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Managing Workforce Diversity in a New Age:
The Challenges and Implications of Ageism

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Abstract: *Managing workforce diversity is one of the major challenges facing human resource professionals today. Key among the many diversity challenges is the reality of dealing with a growing aging workplace population. As a result age discrimination and ageism has been a subtle and covert strategy of many organizations for years. The great recession brought the true realities of ageism to the surface in a distinct way with the number of reduction in force programs that seemed to wrongly target older workers disproportionately as evidenced by the number of age discrimination cases filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) during that period of time. In a time when many elements of discrimination are bubbling to the surface in today's American society, ageism is among the most significant. This is a study of the sociological and legal aspects of covert and overt ageism as related to organizational diversity programming and the recognition of the need for more effective diversity strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

The current workforce offers an interesting generational mix that makes diversity management an interesting challenge in the field of human resources when it comes to the performance of the various functions such as planning, recruiting, selection, training and compensation (Gordon, 2017). As the Age Discrimination in Employment Act recently reached the milestone of its 50th year of existence, it is in some ways ironic that that law itself is about the same age or a little older than those it covers. In a time when it was thought that a more progressive philosophy was being applied in society as well as the workplace of equal treatment, mutual respect for others and a sense of opportunity for all regardless of personal differences, the reality appears to be quite different. In just the last five years in an era of an African-American President and more open policies in general society, a backlash has occurred with a force which has been very surprising. With all that has been occurring as reported in the news headlines, is it really a surprise that age discrimination in the workplace is taking place to the extent that it is? Call it what you will and accept it to whatever degree you believe, it exists in many forms in the workplace.

LESS THAN SUBTLE AGEISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Age discrimination and ageism are threats to aging well into the twenty-first century with ample evidence of its adverse legal and social consequences (Angus & Reeve, 2006). Hard forms of age discrimination reflect a violation of legally established standards that relate to actual decisions made by employers that impact career development while soft forms such as negative age stereotypes or the perception of reduced employee value occur in the interpersonal sphere (Stypinska & Turek, 2017). Despite the efforts of the last half century to minimize the effects of decisions that adversely affect older workers, the prevalence of questionable legal and social practices remain a serious problem (Lahey, 2010). Documented legal violations related to age in the workplace can take the forms of lower pay, being restricted from training opportunities, harassment, hostile and degrading work environments (Fribergh & Kjaerum, 2011). Soft discrimination typically shows itself in forms of age stereotypes and negative opinions that put older workers in a disadvantaged position that can influence the outcomes of interviews, performance reviews or possible work assignments (Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

Some in-depth research on age discrimination has found evidence of an unequal distribution among populations of older workers in terms of incumbency, profession, gender and population centers (Stypinska & Turek, 2017). It appears to occur more often with job seekers rather than with those already employed indicating some evidence of a lack of bargaining power in dealing with employers (Standing, 2011). In addition, it seems to be different for those of certain professions such as in the information technology field and banking as well as the service sector based on customer-driven attitudes (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Additionally, the private sector is more discriminatory than the public sector and for workers in urban areas more so than in rural ones (Johnson & Neumark, 1997; McGuire et al., 2008). There is evidence that competition for jobs in urban areas has increased due to the movement of younger and skilled workers from small towns, villages to cities (Szymanska & Bieganska, 2014). Another area of the reported differences in age discrimination is related to gender. A higher prevalence of age discrimination was reported among women in terms of job opportunities and advancement, especially those living in urban areas possibly due to lower education levels and job experience (Stypinska & Turek, 2017).

THE AGE OF AGE ARBITRAGE

Although sixty may be the new fifty, older workers over the last ten years have been faced with the realities of an economy that can change very quickly from good to bad along with a lack of a global consensus as to the best time to retire. The Great Recession of a decade ago quickly shifted the retirement paradigm. Prior to 2008 many early baby boomers born in 1946 were targeting that year because of their initial eligibility at age 62 for Social Security, prompting some to call it the year of the "Big Leave" (McAlinden et al., 2008). Amid the plans of Human Resource department to step up recruiting to fill the anticipated employment gap left by the Big Leave, the recession of 2008 changed all that. Older workers did not retire as expected and actually remained on the job out of the fear of the declining value of their retirement funds and the fear of an uncertain future held by many in the workplace. As the years have passed the rate of expected retirements has slowed leaving more than expected number of older workers in the workplace (Truxillo, Cadiz & Rineer, 2014). While many sixty-year-olds may not feel significantly different than most fifty-year-olds, complaints and concerns have been growing consistently because of physically demanding jobs, rivalries with younger workers and increased offers of early retirement (Fishman, 2010).

The idea of slowly and quietly evolving to a workplace of planned and prevalent age discrimination may be here sooner than many people think through a concept known as age arbitrage. The basic idea of age arbitrage is the systematic strategy of forcing out older, high-paid employees with younger, more energetic and lower paid workers. Fishman (2010) states that age arbitrating is an essential global strategy for businesses trying to compete in today's economy and any indications of perceived wins in establishing younger workers and low wages will only intensify its prevalence as a future essential and successful management strategy.

The strategic move to reduce older employees in the workplace does have its issues and concerns elsewhere in the economy. Efforts of management to jettison older and higher paid workers can help the United States achieve a relatively young labor force and thus make room for the "boomerangers" who are younger potential employees forced to move back in with their parents because of older workers holding on in the economy (Fishman, 2010). In addition, the push to turn out older employees shifts the burden to other portions of the economy. While organizations generally pay older employees more for their work compared to younger employees, experience is not as valuable to justify such a difference. Therefore, organizations are practicing a type of shifting employment strategy that wrings out inefficiencies such as older worker higher pay, pensions and continued health care coverage whereby the modified private sector safety net will require a fundamentally different public sector system (Leonhardt, 2007). For those no longer receiving a pay check in the working economy the shift in elder income goes to government

support in the form of Social Security. In the United States about half of the retired workers live on government support with the proportions being even higher in places such as France and Germany (Haas, 2007). Being faced with such financial burdens economic systems ponder the possibilities of higher taxes, deficit spending, reductions in benefits or cuts elsewhere.

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY AND AGE DISCRIMINATION

Terror Management Theory is based on a psychological conflict of the self-preservation instinct and the cognition of inevitable death which produces terror in humans (Greenberg & Arndt, 2011). In general society and the workplace these issues create various anxieties that may take many forms with some more visible than others. While a calm facade may be accomplished through rationalizations, there is a hidden person in us all scared about the inevitable reality of death which in some way fosters fear, resentment and less than civil social discourse toward older individuals (Roth, 2001).

The concept of Terror Management and ageism have the unique features of prejudice based on several specific threats, those of death, animality and insignificance (Martens, Goldenberg & Greenberg, 2005). Ageism arises from Terror Management because we try to avoid it by thinking that death is unnatural and results from accidents, war or disease when in fact we see constant reminders and live it every day witnessing the trials and hardships of the elderly among us (Langer, 1982). The threat of animality is the deterioration of the physical body and its associated problems for the elderly and those around them because of loss of control, functionality and negative stereotyping (Isaksen, 2002; Bowd, 2003). Another reason to see overt ageism out of Terror Management is the threat of insignificance. A loss of self-esteem based on cultural standards and diminishing characteristics and abilities create feelings of a loss of self-worth and reduced value to others (Bowd, 2003; Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). Because the elderly are not highly valued in society or a business context they become constant reminders of human mortality and declining abilities. In light of this, organizations move with the tacit approval of management to develop and implement strategic plans that may reflect and carry out ageism, discrimination and age arbitraging.

A NEW IMMIGRATION POLICY BASED ON AGE

While many states, the President and the Congress of the United States and citizens in various regions of the country have vigorously debated our national immigration policy with no specific solutions, business organizations have very quietly adopted a different kind of immigration policy that is specific in its nature and discriminating in its application. It is a very common practice that many organizations use to recruit their employees. Instead of being obvious in their intent to consider only younger candidates for positions, many organizations now use terms such as "digital natives" in recruiting in the media, advertising and tech industries (Giang, 2015). The term digital natives is not new. It was first used in an article about students of the early 21st century who were born in the early stages of digital technology and would grow up using it from a very early age (Prensky, 2001). Because they are immersed in the technology they find all around them they are well versed to understand and use it and are the native speakers of the digital language versus older workers who are known as digital immigrants or those who had to learn to use and adapt to technology and its advances (Gaing, 2015). The term digital immigrants feeds the stereotype of older workers who came of age before the internet who are slow to use technology, reluctant to learn and cost organizations more in terms of pay and training costs (Rosenblatt, 2017).

Based on what organizations seek today in their recruiting efforts, digital natives are likely to embrace an organizational culture that encourages sharing and team work environments. Digital natives see things more horizontally based on egalitarian terms rather than dividing the world into hierarchies that rely on centralized and control oriented governance as digital immigrants tend to favor (DeGraff, 2014).

A simple search of many job ads shows evidence of numerous references to the term "digital natives." The question then is, what does this really mean in recruiting and selection? Since the beginnings of the internet age, many organizations have openly pursued younger tech savvy candidates who can help them compete in the new digital economy (Gaing, 2015). Because of this phenomenon the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is now dealing with new forms of age discrimination in the Internet era with 20,857 age related claims being filed in 2016 (Rosenblatt, 2017). In the past the EEOC has stated that while terms in job advertisements such as "college student" or "young blood" violated the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the use of digital native as a code word for young workers of the digital age is more difficult to define and only a few cases have been tested related to the use of this term (Gaing, 2015). The EEOC has yet to officially comment on job postings that seek digital natives but it is believed that as more cases are filed, the EEOC will likely find that its use will constitute disparate treatment because it illegally discriminates against digital immigrants over forty (Sink & Bales, 2016). Future technology based age discrimination cases will have to prove that disparate treatment was present in that the candidate was treated differently than others who don't share the same protected characteristic outside of specific bona fide occupational qualifications or BFOQs (Guerin, 2017).

Age discrimination in technology related to recruiting, hiring and retention is obviously a   sensitive issue for older workers because of the adoption, use and fluency of the young in this area. Many job postings require applicants to be digital natives and even state it as a qualification as seen in ads placed by companies such as Red Bull, Michael Kors, Hearst Magazines and Under Armour (Sink & Bales, 2016). Although the use of the term digital native is on the rise there has only been one case that has looked at preferences for digital natives in employment versus the standards of the ADEA (Gregory, 2010). In the case of *Marlow v. Chesterfield County School Board (2010),* Debra Marlow at age 60 was initially hired by Chesterfield County Public Schools of Virginia as the Director of Community Relations. After 21 years she was demoted to a lower position and her job was given to her younger assistant and within six months her job was eliminated altogether due to budget cuts. Marlow had sued the school board and the superintendent who openly favored employees with "21st Century skills" such as Marlow's replacement. While the district court found that Marlow's case had some merit, the term "21st Century skills" was ambiguous at best and her job being eliminated was budgetary in nature and not age discrimination (Sink & Bales, 2016). However, it is believed that future cases examining the specific use of term digital natives may have different outcomes and will be sufficient for a plaintiff to prove a prima facie case of age discrimination (Ginsberg, 2010).

Total and free access to the labor market should in theory be a reality to all that are able to work and provide worthwhile contributions to organizations and society. It is believed by some that most of the time people are not consciously aware of their biases or stereotypes and acknowledging that they are implicit to the point of not seeing or recognizing them is a hedge against their negative effects (Rosenblatt, 2017). In addition, the organizations who do tolerate ageist behaviors are more prone to show and practice discriminatory behaviors (Stypinska & Turek, 2017). There needs to be more willingness to recognize ageism which is a barrier to effective diversity policies designed to extend working careers and to eliminate its effects at the societal, organizational, interpersonal and individual levels (Swift et al., 2017; Zacher et al., 2017).

The future holds many ironies in the age of the increased need for technological and digital proficiency. The labor force participation rate for those age 65 or older is projected to increase from the current 18.6% to 21.7% by 2024 (Rosenblatt, 2017). In addition, it was the digital immigrants who invented, developed and taught the technologies that digital natives use and easily apply and the ultimate twist may be that the children of digital natives will likely act like digital immigrants themselves in the future (Powell, 2007; DeGraff, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The ways to effectively debunk ageism in the workplace is for the older worker to take an active role in further developing their human capital, actively engaging in all training and learning opportunities and encouraging and accepting mentoring and advisory relationships with younger workers. Active aging and age-inclusive Human Resource practices that address the issues associated with older workers in the workplace can set a positive tone for an age-friendly and age inclusive work environment (Zacher et al., 2017). These enlightened diversity practices should include how organizations make key personnel decisions related to recruiting, selection, training and promotion to discourage age arbitrage practices and terror management situations.

Many organizations are involved in developing innovative age diversity management programs and creative solutions to better serve their older employees that also result in positive outcomes for organizations in terms of overall performance (Bohm et al., 2014). In addressing issues of age diversity in the workplace, new ideas are being put in place that involve customizing work arrangements known as idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) that leverage the skills and experiences of older employees as related to schedule, location, task and developmental opportunities (Bal & Boehm, 2017). I-deals are negotiated agreements that allow organizations the opportunity to take advantage of older worker skills who in turn are more committed to their assigned tasks. These efforts, also known as job crafting, encourage programs such as bridge employment to help older workers to gradually transition to retirement while at the same time sharing their skills and experiences through formal mentor and coaching relationships with younger employees (Zacher et al., 2017). As time goes on enlightened age diversity to counteract issues of ageism can be both transformational and transactional in nature (French & Ali, 2016). Effective age diversity management strategies and policies can help elevate organizational performance based on the agreed to mutual exchanges thus providing significant benefits to organizations and society in general.

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Gender Imbalance Improvements in Academia, Business, and Physical Education

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Abstract: *Traditionally, men have disproportionally held leadership positions in academia, business, and physical education. Fortunately, graduate programs in each field are providing women opportunities that were not apparent a few decades ago. We examine Business and Physical Education for transgressions of discrimination and provide evidence from personal interviews which indicate progress has been made for women in these fields. We provide several cross-disciplinary themes that transcend gender barriers to promote an equitable workforce in addition to field specific recommendations.*

Key words*: Gender Imbalance, Higher Education, Business, Physical Education*

INTRODUCTION

Female representation in academia, business, and physical education have historically been underwhelming. Moreover, leadership positions tend to be male dominated whether it is administration, management, or advancing towards a terminal degree. To combat this phenomenon, graduate programs have focused their attention on attracting and recruiting quality female candidates, to provide a more equitable workforce going forward. It is essential to recognize the gender imbalance within higher education as these faculty aid in the socialization process of attaining necessary values and attitudes towards a job and often the faculty themselves become the individual's mentors (Dodds, 2005). Furthermore, having a mentor with the same gender can enhance the mentee's experience (Blake-Beard, 2011) and lead to advancement in an individual's career (Dodds, 2005). Therefore, to increase career advancement of women in business and physical education, investigation of higher education discrepancy in ranks is warranted.

HIGHER EDUCATION

As females advance through academic ranks, they may be confronted with barriers that do not necessarily plague their male counterparts. This may lead to a gender imbalance (Easterly & Pemberton, 2008) within rank. Though barriers such as motivation, lack of clarity, and timeframe may prevent promotion to any faculty member, gender imbalance at rank is clearly disproportional. As evidence males and female acquire PhDs at equal rates yet have different degrees of success to attain full professor. In 2001, 26% of full professors were female (American Association of University Professors, 2001). Despite a push towards equity, in 2016 only a slight increase has been noted: 33% of females were full, 45% were associate, and 51% were assistant (The Condition of Education, 2018).

This gender imbalance has been postulated across academic literature. A classic study by Long, Allison, and McGinnis (1993), found that with all else being equal, women tended to be promoted more slowly. More recently, in 2015, Heijstra, Bjarnason, and Rafnsdóttir continue this assertion by arguing that women are promoted at a lower rate than men. Men are about twice as likely to achieve the rank of full professor, and women take around 25% longer to attain the rank (Buch et al., 2011). At one private research-oriented university (R2), 48% of women associate professors with 13 or more years since their highest degree had yet to be promoted compared to 21% of men (Geisler et al., 2007). This may be partially because at the associate professor level, women are likely to spend more time on teaching and service than on research (Link, Swann, & Bozeman, 2008; Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, & Agiomavritis, 2011). Additionally, women are often assigned more committee work, especially in the STEM fields. Gardner and Blackstone (2013) had one female participant explain, "You know, I don't need to be on 12 search committees [*laughs*]. So, it would help if when they ask you for names you don't give them mine!" (p. 422). Britton (2010) reported high teaching and service obligations for both men and women. However, women had heavier student service loads and were not able to participate in the same service opportunities. One example given of a missed opportunity was traveling to conferences to establish a reputation and make connections to serve on national associations, as women often felt compelled to remain home and not travel (Link et al., 2008).

Women place more emphasis on family life, while research has not indicated the same conclusion for men. Britton (2010) suggested that women might feel obligated to play a significant role in the parenting of children. Females more frequently identify work/family issues as factors that slowed down their careers compared to men (Marcus, 2007). Marcus (2007) argued that deadlines for grants are unsympathetic to women who have children because agencies will not extend due dates. Moreover, Wolfinger and her colleagues (2008) proposed that women progress at a slower rate due to fewer opportunities. The authors substantiated this claim by noting that women who have a child under the age of six years are 22% less likely to attain tenure-track positions.

