A Qualitative Inquiry into the Generational Identity of Professional Staff working in Public Universities in Mauritius

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Abstract

Research on generations at work has focused on differences in values, attitudes, and behaviours, with limited attention to how individuals make sense of their generational identity. This study explores how professional staff in public universities in Mauritius perceive their generational identity. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDs), Mauritius has a unique sociocultural context distinct from Western countries. Guided by Social Identity Theory and using an exploratory qualitative approach, 21 semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed. Participants described generational groups as the '*old*' and '*young*' generations relative to their position in the flow of history, with age and tenure emerging as key dimensions of generational identity. Only a few participants, over 50 years old and having long years of service, identified with the '*old generation.*' Findings highlight that generational identity is socially constructed and context-dependent. The study reveals the need to move from the blind application of the US generational categories and the age cohort perspective of generations.

Keywords: *Generations at work, Generational Identity, Professional Staff, Universities, SIDs context, Mauritius*

INTRODUCTION

Generational differences have emerged as a key area of study for those seeking to understand the workplace dynamics (Lyons, Schweitzer, Urick, & Kuron, 2019, Clements, 2023). However, the concepts of 'generation' and 'generational differences' are often treated as self-evident and remain largely unexamined (Rudolph & Zacher, 2022). Research in this field is limited by a lack of rigorous methodologies and theoretical frameworks, leading to inconclusive findings (Rudolph, Rauvola, Constanza, & Zacher, 2021). Studies often lack clarity regarding generational groupings and the definition of 'generation' as a construct (Urick, Hollensbe, & Fairhurst, 2017). While many studies assume a common understanding of the term, evidence suggests that its meaning varies among individuals, emphasising the need for precise definitions in generational research (Urick et al., 2017). Some studies, such as Joshi et al. (2011), advocate shifting from age-based conceptualisations of generations to viewing generation as an identity. Lyons and Kuron (2014) argue that adopting a social identity approach avoids assumptions that individuals within an age group share uniform behaviours and attitudes. It enables individuals to self-identify with a generation, addressing the age, period, and cohort issues inherent in cohort-based models. In addition, less focus has been placed on how individuals conceptualise the term 'generation' and how they perceive and identify with their generational group at work. Several researchers recommended the use of generational identity to further investigate the concept of 'generation' at work (Lyons, Schweitzer, Urick, & Kuron, 2015; Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010; Urick,2020). Universities are complex organisations, characterised by diverse inputs, outputs, processes, and a varied workforce (Gibbs & Kharouf, 2022). Employees are crucial for them to function. The term 'professional staff', established in 2011 by the Association for Tertiary Education Management (Graham, 2012), describes all staff who are supporting the university in roles outside those of academics who have direct responsibility for teaching and/or research (Bossu, Brown, & Warren, 2018). Generational identity among professional staff in higher education is understudied, despite the growing role of professional staff (Gander, 2018, Veles, Graham & Ovaska, 2023). The study addresses this gap by providing insights about how professional staff in the higher education sector perceive their generational identity.

The research questions are as follows:

- How do professional staff in public universities in Mauritius conceptualise the term 'generation' at work?
- How do the professional staff perceive their generational identity at work?

The paper begins with a review of relevant literature on the various conceptualisations of 'generation' and generational identity in the workplace. The research methodology, presentation of findings and discussion of the results then follow. The paper concludes with a summary of key insights.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The Concept of Generation

Generation has been described in several ways in the literature. In their study, Urick et al. (2017) identified five main conceptualisations, illustrated in the diagram below.
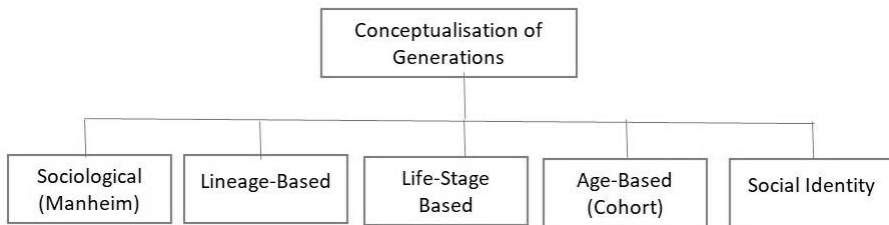

