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Motivating Foodservice Employees to Follow Safe Food Handling Practices: Perspectives from a Multigenerational Workforce

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ABSTRACT: Hospitality managers deal with a very diverse workforce, employing workers from up to four different generations, which poses a challenge for managers as they attempt to train and motivate employees. Food safety is of particular concern in foodservice organizations. This study assessed the generational differences related to foodservice employees' perceptions of their supervisors' roles in food safety and how supervisors could improve their effectiveness. A mixed methods approach (survey and focus groups) was used. Qualitative data analysis revealed four themes: consistency, training, managers' behaviors, and employees' behaviors. Based on these, best practices are suggested for motivating a multigenerational workforce.

SHORTENED TITLE FOR THE RUNNING HEAD: *Motivating a multigenerational workforce*

INTRODUCTION

Foodservice operation managers, supervisors, and customers alike recognize the importance of serving and consuming safe food. Managers view a foodborne illness outbreak as a financial liability, whereas customers recognize the personal impact on their lives and livelihood. Food safety research has pointed to the significance of having an educated and trained workforce; but training and knowledge alone do not assure safe food handling by employees (Green & Selman, 2005; Henroid & Sneed, 2004; Pilling, Brannon, Shanklin, Howells, & Roberts, 2008; Sneed & Henroid, 2007; Sneed, Strohbehn, & Gilmore, 2007). Likewise, several barriers to following safe food handling behaviors have been identified, including employee motivation (Giampaoli, Sneed, Cluskey, & Koenig, 2002; Pragle, Harding, & Mack, 2007; York, et al., 2009; Youn & Sneed, 2002).

More recent food safety research has identified the critical role of supervisors in ensuring employees are practicing safe food handling behaviors in an effort to minimize the potential for foodborne illness (Arendt & Sneed, 2008). With notable workforce challenges, including multigenerational employees, diverse ethnic groups, high turnover, low employee literacy, and limited skill of employees, foodservice managers are confronted with seemingly insurmountable obstacles when ensuring employees are providing safe food to customers.

Despite the important connection between the supervisor and expectations of employee behavior, the existing literature has yet to address what supervisors can do to help motivate employees to practice safe food handling behaviors. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to obtain foodservice employees' perspectives and experiences

on what impact their supervisors have had and what their supervisors could do to be more effective in motivating them to follow safe food handling behaviors. The specific research objectives were as follows: 1) analyze multigenerational employee perceptions about food safety practices, 2) determine interrelatedness of themes that emerge from this analysis process, and 3) develop recommendations for supervisors in foodservice operations working with multigenerational employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Foodservice Sanitation and Safety

Given the trend of "away from home" eating, the role of the foodservice employee in the prevention of foodborne illness is paramount. The Food and Drug Administration (2009) evaluated risk factors for foodborne illness through observations in various foodservice settings including hospitals, nursing homes, elementary schools, quick serve and full service restaurants. Results from the study were consistent with past study findings (FDA, 2000, 2004) in that there was a high rate of noncompliance in the following areas: Improper holding/time and temperature; poor personal hygiene; and contaminated equipment/prevention of contamination. Hand washing was one of the practices with the highest out-of-compliance rate with 76% of the full-service restaurants' employees in the study out of compliance. Similar observations for lack of compliance with Food Code hand washing recommendations of "when" and "how" were reported by Strohbehn et al. (2008; 2011). For improper holding/time temperature and personal hygiene, findings from the FDA studies indicated that institutions (hospitals and nursing homes) had higher compliance rates than restaurants (quick-service and full-service). Similarity of findings over time reflects the challenges in improving safe food handling

practices among various sectors of retail foodservices. Lack of adherence to policies and procedures as it relates to these practices along with monitoring of employees' health status has received attention in the literature (Hedberg et. al, 2006; Hedican et. al, 2009), yet the challenge still remains on how best to motivate employees to comply with proper food safety practices.

Roles of Supervisors and Managers

Supervisors and managers are involved in recruiting, communicating with, motivating and monitoring performance of employees (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2007). As the workforce has become more diverse in terms of age and race, along with variability in language skills and literacy levels, managers and supervisors have encountered more complex challenges, thus their roles have become even more important (Byars & Rue, 2006). Developing trust among employees, managing conflict, exhibiting leadership, and organizing are essential management skills.

Gill (2008) reported that employees' trust in managers and supervisors in the hospitality industry has a positive influence on their job satisfaction and dedication. Conflict management skills are considered crucial because high levels of tension in the workplace over a long period are harmful and impede the achievement of business goals (Nicolaides, 2007). According to ten quick-service restaurant executives, their industry requires multi-unit managers to have leadership and organization/time management skills; attainment of these skills is often challenging for managers transitioning from management of a single unit to multiple units (Umbreit, 2001). The importance of understanding generational differences as well as the impact of them on the workplace

has been investigated (Chen & Choi, 2008; Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Glass, 2007; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

Generational Issues

Assessing and meeting employee needs will become an increasingly important management responsibility as Baby Boomers (birth years 1940-1964) begin to retire, Generation X (birth years 1965-1982) becomes familiar with the work organization and their new leadership roles, and Generation Y (birth years 1983-2002) and New Millenniums (birth years 2003 and beyond) enter the workforce (Roberts, 2005; Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003). One should note that there is variability in generational birth year with Boomer birth years starting anywhere between 1940 to 1946 and ending anywhere between 1960 to 1964 and Generation X birth years starting in the early 1960s and ending between 1975 to 1982 (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Twenge (2010) conducted a review of empirical research about generational differences in work values using a time-lag approach and cross-sectional design. She found Generation X and Generation Y or Me (term for post Generation X) valued extrinsic factors, such as high salary, more than Boomers but no differences in intrinsic values were seen. In addition, another notable finding was the increased sense of ego (narcissism) and entitlement among the Me Generation. Employers have recognized workers in Generations X and Y do not share the same work expectations and values as Baby Boomers, which impacts recruiting, training, and retention efforts (Roberts, 2005). Research by both Loomis (2000) and Tulgan (1996) found Baby Boomers were a group that "lived to work" and preferred a work environment conducive to obtaining results, while those in Generation X "worked to live" and preferred a work environment

conducive to personal relationship development. Generation Y did not plan to stay more than three years in a particular work setting.