There also may be double standards in the evaluation of those who apply for full professorship in that women are typically held to higher standards in teaching, research, and service when assessed for promotion (Ginther, 2006). A Swedish study found that women needed to publish two-and-a-half times more than men to attain the same competence rating (Wenneras & Wold, 1997). Fear of not being marked "competent" may inspire hesitancy in some women qualified to seek promotion. This hesitancy is one factor that contributes to women remaining as associate professors for a longer time (Zakian et al., 2003). One study reported that only 10% of the male professors reported hesitancy when seeking promotion to full professor compared with 30% of females who reported hesitancy (Buch et al., 2011). Furthermore, the lack of female full professors may cause feelings of uncertainty as well. Gardner and Blackstone (2013, p. 421) report a female participant as stating, "I saw one woman who had tried three times to get promoted and didn't get it every time … I saw the men getting promoted only". The lack of role models can have a detrimental impact on a women's confidence to be promoted and can lead to hesitancy.

Overall, women are half as likely as men to be promoted to full professor at doctoral granting institutions (Curtis 2007) and stay at the rank of associate professor longer (Zakian et al., 2003). However, promotion to full professor may depend on context, as some institutions have policies that are more conducive to women becoming full professors. Berheide and Walzer (2014) found that women in two different liberal arts institutions with the same classification had varying experiences with promotion. The department in one college was more understanding and did not appear to have policies discriminatory to women. For instance, it was not seen as negative if the mother took a maternity leave after having a child. These participants characterized the process as "fair" between men and women, with both having equal teaching and service loads. The women at the other liberal arts university were less satisfied because of the amount of committee work and characterized their relationship with their department as "poor". These findings imply that the relationship with the department was a significant factor in promotion of female scholars.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Women have made positive strides in business over the past generation. Like higher education, equality has not been achieved quite yet for women in business. Thirty-five years ago, Steinberg and Shapiro (1982) investigated the validity of the notion that women do not possess the personality traits characteristic of senior managers. Using multiple measures, they found that male and female MBA students did not generally differ on most measures of personality. Their data suggested that female MBA students do possess the personality traits that are commonly used to define a competent manager. Even though the characteristics of male and female managers are similar, MBA students surveyed from 1975 to 1983 expressed a more negative attitude toward female leadership (Dubno, 1985). Furthermore, female executives have demonstrated the same negotiation propensity as males, but see a lesser return (Gerhart, 1991). Burke (2000) found that female leadership that considered themselves workaholics, tended to place less emphasis on the work-family balance. In previous decades, females often had to choose between a family and a successful corporate career. Although top women executives still earn between 8-25% less than male executives (controlling for differences in company size, occupational title, and industry) the wage gap is narrowing (Bell, 2005). Bell (2005) attributed the magnitude of the gender pay gap to be statically related to the gender of the Chief Executive and Corporate Board Chair. Thus, firms with women in key positions tend to have more equality in executive pay when compared to non-women led firms. Although, women are at a cumulative disadvantage compared to their male counterparts stemming from differential rewards to internal and external mobility (Merluzzi, 2015), the literature indicates that the gap is narrowing.

WOMEN IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In congruence with business, historically women in P.E have been discriminated against greatly due to perceived gender roles and motor skill abilities (Cazers & Curtner-Smith, 2017). For instance, it has been noted that men are the perceived "breadwinners" of the family which have historically put women in disadvantageous positions (Bloot & Browne, 1994). Even if hired, transgressions in the past have transpired where women are given lower pay for the same job or have been forced to resign from positions when married (Bloot & Browne, 1994). Due to these insidious acts, legislation has been passed such as The Equal Pay Act of 1963 which aimed at eliminating wage disparity based on sex (Bloot & Browne, 1994). However, despite such requirements, Hegewisch, Liepmann, Hayes, and Hartmann (2010) note that elementary and middle school female teachers make $933 a week compared to their male counterparts with $1,022. Furthermore, female teachers have been fired because of same sex marriage (Bornstein, & Bench, 2015).

Other reasons of discrimination have been noted in regard to motor skills which has prevented some women to attain administration positions or advance into higher education until recently as more female mentors have arisen. Cazers and Curtner-Smith (2017) noted, in their case study of a women physical education teacher, instances of her being not taken seriously pre- Title IX; this is legislation that prohibits discrimination based on gender in any federally funded education program or activity. Robin, the participant, missed opportunities and could recalled several salient experiences growing up in which she asserted there was no P.E teacher to assist her to shoot a basketball because she was not in the boys P.E. program. This inspired her to become a P.E teacher and eventually a professor. Because of legislation such as Title IX, and eventually, more females entering the field higher education such as Robin, there have been more role models. Dodds (2005) explored women PETE faculty mentees' perceptions of mentors during induction years. Mentors were characterized as having the women's best interests at heart, being enthusiastic, and making them feel valuable from the start. In addition, mentors help build collaborative relationships among other faculty members and were open to answer questions. These mentors helped women be successful within the field of higher education including: (a) induction into postsecondary culture, (b) tenure and promotion, (c) writing and research, and (d) teaching. Because of

the increase of mentors for females, Boyce, Lund. and O'Neil (2015) note there are now more female lectures than male in physical education teacher education. Legislation and mentors have positively impacted women in the field of physical education.

IMPROVEMENTS OVER TIME

Female Physical Education Scholars

We interviewed four women in Physical education about discrimination they encountered over their career. Participants were discussed early frustrations in the profession but noted increasing quality in academia. For anonymity, they will be referred to as Lisa, Edna, Marge, and Helen. Of note, most of the gender bias was witnessed anywhere from 20-30 years ago. At that time, it was difficult to envision women teaching a sport. Lisa remarked at her first job that she was told by some faculty and students "You're a girl! What could you possibly know about sports?" This blatant gender bias was apparent for the other women. Others, such as Marge, articulated instances of "stick to only sports you know." These included more "feminine" games as the participants described it. Helen had an experience in which faculty expressed the necessity for her to teach "gymnastics and dance" because she was a female and "probably" had more experience with the sports. However, other than athletics, promotion proved to be difficult as there were limited institutional knowledge in regard to women's needs. Edna remarked "When I was first starting out, I got pregnant with my first son. There were no rules in the handbook for how it would impact tenure and promotion." She felt that there was a need for things to be explicitly stated in the handbook. After, her first pregnancy she got together with the dean of her school to work out instances of maternity leave. These transgressions of discrimination did not deter Lisa, Marge, Helen, and Edna and facilitated a need to be excellent in the field in regard to teaching, research, and scholarship. Each professor was promoted to associate professor in the normal five to seven years and eventually all became full professors.

These women did state that there has been an improvement on gender equality because of clear expectations and consistent improvement over time. Edna explains "I think a lot of things are written down, especially with promotion and tenure. It's a lot less nebulous." She states that there is now a maternity section in their universities policy for promotion. As Lisa explains "Well everyone is evaluated on the same rubric, so if you don't do your job, it's your fault." Besides more well-defined expectations, participants alluded to improvement over time. Helen postulated "Well think about how far back Title IX was…. things have come a long way. It will only get better, as long as we are aware." All four participants stated that gender in their workplace is a nonissue currently.

Female MBAs

As higher education professionals alluded to, instances of discrimination in business have decreased over time. We interviewed five recent Valparaiso University MBA graduates, who completed their degree within the last 2-3 years go gather their experiences of workforce discrimination. According to the program director, Cindy Scanlan, the Valparaiso University MBA program has seen an increase in female representation in the last five years. Female enrollment has risen steadily, from 31% in 2013 to 43% in 2017. Cindy herself is a Valparaiso MBA graduate, who transitioned to higher education after a career in banking. She was promoted from Assistant Director of the program, to Director of Graduate Programs in Management. She was also influential in the local community by serving as both president and board member of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program of the Catholic Charities Advisory Board for LaPorte and Starke Counties. She has seen an increase in both numbers and success of female attendees and graduates at the MBA level. Our interviewees were professional females in the fields of higher education administration, engineering, business management, and healthcare management.

Most of our participants did not feel that they are discriminated against because of gender. However, Lori, who is an Engineer in a male dominated steel industry, has felt discrimination numerous times from her undergraduate to her professional years. Lori further elaborated,

> "Organizations will always discriminate and treat females differently. Especially a mother, having to take off for maternity leave. Being treated like we are disabled when we are pregnant. Taking too much company time if we have to express milk at work. They will always prefer a man for certain positions. Why are secretaries always female?"

She achieved recognition and congratulations for earning her MBA before age 30 but feels that advancement and promotion appear to be slower than her male counterparts. As the only female in her department, she experiences odd situations when she needs to take time to pump breast milk for her infant who is in day care. Her counterparts also give the impression that her maternity leave has affected her involvement in projects.

Allie has faced discrimination earlier in her career because of a supervisor who treated her unfairly. She mentioned,

> "There was a small window of time I felt discriminated against as a female and it was strictly due to one male supervisor who made it clear he didn't like working with women. Although I was completing all tasks expected of me, and then some, at a more than satisfactory level, I still felt as though my job was constantly on the line".

Conversely, Donna indicated that most of her department is female, so she has never felt discriminated against because of her gender. She expressed a sense of support among her colleagues.

All interviewees pursued the MBA for future job advancement and opportunities. Of our sample, only Donna already possessed a Masters. She completed her Master of Science in Organization and Corporate Communication from Northwestern University. Her pursuit of the MBA was primarily for her love of learning and excitement for new challenges. Each participant is proud of their accomplishment of attaining an advanced degree while balancing career and family commitments. Lori endured the most direct impact of gender imbalance as she was the only female in her department. She has since switched organizations with a positive outlook on the next stage of her professional career.

Positive Outlook and Recommendations

In the fields of Academia, Business and Physical Education, most of our sample noticed an improvement in gender balance. We notice that the longer the professional career, the greater the observed difference. Though each participants experience will be unique and different, we found several observations that are broadly applicable to females in the workplace.

1. Promote workplace support. Day care, extended maternity leave, and non-discriminatory practices are becoming more common. More specifically, the women in our study have witnessed less discriminatory practices over time. Larger organization typically have specific protocol in place to alleviate some of the work/life balance. Though it's not universal, even some smaller organizations have found it beneficial to offer additional flexibility to women, beyond what is required by law. Most of the women in our study felt supported by their organization and their co-workers. However, the female engineer, Lori, felt that her male counterparts weren't as understanding as the organization itself. There appeared to be a disconnect between the organizational support and the employee implementation. One way to remedy this situation is to have all employees take part in a sensitivity training workshop. It will benefit all employees regardless of their personal situation.

2. Women supporting women. One of our interviewees commented, "Some of the biggest knockers of females are females. They really don't give themselves credit for being able to do things, particularly in phys. ed. which has always been that sort of predominantly male area". The dominance of males in physical education leadership positions is likely due to the impact of gender image of the subject (Bloot & Browne, 1994). As more women have key roles in organizations, these perceptions will likely diminish. An example of women supporting women includes a local entrepreneur who founded her own organization. She had a successfully career that was put on hold due to the death of a child. It was in her daughter's memory, that she began a foundation that supports families who have suffered infant loss and premature birth. Her board of directors is mainly comprised of successful women who have endured similar tragedies. It personifies the example that women can have a successful career as well as maintain family responsibilities. Therefore, it's becoming less of a choice of one or the other. Women are supporting women to be successful at both.

3. Mentor other women. Females in physical education primarily advanced with the aid of mentors. Mentors were characterized as being positive and helping to alleviate concerns about the job. These mentors did not have to be exclusively female. Helen remarked that her mentor, who was a male, assisted her with publications and to meet people at national conferences. Mentors alleviated stress and facilitated the mentee to meet their most salient roles to be promoted. Lisa stated,

> "Aside from answer[ing] every question that I ever had, she encouraged me to do what I was passionate about doing in my scholarship… So, she encouraged me to do what I wanted to do to start with as opposed to telling me to do something different. And, I think that was absolutely key—having people who supported what I was passionate about versus trying to indoctrinate me into what they were passionate about."

Marge had a similar experience and discussed being able to rely on her mentor: "If I was having an issue, I could ask [Name] how she would handle the situation." The mentees explained that it was a positive experience and now wanted to aid future faculty members in being successful. These same instances of a gender bias have been noted subjects such as physics, chemistry, and mathematics. According to Browne (1991), the imbalance of sexes in senior positions is of particular concern, because females are not seen to hold status positions, and consequently, girls and other female teachers are not provided with positive female role models.

1. **Persistence pays off**. The entire sample of female physical education faculty was promoted to full professor. Though some of them may have taken longer than others, their persistence towards excellence was rewarded in the end. Similarly, when looking at Valparaiso University's College of Business, we identified two leaders who have been promoted within the organization. Assistant Dean Toni Spaliaras has been with the university for two decades. While working at the university, she pursued and achieved her MBA. As she grew in her career, so did her responsibility as a testament to persistence. Similarly, at Valparaiso University, Cindy Scanlan, Graduate Programs in Management Coordinator, wasn't always in her current role. Though she had her MBA prior to joining Valpo, her experience, degree, and performance has allowed her to run the university's MBA program.

2. **Education is an opportunity for advancement**. Something tangible, like a terminal degree is hard for any employer over look. Granted, education alone won't necessarily get you promoted, but it's a qualification that can differentiate the candidate enough to bring her to the next stage of her career. In all three fields, the achievement of the advanced degree indicated an opportunity for

our subjects, regardless of concentration. Though personal sacrifices may have to be made to achieve the degree, the consensus was that the women who completed their graduate studies had zero regrets in doing so.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONS

Academia, physical education, and business may all benefit from the aforementioned recommendations, however each job has many unique nuances that may facilitate advancement. The following sections are dedicated to the idiosyncrasies of each occupation that will promote successful career opportunities for women.

Academia – Collaborate on Research

Link, et. al, (2008) and Misra et. al, (2011) found that women may have the propensity to spend time on teaching and service rather than research. Given that research is vital to tenure and promotion, scholars must prioritize scholarship among the other commitments. A strategy to combat the "lack of time" (Gardner, & Blackstone, 2013, p. 413) and increase publication rates is to collaborate with senior colleagues on projects. This approach can increase publication rates, presentations, and grants awarded which is significant for tenure (Dodds, 2005). Furthermore, Link et al, (2008) pointed out that woman may feel compelled to remain home and not travel thus limiting their exposure in the field. If travel is a limitation, collaboration is a way to get the research out in the general population, thus leading to additional research opportunities. Ideally, scholars should make a conscious effort to build a national/international network by presenting at conferences (Mabrouk, 2007) despite it being challenging in some cases.

Another suggestion specific to academia can be finding a culture that is conducive for success. Often, information on the history of the school can be found on the website. Items like diversity initiatives and women's success can all be found. Some top research universities celebrate influential women in the field. For example, Louise Freer Hall, at University of Illinois, is home to the Kinesiology and Community Health department. Louise Freer came to the University of Illinois in 1915. Over the course of three decades, Professor Freer promoted equality among men and women in physical education. Midway through her career at University of Illinois, the school built a separate building dedicated to women's physical education. Subsequently, the university named the women's gymnasium, Louise Freer Hall, in her honor in 1968. Today it exemplifies the tradition of strong female leadership by having Dr. Amy Woods as the department head.

Business – Join associations and network

In-groups that dominant business result from networking and support. Likewise, women may find those opportunities may arise while supporting each other. Women have the opportunity to promote others in a variety of ways. First, woman may be able to amplify the voices of other women executives. In a group setting, having support of others will amplify the point, resulting in a greater likelihood of adoption by senior executives. Second, women should actively mentor other women in business. We have witnessed a strong connection develop between female guest speakers and students in business. Many of the successful leaders that have "made it" are inspired to assist others in their chosen vocation. Similarly, the third suggestion is to branch out and network. Ideally, this will both gain exposure to what you are currently doing as well as provide more knowledge of future opportunities. Potentially, this could even be accomplished by investing in others where you see potential. For instance, a female entrepreneur may be lacking resources to get a project underway. A colleague who believes in her may take that leap of faith and provide an opportunity that would not otherwise exist. Likewise, women have earned top roles in large companies and have showed significant results.

Successful leaders, such as Indra Nooyi, provide examples of how women can succeed at the top. She joined PepsiCo in 1994 and rose through the company with increasing responsibility and subsequent success. She was named CFO in 2001 which led to her becoming president and CEO in 2006. During her 12-year reign, the recently retired Nooyi won numerous awards and accolades while successfully growing the PepsiCo brand (Isidore, 2018).

Physical Education – Specialize

Our sample of female physical education practitioners universally stated that they were assumed to have interest or knowledge in female dominated activities because they were female. Similarly, there was often a divide where women could only teach or coach sports of the same gender. Conversely, men have had a much longer history of teaching and coaching women. For example, Geno Auriemma has been the head basketball coach at the University of Connecticut since 1985. In three decades as head coach, he has accumulated over 1,000 career wins. Women coaching men's sports does exist, but at a far less frequent rate. Fortunately, the past decade has included several influential female pioneers in profession men's sports. Table 1 includes a small sample of the many women who are working towards reducing the gender discrepancy in male sports (Feldman, 2016).

TABLE 1 – PIONEERING WOMEN IN MALE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

Name	Position
Becky Hammond	San Antonio Spurs Assistant Coach Hired in 2014, became first full time female assistant coach in NBA
Nancy Lieberman	First woman to coach men's professional team, Texas Legends of the NBA Development League. Became second female NBA assistant coach with Sacramento Kings.
Jen Welter	First NFL Assistant Coach. Arizona Cardinals hired her to work with the linebackers for the 2015 training camp and pre-season.
Kathryn Smith	First full time female NFL assistant as the special team's quality control.
Sarah Thomas	In 2015, became the first full-time NFL official (referee).
Justine Siegal	First female to coach a men's professional baseball team as the Brockton Rox's first base coach in 2009. In 2011, she became the first female to throw batting practice to an MLB team with the Oakland Athletics.