Figure 1: Summary of Generational Conceptualisations (adapted from Urick et al., 2017)

Research on generations stems from the work of the german sociologist Karl Mannheim who wrote an essay about 'the problem of generations 'in 1952. Mannheim's Sociological Theory (1952) posits that generations are socially constructed groups shaped by shared experiences of significant historical events during formative years. These shared experiences drive social change and differentiate generations. However, the theory lacks clarity on how generational consciousness connects to individual identity (Alwin & McCammon, 2007; Biggs, 2007) and is often misunderstood as focusing solely on age (Pilcher, 1994). The second conceptualisation view generation as lineage-based, where generations are defined by familial succession, such as one's position within a family

hierarchy. The third conceptualisation views generation in terms of life-stage experiences that are defined by shared experiences during specific life stages. The age-based (cohort) is the most commonly used conceptualisation and defines generations by age or birth year. The widely used and popular US classification stems from this conceptualisation of generation, where generational labels like Gen X, Gen Y are used to categorise individuals based on their age (Urick et al., 2017). The last conceptualisation is Social Identity, where generations are viewed as socially constructed identities. Joshi et al. (2010) introduced this concept in the workplace, identifying three aspects of generational identity in organisations namely age-based, cohort-based, and incumbency-based identity. Age-based identity relates to one's place in history, cohort-based identity about one's membership and tenure in a group of people in an organisation for example, a group of people entering the organisation at the same time. Incumbency-based identity relates to occupying a certain organisational role for a time.

Limited studies have been conducted on how the term 'generation' is conceptualised across different countries worldwide. Urick and Arslantas (2018) compared the conceptualisation of 'generation' in Turkey with that of the US conceptualisation. They found that there were both similarities and differences, mainly arising due to the historical development of the country.

As generations have been conceptualised in various ways, Urick et al. (2017) recommended that scholars clearly state what they mean by 'generation' in their study. There is no agreed-upon definition due to the disagreement among scholars regarding the factors that determine a generation (Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2008, as cited in Woodward, Vongswasdi, & More, 2015). In addition, the term 'generation' and 'generational cohort' have been used interchangeably in the literature on generational diversity. In order to better understand the concept, some scholars advocated using the Social Identity Theory (Lyons and Schweitzer, 2017).

The Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) has been widely applied to explain the formation of generational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It involves two processes: firstly, social categorization, where individuals identify as a group member and perceive people who are not in the group as different. The second is social identification, where characteristics are

assigned to all persons of the group based on one's observation of the group members. Generational identity is '*an individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to a generational group/role, together with some emotional significance to him or her or the group/role membership*' (Joshi et al., 2010, p. 393). This identity requires perceived value in group membership (Finkelstein, Gonnerman, & Foxgrover, 2001) and emerges during adolescence, solidifying in adulthood (Bollas, 2013).

SIT offers advantages over the cohort-based view, allowing individuals to self-identify with generational categories rather than being defined by age or birth year (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2017). Joshi et al. (2010) were the first to study generational identity in the workplace. In 2011, Joshi and colleagues advocated moving away from age-based conceptualizations of generations in the workplace toward a form of identity defined by one's proximity and position during a significant organisational event (such as a merger or downsizing). Foster (2013) also highlighted how generational identity explains workplace attitudes and links social change to generational dynamics.

