in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects and the process affords subjects the opportunity to ask questions, obtain detailed answers from those directly involved in the research, and have sufficient time to consider their participation after they have been provided this information.  The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed in a secure file separate from de-identified participant information.  Record of informed consent must be retained for a minimum of three years from the conclusion of the study.

2)ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS:  The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair and me (954-262-5369 and Pei-Fen Li, Ph.D, respectively) of any adverse reactions or unanticipated events that may develop as a result of this study.  Reactions or events may include, but are not limited to, injury, depression as a result of participation in the study, life-threatening situation, death, or loss of confidentiality/anonymity of subject.  Approval may be withdrawn if the problem is serious.

3)AMENDMENTS:  Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, number or types of subjects, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.  Please be advised that changes in a study may require further review depending on the nature of the change.  Please contact me with any questions regarding amendments or changes to your study.  The NSU IRB is in compliance with the requirements for the protection of human subjects prescribed in Part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) revised June 18, 1991.

Cc:     Elena P Bastidas, Ph.D.
        Pei-Fen Li, Ph.D

Appendix C: Recruitment Script

On the Phone or Email:

Greetings,

"Hello, my name is Sidjae Price.  I am a researcher at Nova Southeastern University.  I am conducting a research study about Understanding how Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict.

I am contacting you to ask if you would be willing to let me interview you.  It should take about 60-90 minutes to complete the interview. Participation is completely voluntary and your answers will be anonymous.

If you would be interested in participating in this interview, we can set up a time now or you can let me know when a good time would be to set-up a time for us to discuss the interview and see if you qualify for my study.

*If interested, investigator will set up date and time and will provide subject with investigator contact information.*  "I have you scheduled for an interview on _____.  If you have questions, I can be reached at (954)864-5863 or sidjae@mynsu.nova.edu.  Thank you for your help."

*If not interested, investigator will end the call*: "Thank you for your time."

Appendix D: Recruitment Flyer on university letterhead

**VOLUNTEERS WANTED**
**FOR A RESEARCH STUDY**

**Understanding how Generation X and millennial**
**entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict**

**Who:** Are you an English speaking Generation X or Millennial Entrepreneur with at least 5 employees based in the United States?

**What:** We are conducting a research study about understanding how Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict and looking for your input!

**Why:** The purpose of this research is to understand and identify the management of organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management for Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs in the United States.

**Where:** This research will be conducted with via Zoom Video Conferencing and you will be asked to  participate  in a 60-90 minute interview. Participation is voluntary and your answers will be anonymous.

**If interested please contact Sidjae Price at 954-864-5863 or sidjae@mynsu.nova.edu**

This research is conducted under the direction of
Sidjae Price, Doctoral Candidate of Department of Conflict Resolution
sidjae@mynsu.nova.edu
(954) 864-5863

Appendix E:  Participant Consent Form on university letterhead

**General Informed Consent Form**
**NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled**
*Understanding how Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict*

**<u>Who is doing this research study?</u>**
College: College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern
University/Department of Conflict Resolution
**Principal Investigator:** Sidjae Price, Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice.
**IRB protocol #: 2017-611**
**Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair:**
**Co-Investigator(s):** Elena Bastidas, Ph.D.
**Site Information:** Web application-Zoom Video Conferencing
**Funding:** Unfunded

**<u>What is this study about?</u>**
This is a research study, designed to test and create new ideas that other people can use. The purpose of this research study is to understand and identify the management of organizational conflict as it pertains to leadership and change management for Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs in the United States. As Generation X is preparing to transition out of organizations and into retirement, millennials are being viewed as the future entrepreneurs, decision makers, thought leaders, and business owners (Price, 2013). With this change, organizations can face a variety of issues when they consist of both Generation X and millennials (Hershatter& Epstein, 2010). There is a practical need for this research to be conducted since millennials are whom the U.S. will be looking to lead the country into the next era. If these cultural differences are not acknowledged, generational entrepreneurs will not be aware on what structures can be implemented into their organizational design to manage organizational conflict effectively. If these differences are addressed then organizations will have increased labor productivity and establish attainable organizational goals for their employees and the departments (Harber, 2011).

**<u>Why are you asking me to be in this research study?</u>**
You are being asked to be in this research study because you are either a Generation X or millennial entrepreneur with at least 5 employees. This study will include about18 people total. It is expected that up to 9 people will be Generation X entrepreneurs and up to 9 people will be millennial entrepreneurs.

**<u>What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?</u>**
While you are taking part in this research study, you will be asked to participate in 1 interview session that should take about 60-90mins.
Research Study Procedures - as a participant, this is what you will be doing:
- Participate in screening process to ensure that you are qualified to participate in study
- Review and sign the study's consent form if you wish to participate.
- Prior to the study you will encouraged to email/call about any questions your might have
- Work with PI to schedule a convenient meeting time and venue to conduct the interview.
- Participate in a 60-90 interview, answering all questions asked, which are approximately 15-30

**Could I be removed from the study early by the research team?** There are several reasons why the researchers may need to remove you from the study early.  Some reasons are if you appear to be in danger, no longer meet inclusion criteria, refusal to answer question, if you abruptly choose to end your participation in the study.

**Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?**
This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.  You may find some questions we ask you (or some things we ask you to do) to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can provide you materials to help you with these feelings.

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?**
You have the right to leave this research study at any time, or not be in it. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty or lose any services you have a right to get. If you choose to stop being in the study, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study but you may request that it not be used. All records must be kept for a minimum of 36 months but may be kept longer.

**What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?**
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigators. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form, if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

**Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?**
There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. We hope the information learned from this study will the PI to be the curator of a new story stemming from this research. Expected contributions of this study to the body of knowledge will include; Providing an inquiry into the management of organizational conflict for Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs; Determining if differences persist between how Generation X and millennial entrepreneurs manage organizational conflict; and Providing conceptualized themes, which generational entrepreneurs can use to manage organizational conflict within their business.

**Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?**
You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study.

**Will it cost me anything?**
There are no costs to you for being in this research study.

**How will you keep my information private?**
Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants of this study to avoid their easy identification.

This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any regulatory and granting agencies (if applicable). If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely The digital recordings, transcripts and notes taken during the interview, will be locked in a file cabinet in my home located at 11241 W. Atlantic Blvd Apt 208 Coral Springs, Florida 33071. My personal computer that is password protected is assessable to only the PI, the password holder. All participants will be informed of the limits of their confidentiality as the recordings may be shared with the IRB personnel and my committee chair if requested. All data will be kept for a minimum of 36 months all and digital recordings will be deleted, and all research data will be destroyed by burning.

**Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?**
This research study involves audio and/or video recording. This recording will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any of the people who gave the researcher money to do the study (if applicable). The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

**Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?**
If you have questions now, feel free to ask us.  If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:
Primary contact: Sidjae Price, Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice can be reached at (954)864-5863 from Monday-Saturday 9am-9pm or contacted via email anytime, any day at sidjae@mynsu.nova.edu.

**Research Participants Rights**
For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:
Institutional Review Board
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790
IRB@nova.edu
You may also visit the NSU IRB website at www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participantsfor further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

**Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section**
Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study.  In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time.  If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research stud, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep.  You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

**SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:**
- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research.

**Adult Signature Section**
I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

| Printed Name of Participant | Signature of Participant | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent and Authorization | Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Authorization | Date |
| Printed Name of Participant | Signature of Participant | Date |
| Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent and Authorization | Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Authorization | Date |