Women in the above table specialized in a specific sport and demonstrate vast knowledge. Women should specialize in their area of interest so that they are not positioned as a generic substitute. For example, if a woman is seeking employment, and has several workshops, assistantships, and experiences for a position, they are more likely to receive the application positively. This means young women should start with practical experiences from an early age. Such is the case for the women listed above.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our study found evidence that the gender imbalance that was historically in academia, business, and physical education has shown improvement. The conscious effort of women (and men) in these specific fields has provided additional opportunities for women that may not have been realized in previous generations. Women that are interested in pursuing a career in these industries can learn from strong examples set before them. Furthermore, current practitioners can promote additional inclusion so that the imbalance in these fields further dissipates.

CONCLUSION

The consensus of the participants in the three fields is that the gender imbalance in these three traditionally male dominated fields is decreasing. Most participants we interviewed felt they did not face overt discrimination. In the case of Lori, who felt marginalized for being female and a mother, the best choice was to switch companies. With her MBA, she was able to find a better opportunity that may have not been possible without her advanced degree. It is important that all female professionals understand their value to help reduce gender imbalance in academia, business, and physical education.

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Utilizing Professional Development Seminars in Academia as a Diversity Management Education Strategy in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Fulbright Specialist Scholar Experience

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to promote the benefits of the Fulbright Specialist Program and encourage diversity education scholars and professionals working in the fields of management and human resource development to consider applying for a Fulbright Specialist award abroad. This article will begin with an introduction and synopsis of the apartheid years in South Africa and its impact on their higher education system. Next, a brief history of the Fulbright Scholar Program and overview of the Fulbright Specialist Program will be provided, This section will be followed by a summary of my Fulbright Specialist experience at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) located in Cape Town South Africa, along with the lessons I learned. This article will conclude by encouraging diversity and inclusion scholars and professionals working in the fields of management and human resource development to consider applying for a Fulbright Specialist award, and by expressing my gratitude to the Fulbright Specialist Program publically for providing me with a life changing opportunity to share my diversity and inclusion expertise and engage in research with colleagues at CPUT in Cape Town, South Africa.*

> "The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation."
>
> Nelson Mandela (2018)

INTRODUCTION

Diversity management is a popular strategy in the U.S. that is viewed as a core human resource development and management function in the workforce (Scott, 2018; 2014). According to Allen, Dawson, Wheatley and White (2004), "successful diversity management helps managers to maximize their employee's knowledge and expertise to better achieve organizational objectives" (pp.13-14). However, as the field of diversity management continues to expand globally, less emphasis has been placed on utilizing diversity and inclusion specialist led professional development seminars in higher education settings as a diversity management education strategy to prepare current and future academic administrators and managers with the diverse competencies they need to educate and train the faculty and staff members they supervise.

My Fulbright Specialist experience at CPUT raises awareness of the need for more diversity and inclusion specialist in management and human resource development to share their insights on the diversity management education strategies they have been utilizing to develop, educate and train academic administrators and managers. It is my hope that this article will encourage more conversation and research on this topic by diversity and inclusion specialists in academia.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE APARTHEID YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In South Africa in 1948, an all-white political party gained power and began immediately creating and imposing policies of racial segregation under a legal legislation called apartheid, which enforced racial

segregation throughout South Africa. Under apartheid, nonwhite South Africans who were Black, Colored (mixed race individuals) and Asians (Indian and Pakistani) were not allowed to vote or marry interracially. They were also forced to live in separate areas from White South Africans and use separate public facilities such as restaurants, restrooms, water fountains, benches, buses and cabs, hotels, and attend fee base segregated schools, even though then and now Black South Africans, Colored and Asians collectively make up the majority of the population in South Africa (Apartheid, 2018).

By 1953, the Bantu Act was created and passed in South Africa as a legislation that limited the educational opportunities for Black South Africans, Colored and Asians (Ocampo, 2004). Under the Bantu Act, scant higher education institutions that were serving students of color were closed, and access to financial aid was limited. Language was also a major issue in the South African educational system because the majority of educators spoke and taught in English, while the majority of Black South Africans, Colored and Asian students wrote and spoke in their native tongue. In the 1960s through the 1980s student demonstrations were taking place throughout South Africa protesting apartheid education. Also during this time period, because Black South Africans, Colored, and Asians had limited employment opportunities due to the lack of higher education attainment, they remained at a low socioeconomic level (Ocampo, 2004).

Through the mid-1980s and early 1990s South African President P. W. Botha began pressuring the South African government to abolish the apartheid legislation. By 1993, South African President Frederik Willem de klerk and higher education administrators created a strategy to transform apartheid higher education policies and practices. Also during this time period, the South African government began making progress towards dismantling apartheid policies and practices. In 1994, Nelson Mandela, a Black South African man and anti-apartheid and peace activist was elected president of South Africa by a majority of non-white voters. As president, Nelson Mandela led the fight towards putting an end to the apartheid system in South Africa which started the process of moving South Africa towards becoming a democratic society (Ocampo, 2004).

THE FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR PROGRAM

The Fulbright Scholar Program is a cultural exchange program that began operating in 1946 under an Arkansas Senator named J. William Fulbright who had an intense impact on foreign policy (Fulbright Scholar Program, 2018). Senator Fulbright's work in foreign policy was what inspired him to create the Fulbright Scholar Program so that it could be used a means to promote mutual cross-cultural understanding globally (Fulbright Scholar Program, 2018). The Fulbright Scholar Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs which offers a variety of cultural exchange programs for U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens in over 160 countries globally. This program also offers a variety of cultural exchange opportunities for students in high school, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as teachers, professors, researchers, government leaders, and professionals representing a variety of career fields

To date, approximately 370,000 Fulbright scholars and professionals combined have received awards since the inception of this cultural exchange program in 1946 (Fulbright Scholar Program (2018). For more information about the Fulbright Scholar Program, visit the Council for International Exchange of Scholars website at https://www.cies.org/about-us.

THE FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

One of the many unique programs offered by the Fulbright Scholar Program is the Fulbright Specialist Program (Fulbright Specialist Program, 2018). This cultural exchange program provides an opportunity for U.S. faculty members and professionals from a variety of academic disciplines and career fields to

work as short-term specialists over a two to six week period at an academic institution or professional organization abroad. As a Fulbright Specialist, you will have an opportunity to utilize your expertise in the areas of teaching, research, programming and professional development.

What is most appealing about the Fulbright Specialist Program is that it is a great option for U.S. scholars and professionals that to want to engage in a cultural exchange assignment abroad in their area of expertise, but can't be away from their families and home institutions for an extended period of time (Fulbright Specialist Program, 2018). For more information regarding the Fulbright Specialist Program visit their website at https://exchanges.state.gov/us/search/solr/fulbright%20specialist%20program.

MY FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST EXPERIENCE AT CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA AS A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SPECIALIST

Shortly after apartheid ended in 1994, higher education institutions throughout South Africa, began admitting Black Colored and Asian students. These higher education institutions were also seeking to transform their campus culture and advance their diversity education and social justice focused initiatives to align with the higher education transformation strategies established by the Republic of South Africa Education White Paper 3: A Programme of the Transformation of Higher Education (Department of Education, 1997) and the document entitled Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, 2002). Both of these higher education transformation documents emphasized the need for South African higher education institutions to: 1) address racial, structural and social inequities that were imitated and supported by the apartheid legal system; 2) promote diversity, equity and access to higher education specifically for Black South Africans and people of color; 3) prepare all students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to live, work and thrive in a global society; and 4) create new institutional identities, such as hiring diverse faculty and administrators, developing new mission and vision statements, strategic plans, courses, research agendas, programming, and student services that are equitable and embrace diversity perspectives, non-discriminatory, non-sexist and democratic (Department of Education, 1997; Minister of Education, 2002). Since the release of these government documents, many South African universities have been interested in hosting U.S. Fulbright Specialist scholars that have diversity and inclusion and social justice education expertise in the areas of teaching, research, programming and professional development.

Over the past nine years, I have been fortunate to have had several academic opportunities to present my diversity education and workforce diversity education research at several universities in South Africa. As a result of these opportunities, I have met and kept in contact with several South African scholars that have similar teaching and research interests. In 2013, after conversing with a South African colleague who had also been encouraging me to apply for one of the many Fulbright Specialist diversity education awards in South Africa, I decided to submit an application to the Fulbright Specialist program as a U. S. diversity and inclusion specialist to spend up to six weeks at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) located in Cape Town, South Africa during 2015-16 academic school year. In February of 2015, I was notified by the Fulbright Specialist Program that I had been granted a Fulbright Specialist award at CPUT to provide diversity education professional development workshops to faculty and academic staff members, as well as engage in research. On October 1 2015, I began my Fulbright Specialist work at CPUT.

Through my research on CPUT I discovered that they began operating under this name in 2005, when these two universities merged, Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon. This merger was part of a post-apartheid South African-wide transformation strategy aimed at amending the higher education terrain. On the Western Cape, CPUT is the only technology focused university that offers a total of seventy undergraduate and graduate programs on six branch campuses and four learning stations in these

disciplines: Applied Science. Business. Education, Social Science, Engineering, Health and Wellness, and Informatics and Design. I also discovered that they were a technological university that is committed to promoting diversity, equity and equality on all of their campuses and learning stations (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2018b).

Additionally, I learned that while most all universities in South Africa during the apartheid year 1948-1994 legally did not admit Black South African students, CPUT opened its door in 1987 to Black South African students after they were granted permission by the South African Government to have their ban revoked on admitting Black South African students (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2018a). Most recently in 2017, CPUT had a total student enrollment of 35,127 which broken down by racial groups reflects the following 65.1% Black South African, 8.6% White South African, 25.5% colored [mixed race students] and 0.9% Indian (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2018a), and their student of color populations continues to increase.

MY PRIMARY REASONS FOR APPLYING FOR A FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST AWARD AT CPUT IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA WERE AS FOLLOWS.

South Africa's higher education transformation strategy is of interest to me personally because I passionately support that Black South Africans and people of color in South Africa should have access to affordable higher education. Moreover, South Africa's higher education transformation strategy is aligned with my academic work in the areas of teaching, research, service; and activism. CPUT's diversity and inclusion project announcement on the Fulbright Specialist website in 2015 was also aligned perfectly with my research agenda areas which :are: diversity and inclusion, social justice, eradicating racism; workforce diversity, management, human resource development, organizational leadership, training development; and professional development.

Additionally, CPUT is a South African university that is seeking to develop and further advance their campus-wide diversity efforts for the purpose of educating all of their students to live, work, contribute and thrive successfully in our multicultural world, which is also a goal of U.S. universities and colleges. Moreover, I was interested to learn more about how CPUT's diversity and inclusion and social justice education efforts were being integrated on their campuses and learning stations. I as well wanted to share my diversity and inclusion and social justice expertise with CPUT because it was different from my public university in the U.S., Oakland University located in Rochester, Michigan as it relates to understanding CPUT's higher education transformation and redress efforts, their diversity and inclusion and social justice curriculum development and implementation process, along with the impact the change in student demographics has had on their campuses and learning stations over the past five years. Based on the above, I am pleased to say that CPUT met all of my expectations as a Fulbright Specialist host university.

My Fulbright Specialist project at CPUT consisted of developing and facilitating three diversity management professional development seminars to academic administrators, managers, faculty and staff members' on these topics: faculty and staff diversity training techniques, diversity education and social justice programming for faculty and staff, and publishing diversity and social justice research. I was also was part of a diversity research team at CPUT that produced a research study proposal, and I met with numerous academic staff members from various academic disciplines at CPUT to learn about how diversity and social justice was being integrated throughout their curriculum.

Moreover, I responded to several questions by CPUT colleagues regarding what teaching formats are used most often to teach diversity and inclusion and social justice concepts in university settings in the U. S. I as well created with a colleague at CPUT, two book proposals focused on the current status of higher education in South Africa – South African faculty perspectives that were accepted by a respected

academic publisher. These two books will be published in 2019. After these two books are published, I plan to pursue South African transformation research grant opportunities in the area of higher education as a way to assist the South African higher education system in moving beyond its post-apartheid state of being.

LESSONS LEARNED

The first lesson I learned that after I decided to apply for a Fulbright Specialist award in Sub-Sahara Africa, was that I needed to spend ample time reviewing every document on the Fulbright Specialist website. This website was very helpful as it provided detailed application instructions and examples of project statements that helped me greatly in understanding the Fulbright Specialist Program its application process.

The second lesson I learned was that I was grateful that I did previous research on the history of South Africa and its s people, and in my case on the history of their higher education system. This research really helped me to create a strong Fulbright Specialist proposal that was worthy of being funded by the Fulbright Specialist Program, and that was of value to the academic administrators, managers, faculty and staff members at CPUT, as well as to me personally.

The third lesson I learned was that I was so glad I did prior research on living in South Africa for an extended period of time so that my transition to a South African lifestyle was uncomplicated. I also researched the weather so I would know what type of clothing to bring and the currency exchange rate for South Africa. Additionally, I researched the cost necessities such as bottled water and food as well as the cost of public transportation and international phone calls. Lastly, I learned that because English is spoken is widely throughout South Africa, I did not need to learn any other basic language skills.

The fourth lesson I learned is that it was most helpful to me that I kept in touch over the years with colleagues I met in South Africa. I say this because you never know when an opportunity may arise for you to make connections with individuals or with resources they know of that could help you to advance your academic career in exciting ways such as collaborative teaching assignment and research projects abroad, or with supportive information that could assist you in applying for a Fulbright Specialist award. In my case, I kept in touch with a CPUT colleague over the past three year because we have been working on co-authoring and co-editing two anthologies focused on the current status of higher education on post-apartheid South Africa Both of these anthologies will be published in March of 2019.

The fifth lesson I learned is that you need to be opened to working on collaborative projects with host colleagues. I say this because at my host university CPUT, several colleagues invited me to be a part of a diversity focused research project they were starting to working on. Because the research project did not interfere with my Fulbright Specialist project work, and the research project saw something that I was interested in, I graciously agreed to lead this research team. In doing so, I increased my network of collaborative academic scholar in South Africa that I can work with on future research projects.

The sixth and final lesson that I learned as a diversity and inclusion specialist at CPUT was that more diversity and inclusion Fulbright Specialist are needed worldwide in academia to educate and train mangers, administrators, directors, instructors, researchers and students not only about diversity and inclusion training and teaching, research, programming and professionally development strategies, but also about the role and goals of social justice.

In conclusion, I hope that more U.S. diversity and inclusion specialist from the academic disciplines and professionals fields of management and human resource development are encouraged by the insights provided in this article and will consider applying for a Fulbright Specialist opportunity abroad in the near future. I also want to publically thank the Fulbright Specialist Program for selecting my project and

providing me with a life changing opportunity to share my diversity and inclusion and social justice knowledge and participate in diversity and inclusion research with colleagues at CPUT in Cape Town, South Africa.

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Diversity Initiative Schemas: Students' Cognitive Representations of Managing Diversity on College Campuses

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Abstract: Using schemas as a theoretical framework, this paper explores students' cognitive representations of managing gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. Exploration of student schemas is necessary to inform higher education administrators of the existing expectations present among students since these expectations interplay with student responses and reactions to diversity management efforts. Using content analysis of students' narratives, results concerning students' cognitive representations are offered, and key managerial implications are shared for those in higher education leadership.

> "Schemas may prove to be informative for educational programs and interventions, and may provide a better understanding of the types of sociolinguistic messages individuals use, and the types of feelings experienced" (Hajek & Giles, 2005, p. 164).

INTRODUCTION

United States' college and university campuses continue to become more culturally and racially diverse. The diversifying of student enrollment makes it essential for management in higher education to focus on diversity initiatives that make their campuses more inclusive and that increase awareness of cultural and racial differences in efforts to minimize race-related incidents, such as those that have recently and frequently garnered national attention.

The lack of diversity initiatives or simply the failure to recognize the changing racial dynamic on college and university campuses results in situations of campus unrest. This type of campus strife occurred in the 60's and launched the Black Campus Movement that lasted from 1965 to 1972 (Rogers, 2012). African American students were being accepted into predominately White colleges; however, the schools failed to fully understand the race of students they were admitting. Students began to revolt over the lack of response from school administrators regarding campus issues negatively impacting them due to their race (Dowd, 1971). More than 50 years later, students and higher education leaders are still confronted with similar race-related issues.

This paper explores students' cognitive representations of managing gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. We argue that an exploration of student schemas is necessary to inform management in higher education of the existing expectations present among students since these expectations interplay with student responses and reactions to diversity management efforts. To date, no research has undertaken this task using schemas as a mechanism for addressing diversity issues that plague higher education in an effort to better inform managerial interventions.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Racially motivated events have plagued several colleges and universities that have been challenged with particularly troubling race-related issues on campuses. At Harvard Law School, portraits of African American professors were vandalized with black tape covering the faces (Mineo, 2015). A noose was found hanging from a tree at Duke University (Zhang, 2015). Without regard to how students would be offended, a teacher at the University of Kansas flippantly used the "n-word" during a class discussion (Jaschik, 2015). At Yale University, female students were turned away from an SAE fraternity party on the basis that it was for White girls only (Jackson, 2015). At Ithaca College, there was an invitation to a "Preps & Crooks" party that identified the crooks' dress code as thuggish with baggy pants, bandanas, and "bling" – a style typically worn by minorities such as Hispanic or African Americans (Svrluga, 2016). The Dean of Students at Claremont McKenna College sent a racially insensitive email discussing racially diverse students and indicating they do not "fit the mold" of the institution (Shire, 2015).