Likewise, Lyons and Schweitzer (2017) conducted interviews with 105 Canadians to explore generational identity, examining whether individuals identify with generational groups and their reasons for identification. Participants identified with generational groups based on age or birth year, shared experiences, and shared values. The study revealed that 'generation' serves as a framework for understanding social contexts and identities in workplaces. While many participants adopted generational labels like Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y, others preferred broader historical terms such as 'younger' and 'older'. Generations were conceptualized as a synthesis of historical and biological age, highlighting the intrinsic link between historical context and perceptions of youth and age. The researchers critiqued age cohort definitions for assuming group homogeneity, advocating for a dynamic, context-specific view of generational identity. They emphasized the importance of examining generational differences within the current historical period and focusing on the roles of 'older', 'younger' and 'middle' generations.

Research about generational identity has mostly been conducted in Western countries. In line with Urick et al. (2017) recommendation for further research on generations at the workplace across cultures, this study seeks to explore the meaning attributed to the term 'generation' in the workplace within a SIDs context. Furthermore, addressing scholars' calls to move beyond the simplistic, age-based categorisation of

'generation' in the workplace, this research adopts the concept of generational identity to provide a more nuanced understanding of the generational phenomenon at work.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used for this cross-sectional study. As per Pratt and Bonanacio(2016), qualitative research is best suited when the goal of the research is to understand the worldview of the studied population on specific concepts. This paper also responds to the call of Urick et al. (2017) for more qualitative studies in different contexts to better understand the concept of generation at work.

The study was approved by the University Research Ethics Committee. (Reference: UoMREC/2020/P18)

Sampling

Data was collected from 21 professional staff working in the four public universities in Mauritius. 6 males and 15 females were interviewed. Ages ranged from 21 to 65. A non-probability sampling strategy was adopted. Purposive sampling was used as it allows the selection of participants who are most likely to provide rich and relevant insights into the phenomena under investigation—namely, generations at work and generational identity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

For this study, professional staff were considered to be the non-teaching staff working in public universities in Mauritius in positions that require at least an undergraduate degree. A list of potential participants for the study was prepared based on the information available on the website of the public universities. The participants were first contacted by email and then by phone to schedule the interviews. At the end of the interviews, they were requested to provide information about other potential respondents as per the snowball sampling criteria.

Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to discover what was '*in and on someone's mind*' (Patton, 2014, p. 420) while staying focused on the research objectives.

A participant information sheet was provided to participants before the interviews to inform them that participation was voluntary,

anonymous, confidential and that they had the right to withdraw at any point in time. The interview guide, at Appendix I, consisted of six main questions. Before the interviews, participants completed a consent form.

Participants, aged 21 to 65, were interviewed primarily face-to-face, with some sessions held via phone or WhatsApp. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by assigning a code to each participant, for example, P3/30–39, which indicates the participant number and age group. The transcripts were then stored using these codes instead of names. Data collection ceased upon reaching saturation (Morse, 1995), resulting in a final sample of 21 participants.