At the University of Missouri, several disregarded race-related incidents occurred over time that eventually escalated to national attention due to a student's hunger strike. Incidents included cotton balls spread outside of the Black Culture Center, racial slurs hurled at students, and a Swastika drawn in human feces at a residence hall (Calamur, 2015; Pearson, 2015). A slew of incidents at the University of Oklahoma occurred over time as well which include urinating on a tepee during Native American week, racial slurs, and offensive, stereotype-themed parties such as Mekong Delta, Cowboys and Indians, and Border Patrol (Duara & Hennessy-Fiske, 2015). However, it was a video from SAE fraternity members at the University of Oklahoma that made headlines. The video showed two fraternity students leading a chant of racial slurs referring to hanging Black men and excluding them from the fraternity (Berrett, 2015).

Students were frustrated over the insensitive and racially-motivated incidents, but more importantly, their frustration stemmed from the lack of sufficient responses from higher education managers in leadership. As a result, students responded by sharing their stories on social media, assembling protest rallies, staging hunger strikes, refusing to practice or play in football games, and gathering petition signatures in efforts to evoke change or have a teacher or administrator removed (Duara & Hennessy-Fiske, 2015; Jaschik, 2015; Shire, 2015; Pearson, 2015).

Instead of being proactive with diversity initiatives, universities were forced to react to the turmoil on their campuses. Reactive responses include faculty and administrators being forced to resign their positions, mandatory diversity training for students, staff and faculty, and newly created diversity officer positions (Keller, 2016; Shire, 2015; Stripling, 2016; Svrluga, 2016). Universities are also susceptible to loss of income from decreases in funding, in donations, in tuition revenue, and penalties for game cancellations, in addition to national shame.

These numerous and continued race-related incidents on college and university campuses underscore the importance and worth of diversity initiatives at today's colleges and universities. While diversity management is essential, little is known about students' existing knowledge structures and expectations about school diversity initiatives. This investigation explores students' cognitive representations through examining schemas.

SCHEMAS AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For decades, schemas have been the most popular mechanism for exploring mental representations that reside in long-term memory (Smith, 1998). Schemas are "knowledge structures that organize information in memory about our past experiences. Schemas are not individual memories of particular events; rather, they are a blend of past comparable experiences, created by the repetition of these events" (Kean & Albada, 2003, p. 283).

Bartlett (1932) is credited with the advancement of schema theories through his insistence that knowledge was summative, which is in line with the gestalt psychologists' view. He argued that people's past behavior and experiences are structured and organized in such a way that facilitates future understanding and behavior. Repeated experiences strengthen the entire structure so that it can be rendered useful as an all-or-none entity. The nature of that structure, when accessed, leads to "systematic biases and distortions in interpretations" (Weary & Edwards, 1994, p. 293).

Head and Holmes (1911) are credited with being among the first to use the term schema, and Immanuel Kant employed the term schema to discuss the possibility of knowledge (Stein, 1992). Unlike associative networks, which are regarded as spiker-like structures that reside in long-term memory, schemas are accessed in summation; they are "activated by the external world and simultaneously provide an interpretation of it" (Stein, 1992, p. 47). As a structure of the mind, schemas provide a useful venue for understanding cognitions associated with diversity efforts. For greater clarity on how cognitions reason through interpretations of an institution's management of race-related diversity activities, schemas provide an ideal entryway.

As a theoretical framework, schemas have been used successfully to explore intergroup communication (Hajek & Giles, 2005) and college students' alcohol use (Kean & Albada, 2003). We argue that similar to these studies schemas have been created in students' long-term memory through their repeated exposure to and engagement in diversity conversations, activities, and initiatives both on and off college campuses. Thus, the nature of these cognitive structures are likely to influence students' reactions and responses to college and university diversity initiatives. Our aim is not to explore schema formation or examine students' personal experiences that have culminated in diversity schemas. Instead, we seek to better understand the representations of diversity schemas to assist leaders in higher education at being more effective in managing diversity issues on their respective campuses. Thus, this research poses the following six questions related to diversity schemas:

> *RQ1:* What is the tone and specificity of student schemas associated with gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives?

> *RQ2:* Who are the participants in attendance in student schemas associated with gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives?

> *RQ3:* What are the *different identities* mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

> *RQ4:* Who are the stakeholders mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

> *RQ5:* What are the primary activities mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

> *RQ6:* What are the focal areas mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

METHOD

Participants

The sample for the study consisted of 313 students from a Midwestern university where neither local media, nor campus media had referenced any diversity incidents or issues at the educational institution beyond those present in students' ordinary campus experiences. Half of the sample (48.65%) were males and 48.31% were females with 9 participants not reporting their sex. The majority of participants were Caucasian (62.16%), with 14.19% African American, 12.50% Asian, 4.73% Hispanic American, 3.72% American Indian, and 2.7% who reported some other racio-ethnic background. The majority of participants were senior students (58.11%), with 33.11% juniors, 6.76% sophomores, 13.51% freshman, 1 graduate student, and 1 student not reporting his/her year in school.

Procedures

The study employed the use of narratives to operationalize schemas similar to previous research (e.g., Hajek & Giles, 2005). After providing informed consent and sharing basic demographic information, students were given the following scenario and asked to write a story. The instructions and scenario for this investigation read:

We would like for you to create a story based on the following information.

> You are on your way to attend a meeting on your campus about the value of your school's efforts to promote a more diverse campus: to increase racial and gender diversity, especially among faculty and students. What kinds of things do you expect to be discussed at the meeting? What types of people will attend and speak at the meeting, and what will these people say about your university's efforts? Add any details that you would like about the individuals involved in the meeting, the setting, or the activities.

Participants were given approximately 15-20 minutes to complete their story. After writing the narrative, participants were free to leave. Of the 313 participants, 296 (94.57%) narratives were completed and capable of being coded, while 7 (2.23%) of the narratives were incomplete. The average word count of the completed narratives was 71 words, with a range as few as 3 words and as many as 240 words.

Content Analysis and Coding Procedures

A content analysis process, as advanced by Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) was used to examine the manifest content offered in student narratives. Each narrative served as the unit of analysis.

Coding Categories. To address the research questions, a code book with the coding scheme for all measures was developed with the categories for all measures designed to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Kaid & Wadswoth, 1989; Krippendorff, 1980). The first four measures include: 1) tone of narrative, categorized as positive, negative, or neutral; 2) specificity of narrative, categorized as high, low, or can't tell/no indication; 3) specificity of racio-ethinic identities, categorized as high, low, or can't tell/no indication; and 4) tone of on-campus diversity climate, categorized as positive, negative, or neutral.

The categories for the remaining set of measures are identified in Tables 2 and 3. These measures include: 5-9) mentions or refers to any student, faculty, staff, administration, or off-campus/community participant; 10-16) mentions or refers to a specific group or ethnicity (international students, Black/African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Native American, minority, or other racio-ethnic group); 17-18) mentions or refers to sex (male or female); 19-26) mentions or refers to

specific different identities (e.g. ethnicity or gender) in diversity initiative activities; 27-32) mentions or refers to specific stakeholders (e.g. student or administration), in diversity initiative activities; 33-35) primary level of engagement; and 36-41) focal area of the diversity initiative.

Coders and Intercoder Reliability. After the code book and code sheet development, two undergraduate students were trained to serve as coders for the investigation, and intercoder reliability was calculated using Scott's (1955) π. The code book and code sheet were pilot tested in training (1 hour) followed by coders completing independent coding to achieve greater clarification on the categories employed for study. Subsequently, revisions were made to the code book and code sheets with additional coder training (two hours). After training, each coder independently coded the remaining subset of the sample, for the purpose of calculating inter-coder reliability, which demonstrated excellent overall consistency, $\pi = .96$. See Table 1 for details of the reliabilities by coding category. After achieving acceptable reliabilities, research packets with participant narratives were split randomly between the two coders (Krippendorff, 2005) with an equal distribution of packets given to each coder for coding. Together, coders made 12,136 coding decisions that culminated in the data for this investigation.

Data Analysis. This study used frequencies to calculate the presence or mentions of various categories from the code book. Frequencies for tone and specificity in this investigation will sum to the total of completed narratives ($n = 296$); however, multiple mentions were possible for each of the other categories thus making it possible to exceed the sum total of completed narratives.

RESULTS

The overall aim of this investigation is to understand the cognitive representations in student diversity schemas for the purposes of assisting higher education leaders in managing diversity initiatives on their respective campuses.

Research Questions 1 & 2

The first research question probed the tone and specificity of the diversity schemas. See Table 2 for these results. Overall, the tone of students' cognitive representations was neutral (75%) with more positive (19.93%) than negative (5.07%) representations. The tone of the on-campus diversity climate was neutral as well (66.22%) with more positive (28.38%) than negative (5.41%) representations. The specificity and level of detail in the narratives were more high (57.77%) than low (38.18%); however, the level of detail in cognitive representations for specific racio-ethnic identities was more low (52.70%) than high (10.47%) with several narratives unclear on containing racio-ethnic identities (36.82%).

The second research question explored the types of participants in attendance as mentioned in the schemas. Student (30.74%) and faculty (25.68%) participants were mentioned more frequently than off-campus/community participants (11.82%), administration (11.15%), female (7.77%), and staff (6.76%) participants.

Research Questions 3-6

The remaining research questions queried which types of different identities, stakeholders, primary activities, and focal areas were mentioned in the diversity initiatives of student schemas. See Table 3 for these results. Cognitive representations contained the greatest mentions of minorities (10.47%), other identities (7.43%), females (5.07%), males (4.73%), and African Americans (3.72%). The greatest mentions of stakeholders were for students (45.95%) and faculty (32.77%), and the most mentions for level of engagement were for discussions/dialogue (51.69%) and observation/listening (46.62%). The greatest type of focal area within cognitive representations were campus-specific (68.92%), followed by global/international/world relations (14.19%) and other focal areas (13.51%).

DISCUSSION

Rather than robust and well-reasoned structures, students' diversity schemas appear to be unsophisticated cognitive representations. Though mostly neutral or favorable in tone, the content of students' diversity schemas suggests a more diverse campus is desirable without students' schemas containing the 'whys' and 'hows' associated with the effort. In particular, very few schemas contained specific mentions of the racio-ethnic groups or key focal areas (e.g., sex issues/equality, U.S. domestic relations, or exclusion/tolerance/inclusion) that are typically associated with the need for U.S. diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. And, the majority of diversity schemas were not decidedly favorable in tone. Consistent with the literature (Bartlett, 1932; Stein, 1992), schemas, function as knowledge structures that students draw on for interpretation of an institution's diversity activities, despite the lack of sophistication or detail in structure.

Diversity schemas did contain mentions of campus-specific activities such as: increasing diversity on campus, increasing the diversity of students who attend the university, increasing diversity in the classroom and increasing the diversity of teachers or faculty. In addition, specific activities related to discussing diversity or listening to speakers share statistics about diversity were mentioned. This further suggests schemas serve as structures in students' memory (Smith, 1998) and exist as cognitive representations that contain diversity-relevant activities, even as they remain vague and ambiguous on the issues or different identities associated with diversity initiatives.

Managerial Implications

The structure of students' cognitive representations hints at a proclivity to emphasize neutrality, offer generic support, and use politically correct phrases or language. What then does this offer for managers who work in higher education leadership and grapple with situations like many of the recent race-related incidents?

A first implication is for managers in higher education to begin with educational efforts on actual issues of diversity rather than diversity activities and to personalize these issues in educational efforts. The majority of schemas contained the activities of discussion and listening. However, few schemas contained representations concerning equality, inclusion, or tolerance despite the focus of narratives on gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives that was offered in the study. Personalizing these actual issues can make for a more compelling case and stimulate greater vested interest.

Another implication is for managers to incorporate or re-focus diversity initiatives on different identities. Without different identities, there is no diversity. As Nkomo and Cox (1995) suggest, different identities are at the heart of diversity. Clearly articulating the historical relevance, marginalized experiences, and underrepresentation of different identities can provide students with exposure opportunities that can eventually culminate in more robust cognitive representations.

A final, and perhaps, most critical managerial implication is for managers to recognize that neutral cognitive representations are the most "swayable," particularly when the weak support offered for the benefits of diversity initiatives is challenged (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953; McGuire, 1961). When repeatedly attacked, cognitive representations that are not decidedly favorable may be just as easily converted to structures of serious concern as they are to be transformed to strong advocates of diversity initiatives. *This means a strong need exists for two-sided messages in diversity managerial programming that offer both the benefits of diversity initiatives and the arguments that can be used to refute those who would attack or challenge those initiatives.* To provide only the benefits of diversity initiatives is to render cognitive representations most vulnerable.

Future research can examine key attributes associated with the formation of schemas as well as unpack the cognitive representations present among research participants who identify along other dimensions (e. g., religion, socio-economic status, etc.) of diversity besides race and ethnicity. Another element of heuristic value is to operationalize schemas using a different sample type than what was used in this investigation.

CONCLUSION

Until now, research has yet to explore diversity management on college and university campuses through an examination of students' diversity schemas. Given the all-or-none entity of schemas, these cognitive representations can serve as a pathway for higher education leaders to more effectively implement diversity initiatives. Our hope is that managers follow the suggested key implications for improving the practice of diversity management on college and university campuses.

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TABLE 1
OVERALL INTERCODER RELIABILITY AND INTERCODER RELIABILITIES OF CODING CATEGORIES

Category	% of Observed Agreement	Overall Scott's π
		.96
Tone of the Overall Narrative	.97	
Specificity of the Overall Narrative	.99	
Specificity of Racio-Ethnic Identities in the Overall Narrative	.99	
Tone of On-Campus Diversity Climate	.93	
Participants in Attendance		
Student participants	.99	
Faculty participants	.99	
Staff participants	1.00	
Administration participants	.99	
Off-Campus/Community participants	.94	
International Student participants	.94	
Black/African American participants	1.00	
Asian American participants	1.00	
Hispanic American participants	1.00	
Native American participants	1.00	
Minority participants	.99	
Other Racio-Ethnic participants	.94	
Male participants	.97	
Female participants	.96	
Identities Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
Black/African Americans	.96	
Asian Americans	.96	
Hispanic Americans	.99	
Native Americans	1.00	
Minorities	.93	
Male	.96	
Female	.94	
Other Identities	.90	
Stakeholders Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
Students	.99	
Faculty	1.00	
Staff	.99	
Administration	.88	
Off-Campus/Community	.91	
Other	.85	
Level of Engagement in Diversity Initiatives		
Discussions/Dialogue	1.00	
Observation/Listening	.93	
Activity/Ceremony	.94	
Focus of Diversity Initiatives		
Global/International/World Relations	.99	
U.S. Domestic Relations	.94	
Sex Issues/Equality	.96	
Issues of Exclusion/Tolerance/Inclusion	1.00	
Campus-Specific Focal Areas	1.00	
Other Focal Areas	.84	

TABLE 2
CODING RESULTS FOR TONE, SPECIFICITY, AND PARTICIPANT MENTIONS IN THE NARRATIVES

Category $n = 296$	Frequency	Percentage
Tone of the Overall Narrative		
Positive	59	19.93%
Negative	15	5.07%
Neutral	222	75.00%
Specificity of the Overall Narrative		
High	171	57.77%
Low	113	38.18%
Can't Tell	12	4.05%
Specificity of Racio-Ethnic Identities in the Overall Narrative		
High	31	10.47%
Low	156	52.70%
Can't Tell	109	36.82%
Tone of On-Campus Diversity Climate		
Positive	84	28.38%
Negative	16	5.41%
Neutral	196	66.22%
Participants in Attendance		
(Mentions in descending order of importance)		
Student participants	91	30.74%
Faculty participants	76	25.68%
Off-Campus/Community participants	35	11.82%
Administration participants	33	11.15%
Female participants	23	7.77%
Staff participants	20	6.76%
Minority participants	19	6.42%
Male participants	17	5.74%
Black/African American participants	14	4.73%
International Student participants	14	4.73%
Other Racio-Ethnic participants	9	3.04%
Asian American participants	5	1.69%
Hispanic American participants	1	.34%
Native American participants	0	0%

TABLE 3
CODING RESULTS FOR IDENTITIES, STAKEHOLDERS, LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT, & FOCUS OF DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN NARRATIVES

Category $n = 296$	Frequency	Percentage
Identities Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Minorities	31	10.47%
Other Identities	22	7.43%
Females	15	5.07%
Males	14	4.73%
Black/African Americans	11	3.72%
Asian Americans	4	1.35%
Hispanic Americans	0	0%
Native Americans	0	0%
Stakeholders Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Students	136	45.95%
Faculty	97	32.77%
Administration	27	9.12%
Off-Campus/Community	27	9.12%
Staff	23	7.77%
Other	3	1.01%
Level of Engagement in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Discussions/Dialogue	153	51.69%
Observation/Listening	138	46.62%
Activity/Ceremony	20	6.76%
Focus of Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Campus-Specific Focal Areas	204	68.92%
Global/International/World Relations	42	14.19%
Other Focal Areas	40	13.51%
Sex Issues/Equality	10	3.38%
U.S. Domestic Relations	4	1.35%
Exclusion/Tolerance/Inclusion	0	0.00%

A Cross-Disciplinary Examination of Institutional Diversity: How University Programs Advance a Diverse Workforce

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Abstract: Diversity in higher education is encouraged and celebrated throughout many predominant universities across the United States. Institutions of higher learning benefit from diversity in all aspects of campus life; from classes, organizations, or extracurricular activities. Institutional theory is applied to this study to examine how diversity programs are implemented in various university types (national research, private, and state) as well as different settings (educational opportunities, leadership, and accessibility) to develop a qualified and diverse workforce. To achieve this objective, we suggest universities implement a multifaceted approach focusing on initiatives at the university, faculty, and student level.