To ensure credibility in the study, the researcher probed further during the interviews to gather thick and rich data from the participants (Tracy & Hinrichis,2017). Once the interviews were transcribed, a copy of the transcript was sent to the participants for their vetting. This ensured that the transcript reflected what the participants shared.
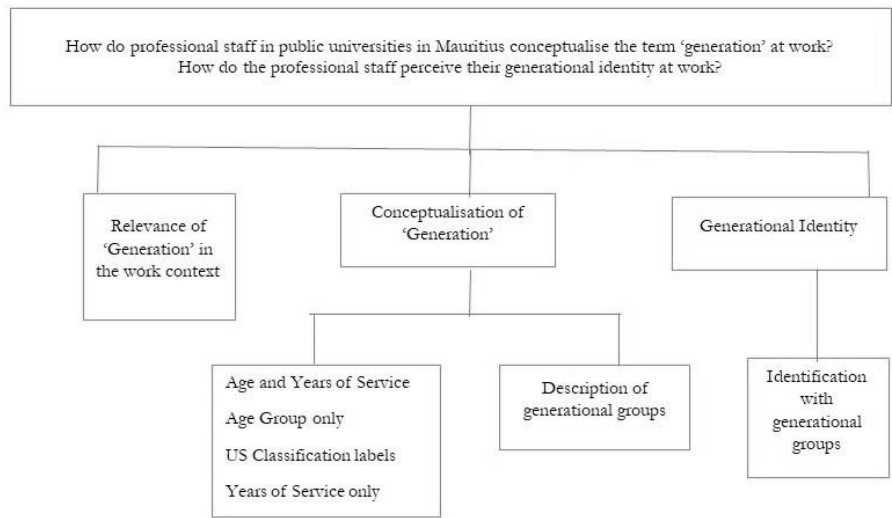
Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the interviews and analysed them using the NVivo software. The analysis process was guided by Saldana's (2016) theming approach, which emphasises identifying and organising recurring patterns and ideas within qualitative data. Each transcript was carefully read multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' narratives. An inductive coding process was employed, where the codes emerged from the data itself. For example, some participants mentioned generational labels such as '*Gen X*' and '*Millennials'* when describing generations. Subsequently, all extracts coded with '*Gen X*', '*Millennials*' and similar labels were grouped into the category '*Mention of US Generational Labels*'. The categories were synthesised into a main theme, such as '*US. Generational Classification*', showing that for some participants, the concept of 'generation' was linked to the U.S generational classification.

Rigour and trustworthiness during the thematic analysis were ensured through the use of a journal documenting codes generated, the associated extracts, analytic decisions and theme development. The researcher also engaged in iterative reading and re-reading to refine the themes.

FINDINGS

The themes which emerged from the analysis of the transcripts are illustrated in the following diagram.

Relevance of 'Generation' in the work context

All 21 participants demonstrated familiarity with the term 'generation' and acknowledged its relevance in the workplace. Participants consistently described 'generation' as a way to categorise individuals, often based on shared characteristics such as age, time of entry into the workforce amongst others. The following key excerpts from the interviews illustrate their perceptions:

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P20/20-29)	*'First thing that comes to my mind is a group of people within an age group and the second one is that they join work around the same period of time……………'*
(P3/30-39)	*'Generation is, for me, a sort of group of people of a particular age group, for example generation 80s, 90s, and 2000s, that is those born in those years'*
(P19/40-49)	*' I tend to think of the 5 generational categories…………….'*
(P21/50-59)	*'Generation for me refers to the various age categories, for example, 18-30*

	age group, 30-50 and those beyond 50 years etc.'
(P/5 60-65)	*'….. For me, generations are some sort of categories that we put people into to understand their attitudes, beliefs etc. For example, the millennials is a category used for young people.'*

Table 1: Generation as a means to categorise people at work

Conceptualisation

The following four themes, each representing distinct ways in which participants conceptualised 'generation' at work, were identified:
- Age and Years of Service
- Age Group Only
- US Classification labels
- Years of Service only

Age and Years of Service
More than half of the participants, inclusive of all age groups, defined generation in terms of age and years of service. As such, they perceive people at work who are roughly their age and having more or less the same years of service as being in their generation as illustrated by extracts from their interviews in the table below.

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P20/20-29)	*'……… is a group of people within an age group and the second one is that they join work around the same period of time, for example me and XXX, roughly the same time in 2018.'*
(P6/30-39)	*'……. generation in general is mostly about people in specific age groups and …joining the organisation in a specific period/year.'*
(P4/40-49)	*'Well it means some sort of category, categorised by age and years of service.'*
(P16/50-59)	*'But at work, generation is about age group as well as the number of years a staff has worked in an organisation.'*
(P/5 60-65)	*'……………, when I refer to my generation at work, I tend to refer to staff who are roughly my age and who joined the organisation around the same time as me. '*

Table 2: Participant Quotes -Age and Years of Service

Age group
For some participants, generation referred to age group. They expressed as follows:

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P19/40-49)	*'…., it is an age group. So you put people in categories based on age group.'*
(P2/50-59)	*'Mostly age, people of different ages at work….'*
(P17/30-39)	*'The first thing that comes to my mind is age. I tend to group people as per their age group. So for me a generation is staff in a particular age group.'*

Table 3: Participant Quotes -Age Group

US Generational Classification Labels

The generational labels of the US Classification were cited by few participants in their definition of generation at work, as illustrated by the following extracts from their interviews.