Key words: Diversity, Inclusion, Higher-Education, Educational Opportunities, Leadership

INTRODUCTION

One of the numerous benefits to working in higher education is the access to diverse perspectives. Diversity may include differences in race, gender, ethnicity, or anything else (Dess & Parker, 1999). Each member of the campus community collectively benefits when the level of interaction among diverse groups increases. Diversity, itself, has been viewed from various perspectives and frameworks. In general, scholars tend to examine how organizations manage workforce diversity through the discrimination and fairness paradigm, the access and legitimacy paradigm, or the learning and effectiveness paradigm (Dass & Parker, 1999). Since educational and civic importance of informal interaction among diverse groups is vital during the college years (Gurin, et. al, 2002), university administrators are conscious of diversity and inclusion to meet societal expectations. Diversity is embraced in higher education, regardless of institutional classification; including national research universities, state funded public universities, and small private universities. It will ensure a higher proportion of diverse individuals that are motivated and capable of succeeding in an environment of rigorous academic inquiry.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate campus wide diversity programs at each university type to highlight initiatives that are implemented ~~in~~ at the collegiate level. To ensure the entirety of the above-mentioned educational spectrum is sampled, the following institution programs are examined: Biological Sciences at the University of Chicago (Chicago, IL; national research), College of Business at Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, IN; private), Health and Human Performance at the University of North Carolina Pembroke (Pembroke, NC; state).

UNIVERSITIES AS MIMETIC ORGANIZATIONS

Institutional rules function as rationalized myths that organizations incorporate to gain legitimacy, maintain stability, acquire resources, and enhance their survival prospects (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Institutional theory suggests that changes in features of the formal structure of organization (institutions of higher education) reflect the effects of the social environment on organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Institutionalization is the process by which actions are repeated and given a similar meaning by individuals and by others (Scott, 1995). The schools we examine are a few of many institutions providing opportunities for diverse students. The institutionalization component suggests that similar institutions will follow suit as it has become the norm. Organizational changes (Scott, 1995) are introduced to align with social rules, expectations, norms, and values. In many cases, these institutions were on the forefront of these changes, and fortunately, others have continued that tradition.

Diverse student populations provide a larger population of prospective students. As these individuals progress through their degree program and graduate, it simultaneously develops a larger alumni network of successful graduates. Having a prodigious base of prospective students and alumni certainly helps mitigate potential financial issues during an economic downturn or periods of uncertainty. Diversity promotes social well-being, talent maximization, and legitimacy among its peers. These institutional forces (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) have a propensity to make institutions more analogous over time. Mimetic isomorphism exists because organizations model themselves after others they perceive to be more legitimate, especially in times of uncertainty.

Influential institutions gain power as they form the ability to define the rationalized and social myths of their industry. With this power, less established institutions follow their lead of diversity and inclusion. Over time, diversity and inclusion has become the industry standard. Though each institution will have its own diversity programs, institutionalization will likely create similarities between them (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This will often provide economic benefits through social process that will benefit the institutions both directly and indirectly (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Therefore, the trend setters have made it a focal point to increase diversity and inclusion, which is having a positive influence on higher education.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY - UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

In the hierarchy of academic institutions, the elite research-oriented universities are looked to as the trend setters. Conforming to institutionalized rules (Staw & Epstein, 2000) can improve legitimacy for the organization and its leadership. Since its inception in 1890, the University of Chicago has been at the forefront of promoting diversity in academia. Unique to many institutions of its day, the university was open to all, regardless of gender, race, or religious background. Its founders recognized the importance of different perspectives when engaging in rigorous academic inquiry. This legacy of diversity and inclusion has been epitomized by the countless breakthroughs that the University of Chicago has made in promoting the scholarship of historically underrepresented groups. From awarding the first Ph.D. to an African American woman in 1921 to inaugurating the first Jewish president of a major American

university in 1968, and then the first female president of a major private American university in 1978, the University of Chicago has led social change in academia. The University of Chicago was also the first major non-historically black institution to have an African American hold a full faculty position (W. Allison Davis in 1942) and refused to set quotas that restricted the number of Jewish students matriculating in a given year, which was common among other elite institutions in the first half of the 20th century (Sokoloff, 1992; Steinberg, 1971). In addition to the promotion of gender, race, and religious diversification in higher education, the university has continually provided a voice to the LBGTQ community, founding one of Chicago's first gay liberation organizations in 1969, and being among the first universities in the United States to offer domestic partnership benefits to same-sex couples in 1992. Due to its continual efforts to improve the lives of its LBGTQ students, the University was the first institution in Chicago to receive a perfect 5 Star rating from the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index.

The tradition of diversity promotion at the University of Chicago is reflected by the many programs and initiatives specifically designed to engender an atmosphere of inclusion and academic equality among its students and faculty at the institutional level. A prominent example is the International House, which was founded in 1932 to promote cross-cultural appreciation and understanding. Since then, the residence hall has housed over 40,000 students from nearly every country, and dually serves as a cultural center for diversity programs at the University of Chicago, as well as the general public. The University also has several organizations and governing bodies focused on promoting diversity, including the Center for Identity + Inclusion, the Diversity Leadership Council, and the University Diversity Advisory Council. These programs are designed to ensure the personal, academic, and professional growth and success of students and members of the university community from all backgrounds. At the graduate level, GRAD Development & Diversity leads efforts within UChicagoGRAD (an organization that provides graduate students and postdocs training to complement their academic pursuits). Their mission is to create, sustain, and coordinate practices that support the career development of graduate students and postdocs from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups, as well as to incorporate diversity in the scholarly lives of all members of the graduate community.

Although similar initiatives can be found at other elite institutions, the university continues to demonstrate its spirit as a pioneer and leader of educational diversity by also focusing on prospective college students. One of the barriers preventing historically underrepresented groups from attaining widespread academic success is the poor quality of education provided by urban school systems throughout the country. Therefore, the University of Chicago has been committed to improving the education of future college students by focusing on primary and secondary schools in urban settings. Through its Urban Education Institute (UEI), the University not only operates a PreK-12 public school for Chicago residents, but also conducts rigorous applied research, trains teachers and school leaders, and provides research-based tools that can be utilized by other urban schools throughout the United States. The University of Chicago has provided a model for how higher education can engage in the systemic improvement of PreK–12th grade schooling. This initiative will likely become increasingly popular in the upcoming years to close the gaps between education research, and practice in a way that improves the quality of schools and student outcomes nationwide.

Despite the progress the University of Chicago has made in promoting diversity at all levels of higher education, the institution has acknowledged previous shortcoming raised by the Climate Survey administered in 2016, which was designed to gauge the experiences of students and faculty on a broad range of issues related to diversity and inclusion. Although the results were mostly encouraging, the survey indicated that many members of the campus community did not feel included or valued ("Spring 2016 Campus Climate Survey", 2016). In response, the University devised the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative which will work in collaboration with previously established campus entities to further improve campus diversity. According to the plan, the Office of the Provost and the University will make a financial commitment to increasing the diversity and excellence of faculty, with a particular emphasis on

women and those from historically underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields (Ward, 2017).

Improving diversity in STEM fields is particularly important because their overall contribution to the United States workforce continues to increase. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, the estimated national size of the STEM workforce will grow to 8,650,000 by 2018. STEM employment is expected to increase by 8.9% between 2014 and 2017, far outpacing the 6.4% expected increase for non-STEM employment (Noonan, 2017). Nevertheless, 88% of working professionals in science and engineering jobs in the U.S were White or Asian as of 2015 (only 25% were White or Asian Women; "Women, Minorities, and Persons, 2017), a statistic that disconcertingly mirrors the distribution of the STEM workforce 30 years ago. This statistic is not due to a shortage of available students, as more women than men are currently enrolled in all U.S. undergraduate programs, and college enrollment among minority groups has generally increased (Digest of Education Statistics", 2018).

Considering the recent statistics on the disproportional distribution of STEM jobs among women and minorities, as well as the results from the 2016 Climate Survey, the University of Chicago has put a considerable emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusion in STEM fields. This initiative is exemplified by the Biological Sciences Division (BSD), which has multiple programs and events to improve diversity in science. In an effort to find and retain promising graduate school applicants from historically underrepresented groups, the Graduate Recruitment Initiative Team (GRIT), a BSD-specific student-led organization supported by administrators and faculty, attempts to improve and sustain diversity for incoming graduate student classes. Essentially, GRIT is involved in several aspects of the admissions proceedings (pre-admissions, invitation decisions, and interview weekends) to improve admission outcomes for historically underrepresented students. Such activities include traveling to conferences that focus on underrepresented minority scientists to recruit new students, working with faculty to correct implicit bias, hosting pre-interview video chats with prospective minority students, and even having an advisory role in selecting candidates for interviews.

Once graduate students from historically underrepresented groups are accepted and matriculate at the University of Chicago, these individuals can join the Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD). IMSD supports research training, mentoring and educational activities of new graduate students, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the diversity of the biomedical, behavioral and clinical research workforce. Specifically, the program pairs students with faculty mentors who help guide their research projects and scientific development. In addition, the program provides professional development in essential scientific skills, leadership, and professional networking, as well as advice on potential career options after graduation.

The BSD also promotes several sustained efforts to foster the development of the next generation of biomedical scientists. One of its flagship diversity programs is the Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP). The program is designed to provide mentoring, research skills, coursework, and a stimulating learning environment to recent post-baccalaureate students who intend to pursue a Ph.D. in the biomedical sciences. It offers a unique opportunity for historically underrepresented students to strengthen their graduate school applications, by conducting research as laboratory technicians for one year at the University of Chicago. By incorporating diverse academic activities that will prepare students for the rigors of graduate level scholarship, PREP has been a particularly effective program, with 100% student placement in graduate school. Consequently, the PREP R25 grant was renewed in January 2018 for the next 5 years and will continue to serve as a reliable pipeline for historically underrepresented students to attain their goal of becoming distinguished biomedical scientists.

Finally, in accord with its pioneering spirit toward academic diversity, the BSD recently decided to no longer require applicants to submit GRE scores as part of the graduate school application process. The

decision was largely influenced by a growing literature on the lack of predictive value of the GREs (Hall et al., 2017; Moneta-Koehler et al., 2017; Pacheco et al., 2015), as well as concerns that the standardized test disadvantages historically underrepresented groups (Croizet and Dutrévis, 2004; Sachs, 1997). Importantly, the University has also exempted undergraduate applicants from submitting SAT or ACT scores in lieu of allowing prospective students to send transcripts on their own and submit video introductions, as well as other nontraditional materials to supplement their applications (Rhodes, 2018). With these changes, the University of Chicago has become one of the first elite research institutions to drop the requirement for standardized test scores at both undergraduate and graduate levels, which will further help to promote the diversification of its student body and graduates entering the workforce. The University of Chicago is a leader in successful graduates in the workforce, and thus other institutions are likely to imitate their behavior (Havemen, 1993). Large organizations, particularly successful ones, serve as role models for other organizations (Havemen, 1993).

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY – VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

Valparaiso University is a private liberal arts university in Valparaiso, Indiana (within 50 miles of Chicago, Illinois). Over the years, the university has made a conscious effort to increase the level of diversity through recruitment, programs offered, and student activities. Like University of Chicago, Valparaiso University benefits from having a diverse population of students in the classroom. One noticeable difference between the two institutions is the size of the student body. While University of Chicago, as a national research institution enrolls a large population of students from around the globe, small private universities often enroll students from the surrounding area. However, being so close to a major metropolitan area provides access to education for a diverse population, while also providing leadership opportunities in a more intimate setting. At the university level, Valparaiso University has developed The Office of Multicultural Programs (OMP) to provide inclusive leadership opportunities for the entire student body. OMP invites students:

> "to join and participate in diverse extracurricular, co-curricular, and curricular programs that offer leadership opportunities, identity exploration, and development; promote multicultural education; enhance student retention; and provide venues for social action, service, and collaborative endeavors. In the process, you will meet caring and dedicated faculty and staff and develop special friendships with other students — "friends that will last a lifetime!" So come and be involved! OMP is the place to be!"

In the spirit of diversity and inclusion, the university offers several inclusive student organizations in several specific areas of diversity (See table 1 for details).

The focus on institutional diversity at Valparaiso University extends beyond the office of multi-cultural programs. Within the College of Business for example, there exists three separate diverse and inclusive professional student organizations. Currently, Valparaiso University's College of Business has a chapter of Delta Sigma Pi (business), Epsilon Nu Tau (entrepreneurship), and Financial Management Association (finance). Additionally, the college is in the midst of pursuing a chapter of National Association of Black Accountants (accounting) to extend additional opportunities to students. Each of these professional organizations are a chapter of a national association. Though each is bound by the bylaws of the national organization, the chapters possess the ability to self-govern.

Like the OMP organizations, the college of businesses student organization leadership includes a diverse representation of the student body. For example, three of the past four chapter presidents of Delta Sigma Pi were female. The presidential representation in those four years also included diversity in sexual orientation and race. It is evident that the chapter has successfully promoted the top candidate to president regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Although the presidents are only one member in

a chapter of fifty, the ability to be inclusive is viewable across campus. The leadership team comprises members who identify with each of the four university diversity organizations. Each semester, the chapter holds recruiting events where a majority of chapter members are available to meet prospective candidates. Comprised of a large, diverse population of members and leaders, future participants may feel more comfortable about acceptance within the group.

TABLE 1: VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Purpose
AAPIC- Asian American Pacific Islander Coalition	The mission of the Asian American Pacific Islander Coalition is to create a welcoming environment for students of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage. We also work to educate camps about the different aspects of Asian and Pacific Islander culture and issues, advocate for our members, as well as create and nurture student leaders within the API community on campus
Alliance	Alliance supports, educates and advocates for the LGBTQ+ community. Alliance creates a safe space for students to explore identity and celebrate LGBTQ+ culture.
BSO- Black Student Organization	The Black Student Organization promotes pride and cultural awareness of the African American culture through various programs and activities. BSO also provides avenues for networking and socializing.
LIVE- Latinx In Valparaiso Excellence	LatinX In Valparaiso for Excellence is a diverse organization that strives to engage members with the campus community, as well as the broader LatinX community, by celebrating cultural awareness and creating an inclusive space on campus. We support students in academic excellence and personal development

Valpo.edu/multicultural

Since its inception in January 2018, the Epsilon Nu Tau chapter has promoted inclusion as one of its key ideals. The members vary in gender, nationality, race, religion, and even field of study as the organization is open to all majors. Leadership positions consisted of students from Arts & Sciences and Engineering in addition to the College of Business. ENT provides an outlet for creative thinking beyond the classroom, thus stimulating a diverse population. In February 2018, ENT helped coordinate an entrepreneurship competition, Valpo Innovates, open to all university students regardless of major. Students had 48 hours to develop a business plan pitch for a solution to a pollution problem in Northwest Indiana. The university invited business leaders and faculty to engage the students throughout the process and provide feedback. The winning team contained students from Arts & Sciences, Engineering, and Business; creating a truly multidisciplinary approach. Overall, the participants came from all four colleges within the university and collectively came up with excellent solutions; as judged by faculty and business professionals. Subsequently, Valpo Innovates 2.0 is scheduled to be held on campus in the spring of 2019. The event was so successful in bringing together strong minds from across campus, that it received recognition by the university and a grant for expansion. Like the University of Chicago, Valparaiso University is committed to providing opportunities to a diverse student body.

The benefits of these leadership positions are a secondary way that a student may differentiate him or herself. Whether it be professional speaking engagements, organizing an event, or networking with other professionals, institutions can enhance the college experience outside as well as inside the classroom. Though the terminal degree will often get the employee the job, the interpersonal skills acquired within an organization setting may be the differentiator towards upward mobility within an organization. Institutional Theory (Haundschild & Miner, 1997) suggests imitation is more common under conditions of uncertainty. When university outcomes are positive, peers will be more likely to imitate (Scott, 1995).

STATE UNIVERSITY - UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PEMBROKE

The University of North Carolina Pembroke (UNCP) is one of 17 institutions that make up the University of North Carolina System. Located in rural, southeastern North Carolina, it was founded as an institution to train American Indian public-school teachers in 1887 (Quick Facts, 2019). Today, 61% of UNCP's student population comes from historically underrepresented groups (primarily African American and American Indian/Alaskan native) and offers 41 bachelor's degrees and 17 master's degrees (Quick Facts, 2019).

Historically, access to affordable college was a barrier to a college education (US News Ranks, 2017. However, UNCP has attempted to alter this paradigm, as the cost of attendance per semester is now $500 (UNCP, 2018). By marketing affordable college towards a diverse population, the representation of a wide variety of culture and backgrounds has also grown.

Originally designated a Tribal College and University (TCU), the university promotes Native American Scholarships to bolster the population and affirm its roots. UNCP informs American Indian students who are applying of several statewide scholarships. The university's website directs students to the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs which helps students attain several special grants prior to entry. Although this source of outside funds is not affiliated with the university, it is augmented with a specific link for Native American graduate student scholarships within the university and a 10-page document for undergraduate scholarship opportunities. UNCP also writes grants for students with Native American descent. This year, a 1.1 million dollar grant over a five-year time period was procured by UNCP to support the Educational Leadership Program. This will provide twenty tuition free scholarships for students, many of which are dedicated for Native Americans and other diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, once in school, scholarships exclusively for Native American students can be attained. The Center for Student Success sends out emails to potential students with qualifying GPAs for specific majors and scholarships. For example, of the 25 scholarships in the School of Education, seven are exclusively offered to Native Americans. An email to a qualifying student would state the availability of such scholarships if prior qualifications were met. Example scholarships can be seen below (Table 2). In addition to Native American scholarships, UNCP offers several scholarships to students who are residents of the county in which UNCP is located. Because the county is very diverse, these scholarships often go to other historically underrepresented students.

Besides state and college wide scholarships to support Native Americans and other diverse population of students, UNCP has existing programs to promote the culture of indigenous people. These activities are for the entire student body and can promote cultural competency. First, an American Indian Studies program exists which students examine issues of sovereignty, nation building, colonization, social justice, and the historical roots of American Indian lives as they are lived today. Regardless of major, students have the opportunity to enroll in these classes as electives.

Furthermore, a Native American student organization assists with creating activities and events surrounding the culture. The purpose, according to the school website, is to "promote pride in our Native American Heritage, explore economic, political and educational opportunities of Native Americans and to promote the unification of Native students on our campus" (UNCP, 2018). With this purpose in mind, the organization has many discussions and events with leaders around North Carolina. All students are welcome to this organization and several introductory secessions are offered throughout the year. Students in some of the American Indian studies classes are required to attend at least one meeting. Lastly, UNCP Chancellor Dr. Robin Gary Cummings, who is Lumbee Indian, also created the Native American Speaker series. This is a series of presentations with prominent people such as artists, chefs, and scholars within the American Indian community. Chef Sean Sherman conducted a food demonstration honoring native food ways. In other words, it was an opportunity for the collective student

body to understand and sample foods that are indigenous to Native Americans. This allows all students in the cafeteria to experience the Native American culture.

TABLE 2: UNCP DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship	Requirements
Anderson N. Locklear Endowed Memorial	Member of a state or Federally recognized tribe. Awarded by the Education Department to a major in Teacher Education. Can be renewed as long as student is in good standing.
Louise Bell Locklear Memorial Scholarship	Second semester Sophomore, Junior, or Senior majoring in education with a 2.5 GPA and a resident of North Carolina. Scholarship renewable as long as recipient is in good standing with university and criteria is met. First preference given to a member of a State or Federally recognized tribe.
Mary Elizabeth Jones Brayboy Scholarship	Member of a State or Federally recognized tribe. Awarded by the Education Department to an Education Major with a 3.0 GPA.
Pearlie Locklear Scholarship	Member of a State or Federally recognized tribe. Renewable as long as student is in good standing. Major in Early Childhood Education.
Sheltering Home Circle	Studying to become an elementary classroom teacher in grades K-6. The recipient shall be selected in accordance with the following criteria: Has completed two years of study in the School of Education, has maintained at least a 2.5 GPA, is a resident of North Carolina, exhibits financial need, and exhibits integrity, moral standards and service through the community and campus involvement. Recipient shall be an enrolled member of a State or Federally recognized Indian Tribe, with a preference to a member of the Lumbee Tribe. Funds from the scholarship will be used for tuition, fees, and books. Scholarship may be renewed for 2nd year as need exists and academics continue to meet criteria.

Uncp.edu/admissions

Symbols of the original roots still exist and are ubiquitous across campus. Newly enrolled students are required to take a freshman seminar class in which they are required to visit the Museum of the Southeast American Indian located on campus. This is an exhibit of culture for the Native Americans in the region. Furthermore, the entire university staff is given a one-hour lecture every year about the history of the University and the significance of the Native Americans to the college. The dedication of tradition extends to various statues, names of buildings, and even the school mascot which is a red-tailed hawk (important to the people in the region). The logo of the sports teams features this hawk with a Native American head in front. The university embraces its original Lumbee Native American roots and is not seen as mistreatment of a heritage. Potentially, that may be why the red-tailed hawk mascot is embraced and not seen as exploitation by the general population associated with the university. Finally, multiple traditions of the indigenous people of the region are displayed at graduation and commencement. These include dress, songs, and musical instruments of the native people during the precession.

In addition to native people, UNCP is home to other diverse populations. They engender an environment where students feel accepted regardless of background. If the feeling of inclusion is not genuine, feelings of isolation may persist and hence, may switch universities (McClain & Perry, 2017). The Office of

Diversity and Inclusion's mission is to "strive to develop or co-create programs and services where each student can be engaged in an inclusive, respected, and diverse environment." Some ways of inclusion can be as simple as having food nights from different cultures such as "Chinese Tea Party" or as extensive as a leadership summit which consisted of several student organizations and faculty having a conversation about diversity. They strive to have constant contact and offer activities throughout each semester. This type of thoughtful behavior ensures that students have a voice in the university and feel welcomed regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. The extent of inclusion goes beyond tangible forms and has grown to social media; a Facebook page set up by the office of diversity where people can share events or thoughts that they are having is open to students. UNCP is committed to the students having a diverse experience. As the vision statement states "Diversity and Inclusion fosters the development of a robust university experience that best prepares students for success in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society." The tenants of the office include:

- **U**nity – Celebrating our similarities and differences, as we strive to prepare students to be inclusive and diverse thinking leaders and representatives of UNC Pembroke

- **N**ourishment – Feed our minds with new ideas and perspectives

- **C**ommunity – Build a diverse and united communities of interests

- **P**ride – Create communities that celebrate, embrace, and affirm its diversity

The Department of Kinesiology implements the campus wide diversity and inclusion initiative in a multitude of ways. First, many of the students attend the events that the university sponsors. Second, the Teacher Education Council (TEC) has a specific task force to recruit a diverse student population. TEC has taken the initiative to visit rural schools and distribute pamphlets about UNCP and its programs. Lastly, diversity is a focal point in many of the classes offered. For example, Health and Physical Education students spend a unit learning about games and activities outside of the United States. This will give students a more diverse pedagogical toolbox and facilitate their own novel ideas about sport. Therefore, not only is diversity a conscious conversation at the macro level, but also thoughtfully implemented in the micro/ departmental level.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of institution type, higher education is focused on adding a component of diversity in all aspects of campus life. We consistently found similar programs and perspectives across our sample that lead to higher education opportunities for historically unrepresented groups. As such, we find the trend is moving in the right direction. However, there is still plenty of work to be done. In some cases, not all students are aware of all the opportunities that exist on campus. Lack of awareness and potentially lack of understanding may inhibit some students from truly being involved.

Therefore, we introduce several proposals with cross-disciplinary benefits for diversity and inclusion.

INSTITUTION LEVEL

Proposal 1: Accommodate a Diverse Population of Students

In the spirit of diversity and inclusion, outreach and recruiting should be welcoming. For many students, their first interaction with a potential school will be with university administration. If institutions fail to connect with students early on, it will prevent a relationship from developing between the faculty and student body. In many cases, initial interest in a school will encourage students to meet with faculty in

their area of interest or plan an overnight stay on campus with a current student. If the student is met with perceived barriers, the second and third opportunities to enact in deeper engagement with other campus advocates may be missed. It is a tremendous opportunity for universities to build a relationship in order to develop a strong pipeline of future scholars into the workforce. Fortunately, all three institutions have specific methods for attracting diverse populations. Though each institution has its own unique programs, mimetic isomorphism has indirectly made the focal point of the efforts very similar. It takes more than generic dialogue to reach some students. Programs to promote STEM jobs among women and minorities is an important step to bridge the opportunity gap. In our study, University of Chicago was not alone in their efforts to attract diverse populations. Like STEM fields at University of Chicago, Valparaiso University is making a conscious effort to attract more women and minorities into their MBA program. When discussing the opportunity to increase applicants from that area, the director specifically mentioned the importance of building a relationship. She, herself a Valparaiso MBA graduate, has seen the program grow in size and diversity over the past decade and a half. Applications, acceptances, and enrollment from underrepresented groups is steadily increasing over time. University of North Carolina Pembroke's approach to diversity is also showing promise. First, their education department works with underprivileged school districts as part of their curriculum. For some students in these classes, it may be their first exposure to higher education. This fosters relationship between the prospective students and current students enrolled in UNCP. As this relationship builds, high school students gain access to information about the institution and scholarship opportunities to make college attainable. Finally, by lowering their tuition to $500 per semester, the access to education has dramatically increased to students from a disadvantaged background.

Proposal 2: Connect with Urban Secondary Schools

Efforts are being made at the secondary education level to provide collegiate opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. There is an inherent need to improve the quality of education received in urban public-school systems, so that a higher proportion of historically underrepresented groups will have both the motivation and academic aptitude to succeed in an environment of higher learning. In an effort to address this limitation in the U.S. school system, urban public high schools have begun partnering with local institutions of higher education to provide students with a curriculum more conducive with college preparation, as well as develop programs that facilitate the ability of underserved minorities to successfully apply to their desired colleges. Such examples can be found at Victory Early College High School (Houston, TX) and Wicomico High School (Salisbury, MD).

Victory Early College High School is a relatively small high school in the Aldine Independent School District of Houston, TX (total enrollment is 449 for grades 9-12) but is consistently regarded as one of the best high schools in the United States, being ranked 272nd nationally, and 50th in Texas (Aldine, 2017). The high school touts itself as a college preparatory institution that collaborates with Lone Star Community College providing an atmosphere that blends high school and college into coherent educational programs. Importantly, Victory Early College High School serves a community that is extraordinarily diverse (total minority enrollment = 98%) and is a poignant example of how high schools can coordinate with local institutions of higher education to prepare students from historically underrepresented groups for the rigors of coursework at the collegiate level. Victory provides students with the opportunity to pursue a high school diploma and an Associate's of Arts Degree or two years of college credit toward a baccalaureate degree.

Wicomico High School (Salisbury, MD), implemented a program called GEAR UP (GEAR UP, 2018). **G**aining **E**arly **A**wareness and **R**eadiness for **U**ndergraduate **P**rograms is made possible through a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This program is designed to prepare students and families academically, financially and inspirationally to enroll and succeed in post-secondary (college or technical school) education. A unique aspect of this program is that it targets the students in middle school and will

continue to assist students throughout their secondary education. GEAR UP is a program that will assist students through summer enrichment programs and scholarships. Other programs offered included campus tours, tutoring in English or math, speeches by selected guests, Career Day, and field trips.

STUDENT LEVEL

Proposal 3: Promote Student Advocacy

When trying to promote diversity on campus, student buy-in is essential. Student peers will often have more direct influence on students being involved compared to faculty or administration. In our collective experience, student recruitment is essential to foster diversity in academic programs, professional organizations, clubs, and events. The composition of participants can be a door or a barrier to gaining diversity opportunities. Comparatively, it is more difficult to truly merge into a group that lacks a common identity. Since diversity is multi-faceted, any positive association with other members may lead to connectivity. Student interaction is essential to feeling welcomed on campus. Prospective students may meet with current students, get campus tours, and even spend a night on campus. Others, though, may take their first steps on campus at the start of their freshman year. In either case, college presents a new challenge and opportunity for all students. The universities we studied all have significant resources allocated to foster an environment of inclusion. In all cases, the universities offered diverse clubs and organizations through a specific office dedicated to diversity and inclusion. Yet, it is equally important to have the students be as welcoming as the rest of campus. It may be tempting for campus organizations to recruit from the same pool of students as it has worked in the past. However, over time, this inhibits diversity and the opportunity for growth. For anyone who works with student organizations, it is advised to make it a focal point with leadership. In our experiences, the student organizations that we work with have a strong diversity component, which deserves recognition for the respective student bodies. It shows that the students are implementing the values of the university at the student level.

FACULTY LEVEL

Proposal 4: Encourage Faculty Interaction

Compared to institutions and students, faculty have the greatest ability to make an impact in the professional lives of students. Once a student arrives on campus, the collective faculty are entrusted with disseminating knowledge in the field, both theoretical and practical. Though students will talk to administrators and other students about general perceptions of the professional environment, these discussions often engage faculty members. As faculty, we have all gone through some sort of exploration process to end up where we are. In fact, something unique to our field led each author to take that exploration in a particular direction. It provides faculty scholars to mentor and outline the process of finding that area of excitement. Additionally, the longer a faculty member is engaged, the more anecdotal stories of success can be shared. When discussing underrepresented groups in higher education, each field of our study had a specific program to reach out and connect with diverse groups. This study examined institutional diversity and its implementation in a specific field. As such, each institution has significantly more programs that provide opportunities for different areas of diversity in various other fields of study. The strategic importance of the faculty member is that he or she will be more aware of key opportunities and be able to instruct the student population accordingly. It is common for any student organization to have a faculty advisor. Therefore, that individual can collaborate with student leadership to provide greater accessibility to a large segment of campus.

In conclusion, all universities are as unique as the individuals who attend them. Each member of the campus community brings something unique and valuable to the organization. Fortunately, these schools we studied have all made it a point to emphasize diversity across campus. Initially, this means that

diversity programs were at the administration level. Over time, faculty and students took on a more specific role to embrace inclusion in their various fields of study. The leading institutions are often at the forefront of social change, as industries often look at the key players before deciding what to do next. Regardless of the institution's position in the market, diversity and inclusion benefits the past, present, and future students of that college or university.

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Stress and Employee Engagement[1]

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We explored strategies that HR leaders within a single healthcare organization in Franklin, Tennessee, used to reduce employee disengagement caused by stress and identified four themes related to business practice. The four themes were (a) integration of employee engagement practices into culture and business processes, (b) providing managers with the job resources they need, (c) intentionality, transparency, and honesty in communications, and (d) relying on supportive supervisor behavior. Senior executives and HR leaders should examine the feasibility of proactively implementing similar strategies to mitigate employee work place stress, reduce disengagement, and improve employee engagement and commitment to the organization.

Employees who bring an emotionally positive state of mind to their workplace invest of themselves emotionally and cognitively in their work (Lee, & Ok, 2015). Cohen (2014) observed that a motivated workforce improves business productivity, revenues, and performance. Analysis of data on employee engagement and financial performance from 94 companies between 2008 and 2012 found a significant correlation between increased engagement and sales growth (Merry, 2013).

People experience stress as physiological and psychological reactions when they are unable to handle the demands of life events, with work-related events, relationships, and finances being the most common stressors for adults (Durante & Laran, 2016). Employees can experience stress at work and outside of work for a variety of reasons. People experience job-related stresses, such as job dissatisfaction, job insecurity, organizational conflict, and organizational change (Smollan, 2015); money stress (Sturgeon, Zautra, & Okun, 2014); and retirement-related stress (Verne, 2015). Stress, inside and outside of work, affects employee productivity (Tunwall & Stutzman, 2012), and the estimated impact of employee absenteeism on U.S. businesses was $225 billion per year through reduced efficiency, overtime wages, fixed fringe benefits, and the cost of replacement employees (Biron & De Reuver, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress and Its Effect on Individuals and Organizations

Stress is a negative, bodily, and psychological reaction to individuals' inability to cope with situations in their life; work-related events, relationship issues, and finances are the most common stressors for adults (Durante & Laran, 2016). Jain, Giga, and Cooper (2013) observed that researchers have variously conceptualized stress as a stimulus, a response, an interaction between stress and the response, and an individual's specific interaction with their environment.

Behavioral reactions, physical reactions, and psychological reactions are the strains that individuals experience under stress (Spector, 2006). MacFadyen, MacFadyen, and Prince (1996) noted that stress is cumulative in its effect on individuals' mental wellbeing across stressors such as lack of employment, lack of social support, social status, organizational changes, savings, and income. Individuals' reactions

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to stress can manifest as muscle tension, mental fatigue, and cognitive impairment (Sandmark, Sarvento, Franke, & Akhavan, 2014; Voci, Veneziani, & Metta, 2016).

Walinga and Rowe (2013) noted that sustained stress experienced in the workplace led to employees experiencing job burnout resulting in absenteeism, lower organizational productivity, and higher attrition, causing increased costs for the organization on staffing and health benefits. Employees experiencing chronic work-related stress show lower concentration and productivity at work because their blood pressure is not steady, their cholesterol levels are elevated, they experience muscle tension, and they suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and clinical depression (Colligan & Higgins, 2006). Stress at work arises from issues such as too much work, conflicting goals, vague task goals, emotional demands, lack of autonomy, and absence of supervisory support (Corin & Bjork, 2016).

Workplace stress places significant burdens, physical, cognitive, and emotional, on both the employee and the organization through lower productivity, increased absenteeism, increased presenteeism, counterproductive work behavior, and job burnout in the workplace (Colligan & Higgins, 2006). Employees with high sense of their ability to succeed in certain situations see more opportunities than situational threats and demonstrate greater efficacy in coping with stressful situations (Lu, Du, & Xu, 2016). Montgomery, Spanu, Baban, and Panagopoulou (2015) and Elst et al. (2016) commented on the job demands-resources model and stated that individual characteristics interact with work characteristics to cause psychological reactions such as burnout or work engagement and that job resource availability was the primary predictor of work engagement. Stress and cynicism affect enthusiasm in the workplace; cynicism, one of the components of burnout, is one of the first indicators of deteriorating wellbeing in the workplace (Viitala, Tanskanen, & Säntti, 2015).

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that HR leaders used to reduce employee disengagement caused by stress. The sample population for this study comprised of HR leaders and line managers within a single healthcare organization in Eastern Tennessee, who had used such strategies and had reduced employee disengagement caused by stress. The findings of this study could help employers reduce their employees' level of disengagement caused by stress. The implications for positive social change include the potential to improve human resource management (HRM) practices in organizations that might implement such strategies, which could lead to improved emotional wellbeing for employees, with concomitant benefits to their families and communities.

METHODOLOGY

Researchers use qualitative methods to explore the ways in which people experience and perceive situations (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). We selected the qualitative method because we wanted to ask exploratory questions to understand the ways in which HR leaders and line managers experienced and perceived situations related to stress and engagement. Researchers use the quantitative method to examine the statistical significance of relationships or differences among variables to test hypotheses (Skott & Ward, 2016). Researchers use the mixed method to approach a topic from an objective, detached perspective and a participative, exploratory perspective to obtain a multidimensional view of the study topic using statistical analysis and rich descriptions, which they then analyze to identify and explore key themes either in parallel or in sequence (Stuart, Maynard, & Rouncefield, 2017). We did not use the quantitative method or the mixed method for my study because We did not intend to conduct a statistical analysis of significant relationships or differences among variables and therefore did not wish to test statistical hypotheses for relationships among variables as part of a mixed study.