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P19/40-49)	*'I tend to think of the 5 generation categories, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z….'*
P10/40-49	*'Generations for me is about who fits in categories like Gen X, Gen Y etc. ……... When you ask about generation, they are the first to come to my mind. …..'*

Table 4: Participant Quotes- US Generational Classification Labels

Though very few participants mentioned the US classification, it shows that the US Classification was known even in the SIDs context, like Mauritius.

Years of Service
It was also found that very few participants in the age group of 50-59 defined generation at work in terms of years of service only.

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P14/50-59)	*'Generation, well I tend to think of those who just recently joined work and my generation, those who have have years of service at work. For me, generation at work is not about age, it is about the time you spent in an organisation. '*

Table 5: Participant Quote – Years of Service

Generational Identity
(a) Description of Generational Groups

Participants used terms like 'younger' and 'older' to describe the generational groups. Participants often described their generation in

relative terms, reflecting a clear age-related pattern in how they perceived their belonging. Those who identified as 'older' or 'younger' generation viewed these labels through the lens of both age and tenure, as shown in the table below. They described the 'old generation' as those who are more than 50 years old and have more than 25 years of service. The 'young generation' was described as having less than 50 years and less than 25 years of service, as illustrated in Table 7 below.

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
(P15/40-49)	*'Well, let's say that those with less than 5 years of service are usually the young and I term them as the young generation. Those over 25 years and retiring soon are the old generation. '*
(P11/50-59)	*'I mean those who spent a lot of years in an organisation, let's say around or more than 25 years, I will label them as being the 'old generation'. Those who recently joined, that is, from 0 to25 years, the 'young' generation.'*

Table 6: Participant Quotes – Description of generational categories

It was also found that those in the age groups of 50 and above perceive themselves as the 'old generation' whereas those below 50 perceive themselves as the 'young generation'.
As for those in the age group of 30-50, they tend to refer to those to join before them as the 'old generation' and those who join after them as the 'young generation'. These findings are illustrated below:

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
P9/30-39	*'I tend to think of generation in terms of old and young with regard to me. So, those who recently joined are the young generation and are usually younger than me in age, while those who joined before me are the older generation and usually are higher in age as compared to me.'*
P1/40-49	*'For me generation is about those who join the institution before me are the young one, usually they are younger in age also and those who joined before me and are usually older fall into the older generation.'*
P12/40-49	*'New recruits are the young generation. They are usually younger than me but there are exceptions. So for me, young and old are relative to when they join and whether it was before or after me'.*
P13/40-49	*'………., I tend to refer to those who join after me, with long years of service as the old one. The young one are those who joined recently, after me..'*

Table 7: Participant Quotes -'Old' and 'Young' Generation

(b) Identification with generational groups
Personal Identification with Generational Group

When investigating whether the participants personally identify with generational groups, it was found that some participants identified with a particular generational group. Some even referred to the generation they belong to as 'my generation' and also used the pronoun 'we', indicating a personal identification with the generational group. Some extracts of the interviews of the participants are below:

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
P14/ 50-59	*'My generation has another approach to work, a different way of tackling work. We are not too used to the use of technology and also prefer to use paper and pen…....'*
P17/ 30-39	*'I think it's millennials……We can easily use technology, new software, apps etc. Those in the older generation do not know how to use the basic IT tools like preparing a google form……….'*

Table 8: Participant Quotes -Personal identification with generational groups

Partial Identification with generational groups
Few participants mentioned that they identified partially with a generational group, as they were of the view that they shared only a few characteristics with the generational group. This is illustrated below:

Participant's Code	Interview Extracts
P6/60-65	*'I don't identify really with a particular generation…….I am from the oldest generation and those who recently joined are the youngest generation and are different from my generation'*
P3/30-39	*'Identify? Not really. Let's say, identification by less than 50 per cent only with millennials and only on the technology aspects. '*
P20/50-59	*'No, not really. Me and colleagues in the same generation like me, we grew up together and experience also of things together at work, for example the introduction of PCs at work, how we learned to type our own memos but I have evolved….. In some way, I identify with people in my generation, but not in all ways'*

Table 9: Participant Quotes- Partial identification

No identification with Generational Groups

The majority of the participants did not identify with any generational groups. They were of the view that motivation at work was more

important than generational affiliation to a certain generational group. Some of the extracts of their interview are below.

Participant's Code	Quotes
P19 /40-49	*'I don't see myself in any generation. For me self motivation is important. I motivate myself to perform better all the time.'*
P21/ 20-29	*'Not on all but I am motivated and want to get things done……'.*

Table 10: Participant Quotes- No identification

DISCUSSION

The study's findings shed light on how 'generation' is perceived in the workplace within a SIDs' higher education context and also provide insights about generational identity in the work environment.

Relevance of 'Generation' in the work context

Firstly, the findings indicate that all participants demonstrated an awareness of generation as a significant social phenomenon in the work environment. This aligns with Rudolph et al. (2021), who note that the term 'generation' is widely recognised and commonly utilised, particularly in organisational science and practice. The findings tend to indicate that the term 'generation' is popular even in the SIDs context.

Secondly, the participants described 'generation' as a category used in the workplace to explain perceived differences between generational groups. Foster (2013) found that 'generation' was a common term, particularly used when discussing generational differences in the workplace. Although some scholars, such as Rudolph et al. (2021), have suggested that research on 'generation' should be put to rest, the findings of this study highlight the continued relevance of generational research. The concept's widespread popularity and its use in the workplace demonstrate the need to deepen our understanding of the generational phenomenon worldwide.

Conceptualization of 'Generation' in the workplace

Despite the popularity of the generational labels of the US Generational Classification in the literature, the majority of participants of the study did not mention the popular generational labels like Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y. Instead, mention was made of 'old

generation' and 'young generation', described in terms of age and years of service. It might be that the context of this study is different as SIDs context is particular. In their study, Lyons et al. (2017) also found similar findings where the use of the US classification label was not used consistently in the participants' discourse.

However, the findings of this study contrast with that of Lyons et al. (2017), where the participants' discussion of generation was about generational identity based mostly on age groups, together with either tenure or incumbency generational identity. Participants in the current study described generational identity using age and years of service/tenure relative to their position in the flow of history. This finding contributes to the literature by applying the Social Identity Theory to better understand how generational identity is constructed and experienced in organisational settings.

Identification with Generational Groups

Previous studies on generational identification, for example, Lyons et al. (2017) and Linder, Stelboum and Hakim(2023) have found generational identification with generational labels such as Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials.

However, in this study, identification with the generational groups of the US generational classification was not found. Rather, the participants used other generational labels such as 'older generation' and 'younger generation'. The reason might be that the context of this study is not similar to that of Urick et al. (2017) and Lyons et al. (2017), whose studies were conducted in America and Canada, respectively. As such, the results of this study strengthen the argument brought forward by Lyons et al. (2017) that identification with the generational groups of the US Classification is not 'universal'. As such, the cohort-based approach used in studies on generational differences must be discouraged.