Researchers use case study designs to ask what, how, or why qualitative research questions about a current day phenomenon in a real-life context and use multiple sources of data for triangulation of evidence (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay, & Gray, 2016). We used the case study design, as we wanted to interview managers in a single organization to determine the strategies they used to reduce the effect of stress on employees and improve employee engagement. We did not use the ethnographic design, which researchers use to explore the cultural values and beliefs of a group of participants (Shover, 2012), or the phenomenological design, which researchers use to explore the meanings of participants' lived experience with a phenomenon (Eberle, 2013).

RESEARCH QUESTION

What strategies do HR leaders use to reduce employee stress and increase employee engagement?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What strategies did you use to increase employee engagement and commitment to the organization?

2. What strategies did you use to reduce stress in the workplace?

3. How did you assess the effectiveness of these strategies on decreasing employee stress and increasing employee engagement?

4. What barriers/challenges did you experience in implementing these strategies?

5. How did you overcome these barriers/challenges?

6. What other topics that we did not cover in our discussion would you like to discuss that can contribute to my understanding of the strategies your organization utilized to reduce employee stress and increase employee engagement?

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

We conducted a single case study in a healthcare organization in Franklin, TN, that had implemented policies and practices towards employee engagement. The identified participant population was 12 executives who either oversaw the HR function or were line managers with responsibility for supervising other employees. We used census sampling to identify the pool of 12 study participants in the single organization. Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2017) observed that sample sizes in case studies are generally small because the researcher is interested in the case's special attributes. The final list of participants represented executives with a varying range of employment tenure from across many business functions within the organization: human resources, clinical operations, coaching operations, technology, emerging business, account management, and finance. The identified participant population was 12 executives who either oversaw the HR function or were line managers with responsibility for supervising other employees. Table 1 provides a classification of the participants based on their role and tenure in the organization. Seventy five percent of the participants had worked in the organization for 5 or more years.

THE FINDINGS

We identified four themes related to business practice as shown in Figure 1. The four themes were (a) integration of employee engagement practices into culture and business processes, (b) providing managers with the job resources they need, (c) being transparent and honest in communications, and (d) relying on supportive supervisor behavior.

We conducted the study within a healthcare organization in Franklin, TN, to understand the strategies its HR leaders used to improve employee engagement and mitigate employee stressors. The organization's management had experienced a long period of business success leading up to 2015. During this period, management empowered high commitment human resource practices, invested in leadership training and support activities over a period of years, framed these activities within a set of organizational culture development practices, and embedded employee engagement practices into business processes. The organization's leadership trained line managers, provided them the tools to help employees mitigate work stressors, and involved them in defining employee engagement practices. Between 2014 and 2016, the organization's management had to reduce costs in response to setbacks in business.

TABLE 1
**ROLE CATEGORY AND TENURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

Alias	Role category	Tenure (Years)
P1	Communications and culture manager	10-20
P2	HRM practice leader	10-20
P3	Emerging business division leader	5-10
P4	Clinical operations manager	5-10
P5	Technology operations manager	0-3
P6	HR business liaison leader	0-3
P7	Technology leader	10-20
P8	Coaching operations leader	5-10
P9	Call center leader	10-20
P10	Account management leader	20+
P11	Finance manager	5-10
P12	Emerging business manager	0-3

At the time of our study, the new leadership was assimilating the division into its systems and processes. As a result, the study participants had experienced or heard about the prosperous years, had faced periodic layoff events since 2014, and had become employees of a new organization in 2017. Based on discussions with the organization's HR leadership, we decided to present the findings over these two distinct periods in the organization's recent history, "the golden years" and "the change years", in order to provide a context for strategies HR leaders used to reduce disengagement caused by stress and improve employee engagement. We identified the golden years as the period between 2008 and 2015. The following themes relate to the golden years of the organization.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

Integration of employee engagement practices into culture and processes. During its golden years the organization created a mission-driven, values-based work culture. The study participants were nearly unanimous in their responses (10 out of 12 participants) on this theme. Berens (2013) stated the four qualities conducive to employee engagement were (a) employees want to be part of something bigger than themselves, (b) they feel a sense of belonging, (c) their journey needs to have a purpose and be meaningful, and (d) they want to see their contributions make a significant impact. Byrne (2015) observed that the organizational factors that inhibit employee engagement include lack of perceived organizational support, physical resource constraints, hostile or abusive work environment, micromanagement, absent or ineffective leadership, and constant change.

FIGURE 1. STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING EMPLOYEE DISENGAGEMENT AND IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
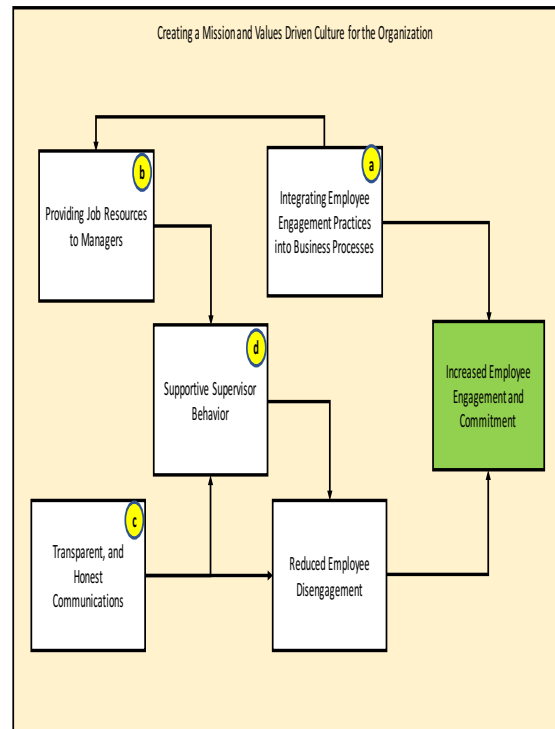
The organization's leaders, knowing that "there will always be a culture in an organization so long as you have people because of the people, the personalities, the dynamics, and the way people engage" (P2), were intentional about creating a work environment in which employees felt a sense of purpose and developed a sense of commitment to the organization. Organizations determine the employees' engagement experience through the creation and sustainment of an organizational culture (Shuck, Collins, Rocco, & Diaz, 2016). The approach contrasted with Valentin's (2014) observation that organizations' employee engagement initiatives focused on performance and overshadowed discussions around the employee's workplace experience and wellbeing.

The organization's mission, as P8 stated, was "to create a healthier world, one person at a time." The human resource department integrated the mission statement and the organization's set of values into its employee hiring, employee onboarding, employee development, and performance evaluation procedures. These procedures helped articulate that the organization's values were "more than just knowing what the values were, but how they interacted, and why it was important that we had those ones and what they meant" (P2). P8 explained the link between the organization's mission and values, "when we had a clear mission with very clear values, I felt like most colleagues that interacted with across the board were "dialed into" that mission and people came to work even when it was hard, I would hear people say, "I am helping people."

These statements appeared to support the Kopaneva and Sias (2015) assertion that employee commitment to the organization arises from a shared understanding of the organization's purpose and generates trust, leading to a sense of belonging. The organization was intentional about nurturing a culture of engagement in the work environment as the following responses indicated, "one of the things that I believe is unique about XYZCo in its history is that there was an intentional effort, a decision made by

our founders to define the culture that they wanted. They wanted to define the workplace where they wanted to work and went about a series of steps to put that culture into play" (P2). As P2 stated, "We made that shift, and with that we put a lot of effort into defining what engagement meant for our managers and for our colleagues and to really build into the culture a sense of engagement."

The organization's leaders believed that leaders, managers, and employees had a collective responsibility to create an engaged workforce. Eight of the 12 participants agreed that the organization signaled their commitment, financial support, and leadership in creating a work environment that reflected the organization's mission and values and tasked the managers and employees with defining and implementing the required practices and procedures. This aligned with the observation by Shuck et al. (2016) that employees engage when organizations (through organizational development and culture) and managers (through leadership) nurture the conditions of engagement. Organizations can counter the negative effects of stress and burnout by building a positive trusting work culture (Anthony-McMann, Ellinger, Astakhova, & Halbesleben, 2017).

As a result, employees and managers in the organization felt a sense of ownership in creating the environment in which they worked. As P1 stated, "that was helpful for our colleagues and our leaders because our colleagues were able to participate and drive their own engagement and drive the engagement of their peers. Our managers and senior leaders were able to say, "it is not just up to us, engagement is all of our jobs" and I think it gave people more sense of pride in our engagement because we all owned it."

Bakker (2017) asserted that HR practices such as creating a culture of trust and empowerment, performance development, training, career development, and ongoing appraisals influence employee engagement. P7 compared the organization's effort at engagement with other organizations, "XYZCo has been one of those places where I have worked where you have more of those types of individuals that are here because of the mission and they want to know that what they do every day adds value in helping the organizations achieve its mission. Whereas, other organizations I have worked for, not so much".

The HR department partnered with business leaders to embed employee engagement practices into business processes and workflows. The organization updated its performance evaluation process to measure not just performance goal achievement but also how the manager and employee went about achieving those goals. Saks (2017) stated that organizations should manage employee engagement the same way they manage job performance, by making employee engagement the focus of and embedding it into the ongoing performance management process. Anthony-McMann et al. (2017) found that training leaders and employees in fostering a work environment that helped develop positive work relationships was the most important activity an HR department could undertake to improve employee engagement.

Leaders and line managers were trained on the tactical activities designed to improve employee engagement, including training on the Gallup Q12 survey methodology, a tool used to measure engagement scores at the individual, team, division, and organization levels. The organization shared the list of Q12 survey questions (Table 2).

Leadership developed a robust set of activities framed within the purpose and values of the organization to implement, measure, and monitor employee engagement and commitment to the organization based on responses to questions 1 to 12. Managers received regular training on creating engagement impact plans and tools to measure, monitor, and report progress on an annual basis. Participant P10 observed that "every year, it wasn't just that we got the readout of the result. We were further challenged to take the read out of the results, look for the areas where we could obviously improve, and then generate action plans that we measured throughout the year to try to address those areas for opportunities for improvement".

Participant P2 observed that "on the whole, we did see significant improvements from year to year in our engagement results that we felt stemmed from the work we did, not only around engagement but also around change management, around training and development, leadership development and such, and overall communication path and strategy.

TABLE 2
GALLUP Q12 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Number	Question Wording
Q0	How satisfied are you with XYZCo as a place to work?
Q1	I know what is expected of me at work.
Q2	I have the materials and equipment to do my job right.
Q3	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
Q4	In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
Q5	My supervisor, or someone at work, appears to care about me as a person.
Q6	There is someone at work who encourages my development.
Q7	At work, my opinions seem to count.
Q8	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
Q9	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work
Q10	I have a best friend at work.
Q11	In the last 6 months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
Q12	This last year, I have had the opportunities at work to learn and grow.

The HR leaders also empowered employees to take an active role in creating the impact plans to ensure they had a voice. The organization's HR department, with support from senior leadership, developed policies and practices that were people-centered. Hiring and selection processes assessed applicants' identification with the organization's purpose and values. Such recruiting practices may have helped hire staff who came equipped with coping mechanism defenses to deal with negative effects of stressors (Newton & Teo, 2013). Employees were known as "colleagues" (P1). The HR department developed trusting relationships with managers and employees. Bakker (2017) asserted that high-performance HR practices engender employee engagement. As P1 stated, "Our colleagues are our customers and they are the center of our experience. And everything we do is to make their experience better." P6 echoed this by saying, "I think all that plays into people knowing that they are treated with respect and there is an openness about the culture."

Leadership created a work environment that felt open and bright. Leaders and managers encouraged work-at-home and flexible hours to promote a work-life balance among employees and invested in creating a work environment that supported physical activities and made it easy for employees to find healthy food options. Participants P3 and P12 described their efforts at helping their staff step away from their community level engagement responsibilities. P1 stated that her supervisor encouraged her to balance her work and life commitments. P5 explained how he encouraged his staff to take vacations and not answer e-mails while being away. P6 talked about the opportunities to engage in physical activity and the general approach to wellbeing within the organization. P7 contrasted his work experience at the organization and his earlier companies to say that the organization implemented employee engagement practices across the board. The organization appeared to mirror an observation from Boreham et al. (2016), who asserted that low levels of employee engagement were linked to low level of wellbeing at an organizational level. P11, a line manager, stated,

the company really prides itself in having a culture that is very health oriented and along with that, being an employee-friendly, work-life balance sort of focus. Having a flexible generous PTO policy for one thing, paying for our gym memberships, and things like that.

The leaders encouraged managers to involve frontline staff in the decision-making process even if it meant merely listening to employees' reactions to leadership decisions. As P10 stated, "Just the fact that somebody took the time to listen to them and to hear out their perspective, to me, makes a huge difference in their engagement and whatever process or activity is being rolled out." When colleagues' positions had to be terminated, the organization ensured that the decision was carried out in a respectful manner and did the most it could do for the employee being terminated. As P1 stated, "we had 155 colleagues at the time and only five left and the other 149[sic] stayed to the very end and to this day, I get emails from people who say this was the best place they ever worked and there is a Facebook group of them that I am a part of and the ones that are still in Raleigh still get together. And we had people thank us at the end . . . "thank you for doing this in a dignified way" and "thank you for this being a great place to work," and that's not always the case when you close a facility with 150 people losing their jobs on the same day".

Providing managers with the job resources they need. The leaders empowered employees and their managers to collaborate in identifying barriers that prevented them from achieving their best work outcomes, creating improvement plans, and implementing robust monitoring and reporting processes around such plans. The HR department provided managers opportunities to participate in leadership training events as part of their personal development plan and emphasized equipping managers with the tools, the talking points, and the context behind organizational changes so they could proactively address employee concerns. In providing managers job resources such as leadership training and training in engagement practices, the organization engaged in a social exchange principle of reciprocal interdependence (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005).

HR practices, such as creating a culture of trust and empowerment, employee development, training, career development, and ongoing appraisals influence employee engagement (Bakker, 2017). Employees engage when they have the resources to do their job, manage work stressors, feel safe in the work environment, find meaning in their work, have an interpersonally oriented leader, and connect with their colleagues to align with the organization's mission (Byrne, 2015). Bakker (2017) observed that leadership development intervention had a positive effect on followers' perceptions of work-culture support and strategic alignment. Social exchange relationships at work evolve when employers take care of employees, which thereby gives rise to beneficial consequences (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As P4 stated, "HR would take a lot of depth in the leadership growth, being an active partner in not only being a part of the team, a superficial part of the team, but being able to really help, 'how can I help you have that conversation?', 'how can I help you develop this certain skill?' and watching." HR managers were involved in providing the mentorship and support managers needed in implementing the leadership training.

The HR department recognized the importance of providing line managers the information, the support, and the tools they needed to engage with their staff to facilitate two-way communicate about the organization's direction and leaders' decisions. Many participants praised the HR-sponsored training and development programs. P8 stated, "I feel like they were important for manager engagement. It helped them feel like they were supported. On a scale of 1-10, the value they provided in 2010 and 2011 was 7 or 8. They were good programs." Referring to the HR department, P10 stated, "Having a team of people waking up every day trying to think about how to make sure we support and sustain our culture is significant to the success". Social exchange theory explains employee engagement by stating that employees who perceive higher organizational support are more likely to reciprocate with greater levels of engagement in their job and in the organization (Saks, 2006). Dewettinck and Vroonen (2017) found that managers' beliefs regarding the usefulness of employee performance management activities were the key determinants of a successful implementation. Anthony-McMann et al. (2017) found that training leaders and employees in fostering a work environment that helped develop positive work relationships, was the most important activity a HR department could undertake to improve employee engagement. P2 explained how the organization approached its role in supporting line managers, "they may have limited

amounts of information or context, but yet, they are needing to craft a message for their employees that motivates, that gives them hope, that gives them meaning and so, if you are able to empower them, give them more tools, more information, then I think you are set up for more success when you think about colleague engagement, when you think about stress levels and the ability to impact anxiety".

Being transparent and honest in communications with employees. Five participants responded that the organization developed a communication strategy that emphasized transparency, helped employees understand what organizational decisions and events meant to them, provided managers with the talking points they would need to cascade information to their staff, and helped develop trust with the employees. Meyer (2017) had suggested that effective, two-way communication was important in shaping employee perceptions of the organization's efforts at creating a values-based culture and implementing employee engagement practices. A communications and culture specialist within the HR department described the role was about "ensuring our colleagues and leaders are set up for success through transparent and timely communications, so making sure our messaging makes sense to people, aligning messages of our senior leaders on down to our front-line colleagues" (P1). Straatmann, Kohnke, Hattrup, and Mueller (2016) found that implementation of change related communications processes helped employees perceive greater behavioral control around change events because they felt informed. Straatmann, Kohnke, Hattrup, and Mueller found that the theory of planned behavior constructs of attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms explained about 47% of the variance in employee intentions to engage in organizational change events and process. As P2 stated, "some level of transparency I think, was very important, for colleagues to feel a sense of trust from the organization and for them to understand what it truly meant for them – positive impact or not, they knew where they stood, to the degree it could be communicated but on the other side it was important to prepare our leaders – frontline and middle management with the talking points, the tools, the context behind that change because they were the ones that had to carry that change forward and they were the ones that were going to get the questions and concerns from their team about this change, they were the ones that were going to see the stress and anxiety in their team mates and were going to be ones that had to address it".

HR leaders reached out to influencers within the organization as part of an overall change management strategy and communications plan in advance of major organizational events. Participants P6 and P12 insisted that it was important to be open and as professionally transparent as possible with their staff. P12 observed, "I think, if people think that something is going on and they are kept in the dark about that, it just creates more stress and gossip and speculation". P10 emphasized the importance of communication as part of an overall engagement approach, my leadership philosophy has always been that it's really important sometimes, to the point of over communicating to make sure that you're consistently informing the people that report to you, about anything that's happening in the company both positive and negative.

However, these communications practices were likely insufficient to cope with the sheer size and frequency of the organizational changes that occurred during the change years. Responses from a few participants appear in the change years section of this study. Meyer (2017) argued that organizations that recognized the basic human needs of autonomy, efficacy, self-control, social connection; implemented HR policies that reflected fairness in hiring, development, and evaluation practices; and implemented frequent and effective two-way communications with their employees, as best principles, had a greater chance of improving employee engagement and improvements to the bottom line. As P10 observed, "the values of the organization were the focus on culture, the fact that we looked at it, we measured it, we talked about it, we where we had it on our badges, where we were consistently reminded of the importance of culture and the very specific tenets of that culture that we wanted to uphold".

The leadership invested in these strategies over a period of more than 7 years to allow employee engagement practices and perspectives to become part of the way the whole organization conducted itself. Figure 2 shows the trends in annual employee engagement Gallup Q12 scores for the organization.

Organizational engagement scores measured on a scale of 0 to 5, rose from 3.82 in 2008 to 4.20 in 2012, and plateaued for the next three years.

FIGURE 2. TREND IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT TREND BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015AS PROVIDED BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION.
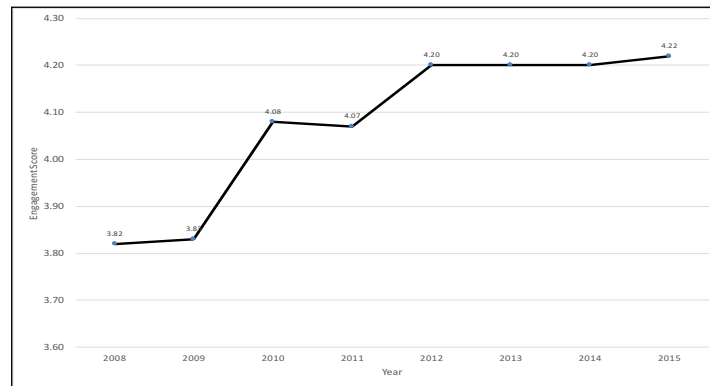
However, even in an engagement-oriented culture, there remained pockets of disengaged employees. As Shuck et. al. (2016) observed, even though organizations determine the experience of employee engagement by creating and sustaining an organizational culture, employees may become disengaged because of an uncontrollable, local condition of work. P9 mentioned the differential treatment towards the call center staff by saying, "For the longest time, I feel that the call center people were treated like a different caste or group within the corporation." Leaders in the call center had to go to lengths to create, according to P9, a "bubble around the call center" to make it a fun place. The call center leaders developed a manager training program that focused on building team morale by "promoting from within" (P9). They created a program that would allow front line staff to take on managerial roles when they became available. P7 wished that HR's scope of engagement could have extended from the organization level to the employee level. P3 mentioned having to customize organization-level communications to suit his business. Participants' responses related to the change years revealed additional details related to some of the themes from the organization's golden years.

THE CHANGE YEARS

Organizational changes including changes in leadership, curtailment of non-essential expenses, and staff headcount reductions started in late 2014. Employees lost long-term friends to departures or layoffs. Remaining team members saw an increase in their workloads. Leadership stopped administering the Gallup Q12 survey after 2015 even though employee engagement practices remained integrated into business processes. Then, in 2016, the organization was spun-off from its parent company and sold. More changes occurred in leadership positions. New rounds of layoffs occurred across the organization. Reporting relationships changed.

Integration of employee engagement practices into culture and processes. Leadership commitment to creating and maintaining a culture of engagement appeared to be important leading up to and during the change years. Six participants responded to the changes in organization culture during the change years. P10 used the term "counter cultural" to describe the effect on the organization's values and culture as new leaders came into the organization and spoke about the need for leaders to be aligned with the organization's culture because the organization took its cues from their behaviors. P12 spoke about the

palpable sense of loss employees felt in the organization's culture activities after the acquisition. P2 spoke about the "ebbs and flows, and changes based on new leaders" as the reason for the shift away from the values that formed the basis for the organization's culture during the golden years.

The relatively sudden erosion of values starting in 2015 and the associated ambiguity about the organization's mission after the acquisition, caused perceptible changes in how employees talked about the organization. The main source of stress during the change period arose from uncertainty about changing job roles, potential redeployment, layoffs, perceptions of change processes, lack of resources, and the absence of consultation and information (Smollan, 2017). Based on their findings on organizational identity and employee stress, Newton and Teo (2013) suggested that organizations should facilitate high levels of identification with the organization, its mission, and values because such identification would allow employees to adjust better to organization changes and the effects of such stressors. When individuals identify with the organization, they are likely to express satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Lee, Park, & Koo. 2015). Newton and Teo (2013) found that employees who identified strongly with their organization showed decreases in their job satisfaction levels and their psychological health when they were unclear about their role.

P2 mentioned that employees were not sure how they fit into the organization after the acquisition. P8 stated, "And where we are now is, we don't have any values, we got some values thrown on to our annual performance evaluation. They weren't all that meaningful and they were a little confusing" when speaking about the sense of confusion among employees about the organization's purpose under the new parent. P1 was optimistic, but cautious about the future of culture-related activities after the acquisition. P12 spoke about the steps the team took to reinstate the cultural values of employee recognition and celebration of life events when they realized that the HR department had stopped doing so.

Employees appeared to be going through an identity crisis because they sensed a loss of identification with the organization. Organizational identification forms the basis for the theory of planned behavior model of attitudes and behaviors in organizations (Lee, Park, & Koo, 2015). It is common for individuals to construct their identity from the identity of the organization they work for because being part of and working for an organization consume a significant portion of a person's life (Lee, Park, & Koo, 2015). Balanescu (2017) found that the three motivational factors that motivate employees to stay with their employer were (a) the working environment, (b) relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and (c) identification with the organization. P7 used the term "wandering in the wilderness" to describe employees who did not understand what the "tsunami of changes" (P10) meant for them in their jobs. Sung et al. (2017) suggested that perceived changes in employees' social exchange relationship with the organization based on their perceptions of job security, job continuity, and distributive justice, affected their attachment to the organization. Thus, it appeared as though employees who identified strongly with the organization felt stressed, disengaged, and less committed to the organization during the change years because of the erosion in employees' sense of organizational identity. Supervisors had an important role to play in helping employees reduce their stress, regain their sense of belonging and commitment to the organization.

Providing supervisors with the job resources they need. Seven participants highlighted the importance of psychological contract fulfillment through employee training and development programs during the change years. A psychological contract represents employee beliefs and perceptions about implicit promises and obligations between the employee and employer in an employment exchange relationship (Birtch, Chiang & Van Esch, 2016). Participants lamented the absence of ongoing training and development programs during these years. P4 missed HR's involvement and active participation in leadership development programs. P10 stated that the training programs were "critical to our success in engagement". P11 stated that he had received little to no management training since his promotion as a manager in 2016. P3, P8, and P11 spoke of the constraints they faced in trying to invest in training and

development programs for their staff. P7 regretted the "lip service" the organization was providing to investing in employee growth. These participants appeared to be referring to concept of psychological contract fulfillment. Birtch, Chiang and Van Esch (2016) stated that psychological contract fulfillment, a social exchange perspective on the employer-employee exchange process, reflected employee beliefs, expectations, and perceptions about the employment relationship and the satisfaction of implicit promises between employee and employer. Communications strategies provide employees with the tools to manage their beliefs, expectations, and perceptions of the organization's decisions and activities.

Being transparent, and honest in communications with employees. During the change years, the organization increased its use of communications as a tool to help reduce employee disengagement and mitigate change-related stresses.   Straatmann, Kohnke, Hattrup, and Mueller (2016) found that implementation of change-related communication processes helped employees perceive greater behavioral control about the change because they felt informed about the change. As identified by Francis, Ramdhony, Reddington, and Staines (2013), the HR department recognized the role that line managers could play in moderating the adverse effects of the workplace changes on employees, by engaging in near continuous dialogue with their staff, to help reconcile individual and organizational needs and interests. Tucker (2017) stated that managers could play an important communications role to reduce employee frustrations caused by lack of direction and information by planning their communications ahead of time, sharing information as completely as allowable, and listening carefully to employee feedback. The department leaders implemented a change management strategy that included a detailed communications plan. The plan included, as P2 stated, "talking point" memos that provided managers with information on the nature of the change, impacts if any, and the reason for the change.

P7 expressed concern about the communications strategy implemented during the change years by saying, "They communicate that change is occurring, but they don't communicate what is the overall objective behind this change, and what are we trying to accomplish, and getting everybody aligned around that proverbial North Star." P7 positioned his concern with the communications strategy within the context of lack of job resources; mission clarity, the absence of clearly defined goals, and objectives for operational teams, after the acquisition. The common factor between engagement and burnout may be the presence or absence of job resources; the physical, psychological, and organizational features that help employees achieve their goals (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Hernandez, Stanley & Miller, 2014). Supervisors play an important role in providing essential job resources to their staff.

Supportive supervisor behavior is essential to mitigating employee stress. Ten participants provided a variety of examples on how supportive supervisory behavior can help organizations with employee stress mitigation. The change years highlighted the importance of training and developing managers in employee engagement activities because the training helped mitigate employee stresses. Teoh, Coyne, Devonish, Leather, and Zarola (2016) found that social exchange theory explained the positive relationship between supportive manager behavior and employee engagement.

Kang and Kang (2016) asserted that perceived supervisor support significantly reduced employee job stress and reinforced the effect of high-commitment HRM practices in lowering employee job stress. Kinman and Jones (2005) observed that managers' beliefs and attitudes regarding work-related stress and its impact on employees would determine the culture of the organization and inform its policies and practices on dealing with stress. During the change years managers had to focus on strategies that would help employee reduce disengagement and mitigate stress. The stress mitigation strategies required building and leveraging trusting relationships with employees by being available to employees, engaging in honest and transparent communications, listening with compassion, and helping employees cope with organizational change.

The dominant cause of stress participants reported hearing from their staff was the fear of losing their jobs after the acquisition. Referring to the frequent layoffs in the recent past, P6 stated, "I think people have it in the back of their minds that another shoe is going to drop." This stressor remained dominant in employees' minds despite attempts by the organization's leaders to increase the frequency and types of communications and events. P9 confessed that attempts to obtain feedback from employees about their job-related concerns generally devolved to the questions "when am I going to get fired, when am I going to get laid off, when is the next layoff?" P6, P7, P8, and P10 expressed distrust in leadership because of the perceived dishonesty about the number of organization changes that they experienced. Stress at work arises from issues such as work overload, conflicting goals, unclear tasks, emotional demands, lack of control, and lack of supervisory support (Corin & Bjork, 2016; Newton & Teo, 2013). P10 appeared to echo Balanescu (2017) by stating that, while he was keeping his employee options open, he worried about leaving a work environment that was supportive of his work-life balance needs. P5 felt that his staff feared change even though their skills were in high demand in the industry.

Six participants discussed the reasons why employees felt disengaged. The primary reasons for disengagement during the change years were ambiguity of mission, feeling uncertain about the future, unclear or unstated organizational objectives, and lack of clarity on employees' roles in the future organization. Participants P1, P7, P9, and P12 differentiated between good stress and bad stress. They were unanimous in their belief that the organization had a history of coming together to resolve the good stress situations. Their staff had told them that the organization could have done a much better job of stating the organizations' change objectives, reasons for the changes, and what they meant for teams and employees.

Mont and Beehr (2014) noted that supervisor communication and social support for employees had the largest positive effect on employees' subjective wellbeing. Managers helped mitigate employee stress by sharing their own feelings honestly with their staff, providing examples of how they coped with their stress, and by channeling the conversation towards the tasks at hand that both, manager and employee, needed to focus on. Anthony-McMann et al. (2017) observed that organizations might be able to mitigate stresses caused by role conflict, role ambiguity, and role-stress fit through improved resource allocation, increased team collaboration, improved communications, and developing a culture in which employees can safely express their concerns. P4 and P12 allowed staff to vent their feelings by providing them a safe environment to do so and then helping them channel their feelings into focusing on tasks ahead. P9 helped employees face where they were in their "state of change" by facilitating team discussions where employees assessed their readiness to accept the organizational changes and focus on their daily tasks. P5 helped his staff see that despite the many changes in the organization leading up to and beyond the acquisition, nothing had changed about their tasks and their relationships with their internal customers. Consistent supportive behavior from managers can help employee engagement by providing job resources, emotional support, and appropriate working conditions (Byrne, 2015; Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013).

Tucker (2017) asserted that managers could encourage continued learning and development by their staff by helping them identify new learning opportunities and providing them with opportunities to connect with experts. Most manager participants invested their time in helping their staff deal with stressors and helping them with career growth options. P7 and P12 allowed staff time to pursue skills adjacent to their core skills and said, "I think the type of people you need to be able to grow an organization you have to bake time in to let them explore internally and to look at things and learn and bring something back that is different". P8 found creative ways to help staff pursue low-cost training opportunities and by finding other roles within the organization. P9 spent a significant portion of each morning being available to staff and engaging in team and individual mentoring activities. P11 kept his team engaged by helping them acquire new skills related to their roles. Managers in the organization used stress mitigation strategies they learned as part of their HR sponsored leadership training programs. They were responsible for

meeting the organization's commitment to its customers and other stakeholders. Byrne (2015) asserted that employees see supervisors who demonstrate support for their staff and value individual employee contributions, as good role models. The elements of organization culture and employee engagement practices that remained in place allowed them to help their staff cope with the stresses during the change years.

Thus, participant responses spanning the organization's golden years and change years provided a unique set of contexts to explore the themes that emerged and yielded information about the importance of the strategies the organization's leaders used to mitigate employee stress and reduce disengagement. The intentional deployment of employee engagement strategies occurred within the context of the organization's golden years. The strategies to mitigate employee stress and reduce disengagement, were realized to greater extent within the context of the change years. The conceptual framework theories of social exchange and planned behavior were adequate in identifying the four themes. These strategies might have useful applications to professional practices within the context of employee stress mitigation and employee engagement in other organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Many study participants reported that ambiguity of mission and objectives, and lack of role clarity were causing stress and disengagement among employees. The organization's leaders should consider implementing a comprehensive communications plan that clearly presents the parent company's mission, and the role that various divisions and teams within the organization play in achieving that vision. They should consider utilizing the available set of change management and communications practices developed by the HR department over time.

Given the dynamic nature of business environments in which organizations exist, senior executives and HR leaders in other area organizations could consider a proactive implementation of similar strategies to identify opportunities to mitigate employee work place stress, reduce disengagement, and improve employee engagement and commitment to the organization. Leaders could engage with researchers on employee engagement to stay abreast of latest research on implementation outcomes. They could partner with organizations like Gallup to implement a data-driven employee engagement strategy. The leaders could experiment with these strategies in a relatively insulated division in the company to understand costs and benefits before full implementation. However, these strategies required significant, long-term investments and therefore might be available to a limited set of organizations. Organizations that consider themselves either as startups, or large companies with many geographically dispersed divisions, would need to address differing sets of challenges in implementing these strategies. Byrne (2015) cautioned against using a single approach to stress mitigation and employee engagement because organizational environments are likely heterogeneous in terms of organizational climate, job characteristics, and leadership style.

The benefits of implementing such strategies appear to be attractive, nonetheless. Workplaces that demonstrate high levels of engagement potentially may attract top talent (Joyner, 2015). Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) supported Joyner and stated that organizations with high levels of engagement among employees experienced a 19% increase in net income and a 28% increase in earnings per share growth while those with low engagement levels experienced more than 32% drop in net income and an 11% decline in EPS. The organization had not been able to objectively relate their employee engagement initiatives to business outcomes, however. I propose recommendations for future research that could address this and other limitations of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We conducted this case study research in a single healthcare organization in Franklin, Tennessee. Recommendations for future research include the following:

Conduct a quantitative study to determine the relationship between improvement in employee engagement score as the independent variable and reduction in healthcare costs for an organization as the dependent variable.

Conduct a follow-up case study after 12 months to understand the resiliency of the employee engagement strategy implementation in a post-acquisition scenario.

Conduct a comparative case study across two or more similar organizations to compare their approaches to mitigating employee stress and reducing employee disengagement.

Conduct research on employee stress mitigation and reducing employee disengagement in other types of healthcare organizations such as health plans and hospitals, using other conceptual frameworks such as social identity theory, organizational identity theory, and conservation of resources theory.

These recommendations may provide organizations additional insights into employee engagement practices and the long-term economic benefits of creating an organization culture that allows managers to develop productive, engaged, and committed employees.

CONCLUSION

Stress, whether it is work-related or from a person's life outside of work, causes an increase in employee disengagement and a decline in employee productivity and workplace performance. Disengaged U.S. workers cost the country's businesses $225 billion annually in lost workdays and overtime wages. In contrast, organizations with high levels of engagement among employees experienced a 19% increase in net income and a 28% increase in earnings per share growth while those with low engagement levels experienced more than 32% drop in net income and an 11% decline in EPS.

We explored strategies that HR leaders within a single healthcare organization in Franklin, Tennessee, used to reduce employee disengagement caused by stress and identified four themes related to business practice. The four themes were (a) integration of employee engagement practices into culture and business processes, (b) providing managers with the job resources they need, (c) intentionality, transparency, and honesty in communications, and (d) relying on supportive supervisor behavior. Senior executives and HR leaders should examine the feasibility of proactively implementing similar strategies to mitigate employee work place stress, reduce disengagement, and improve employee engagement and commitment to the organization.

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Journal of the North American Management Society
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