Generational identification was found to be strongest among those over 50 and having worked for more than 25 years at their respective institution. Older participants were more likely to identify with the *'old generation'*, as the generational identity of the '*old generation*' might have been reinforced over time as the participants were exposed to new experiences at work and worked with new generations with whom they could compare themselves (Bollas, 1992; Eyerman & Turner, 1998, as cited in Lyons et al., 2017). Many participants did not identify with the 'young generation' or the 'old generation' nor partially identified with

them. This finding corroborates with that of Lyons et al. (2017), whose study also showed that identification with a generational group was not ubiquitous. A similar finding was reported in the study by Urick (2014). The main reason brought forward by those who did not identify or identified partially only with the generational labels 'old generation' or 'young generation' was that they did not share all the characteristics of the generational groups. This was also found in Lyons et al.'s (2017) study, where participants mentioned that they did not identify with the generational groups for the same reasons. As such, this study confirms that the concept of generation may be considered a social identity with which individuals identify or disidentify (Urick, 2014).

The findings of this study extend the applicability of the Social Identity Theory at the workplace, to an unexplored context, more specifically to the African and SIDs context. It also demonstrates how identities at work are socially constructed and how dimensions of generational identity at work may vary across organisational contexts. Generational identities may not be salient bases for social identities at the workplace.

Contribution of Study

The findings of this study add to the literature as it responds to the call of Urick (2012) for more studies on generational identity from an interpretivist's perspective. Also, it explores the concept of 'generation' and dimensions of generational identity in a different context, responding to the need for further studies in other cultures and contexts as recommended by Urick and Arslantas (2018). Literature on professional staff working in the higher education sector is also scarce (Gander, 2018), and this study adds to the literature on this understudied population.

Practical Implications

The findings emphasise the need for caution when conducting or interpreting generational studies, as participants' perceptions of generations and their personal identification with them can vary significantly. The application of U.S. generational labels should be critically evaluated for contextual relevance. Generations function as social identities, and individuals may choose to identify—or not identify—with these classifications (Urick et al., 2017).

For employers, this underscores the importance of understanding the social identities of employees rather than making assumptions based on popular generational categories or perpetuating stereotypes. Such insights are particularly relevant for the Higher Education sector in Mauritius, which is also characterised by a multigenerational workforce and a unique context, as they can help employers foster an inclusive work environment. Providing training for managers and employees on generational identity can foster greater awareness of age-related dynamics and reduce the dangers of stereotyping.

Limitations

Being a qualitative study, the sample was small and was not intended to represent the Mauritian population. However, using a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to get deep insights and rich data about the generational concept in a SIDs context in Mauritius. In addition, the study is a cross-sectional one and provides a snapshot of the concept at one point in time. The gender imbalance in the sample, reflecting the higher proportion of women in the higher education sector of Mauritius, may influence the perception of generational identity at work.

Avenues for future research

The results of this study demonstrated that there was no uniform way to define 'generations' at work. Age and years of service emerged as dimensions of generational identity at the workplace. Future research can probe further into these dimensions in other industries or workplaces. Longitudinal studies about generational identity can also be envisaged, as they would enable comparisons and also, possible inferences about generational differences, if any. In addition, quantifiable measures can be developed to assess the strength with which individuals identify with generational groups. Future research can also explore whether gender influences the perception of generational identity.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how the professional staff employed in public universities in Mauritius conceptualise the term 'generation' at work and perceive their own generational identity. The findings revealed that employees were categorised in terms of 'old' and 'young' generation and

generational identity was defined in terms of age and years of service. In addition, only those in the 'old generation' identified with the generational group. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on generation at work by offering insights into the diverse ways in which the concept of generation is understood, as well as shedding light on generational identity within the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDs) and Africa. Furthermore, it highlights the complexity of the generational construct in professional settings, emphasising the need for practitioners and researchers to move beyond simplistic age-based categorisations when seeking to understand the multigenerational workforce.

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Appendix I

Interview Guide

- What do you think when someone says the word 'generation' at work?
- What does this word mean to you?
- How would you describe the generation you belong to at work?
- Do you personally identify with the generations at work? Which one? Why do you identify with that?
- Do you believe that there are some differences between the generations at work? In what ways? Why do you think so?
- Based on your work experience, do you think that generational differences are important? Why do you feel this way?