Generational Issues and Food Safety

Generational issues and foodservice employee food safety issues have been studied to a limited extent. One study by Ellis et al. (2010) found that while all generational groups in a national sample of 311 hourly foodservice employees were intrinsically motivated to follow safe food handling practices, differences between generational groups were reported for extrinsic motivations. For example, the youngest group of employees (ages 18-20 years old) had higher mean scores (agreement scale used with 1-5 point scale) for reward and punishment as compared to one of the older employee groups (ages 50-59 years old); meaning this younger group of employees reported they were more motivated to follow safe food handling practices in the workplace if rewards and punishment were used. Other research has been done in the consumer population, not with foodservice employees. Researchers have assessed self-reported knowledge and attitudes of young adults and found that young adults do not have the knowledge nor practice safe food handling (Byrd-Bredbenner, Mauer, Wheatley, Schaffner, Bruhn, & Blalock, 2007). Data were compared between genders but not among different age groups in the Byrd-Bredbenner et. al (2007) study. In another consumer study, food safety perceptions and practices of older adults, defined as 60 years old or older, were compared to those of younger adults, defined as less than 60 years old (Anderson, Verrill, & Sahyoun, 2011). Overall, findings revealed that a greater percentage of older adults in the study reported practicing food safety procedures than younger adults.

Generational Issues and Training

Specific to food safety training for different generational groups of foodservice employee, limited known research is published in this area. The majority of the food safety training related research attempts to assess impact of training on knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviors (Dworkin, Panchal, & Liu, 2012; Egan, Raats, Grubb, Eves, Lumbers, Dean, & Adams, 2007; Roberts, Barrett, Howells, Shanklin, Pilling, & Brannon, 2008). One related study assesses method of delivery for food safety training. Interestingly, participants in the study were given the opportunity to self-select either face-to-face food safety training or computer training. Albeit the group over age 50 was small (n=11), all selected face-to-face training rather than computer training. Cekada (2012) noted that each generation of employee has different preferred learning styles, approaches and methods. It is important to recognize these differences and use a "training by generation" approach adapting training for each generation, thereby resulting in enhanced training outcomes (Cekada, 2012).

Demographics of Foodservice Employees

Foodservice operations themselves are as vast and expansive as the employee populations who work in them. From quick-service restaurants to school lunch programs, demographics of employees in each segment have their own unique characteristics. In 2012, adults over the age of 65 represented 16% of the entire labor force (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Given current economic conditions, it is likely this percentage will continue with similar situations of increasing numbers of older workers in foodservice sectors. Industry data reported by the National Restaurant Association (NRA, 2006, 2008a, 2008b) found more than half (54%) of the nonsupervisory/managers workforce

was less than 30 years of age (New Millenniums, Generation X and Y), with close to half (42%) under the age of 25 (New Millennium and Generation Y). The most recent NRA Industry Report (2012) found a smaller percentage of 16 to 24year-olds made up the foodservice workforce in 2010 (38%) as compared to 2000 (42%). Conversely, the percentage of those 55 and older increased during the same time period, from 8% to 10% respectively.

Employees in other sectors of the foodservice industry also have unique demographic characteristics. Wilson (2007) found that the majority (74.2%) of hourly employees working in school meal programs in the Midwest were women between the ages of 41 and 60 years. College and university foodservices employ a wide age range of workers, as college age students (Generation Y or Me) work alongside Generation X and Baby Boomers (NACUFS, 2008). Thus, organizations must offer training in a way that will be received by learners of different ages with different values, work habits, and learning styles.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Participants

The research participants for this study were foodservice employees without supervisory responsibilities. A mixed methods approach was used in this research. Focus groups (a more qualitative approach) were coupled with closed-ended questionnaires (a more quantitative approach) for data collection. Four focus groups were planned with four different age groups of foodservice employees: 18-25, 26-40, 41-60, and over 60 years of age. The purpose for dividing the focus groups by age category was to avoid generational conflicts. Kitzinger (1995) noted, in a study exploring employees'

experiences with supervisors, the importance of interaction among focus group participants and explained the usefulness of this method in exploring participants' experiences.

Focus Group Procedures

The focus group participants and locations were geographically dispersed in one Midwest state. Purposeful sampling was used with selection criteria as follows: 1) one employee maximum per foodservice operation, 2) employee without supervisory or management responsibilities and 3) employee within the designated age range. Focus group meeting places were tailored to the age group. For instance, the over-60-year-old focus group was conducted in a public library conference room on city bus route whereas the youngest age group took place on a college campus in a lounge area. The goal was to have between six and 12 participants for each focus group, as recommended by Morgan (1998).

Approval was obtained from the sponsoring Universities' Institutional Review Boards prior to data collection. An established recruitment procedure was followed. Once four towns/cities were located throughout the state, foodservice operations (commercial and noncommercial) within a 20-mile radius were identified using Mapquest; a 20-mile radius was used to include smaller communities and thus, capture more operations. The number of contacts made for each focus group varied depending on size of town and number of foodservice operations in the defined area.

Focus Group Recruitment

The recruitment process followed four steps. First, the manager or owner of the operation was contacted by phone and the purpose of the study was explained, with a

commitment to post recruitment flyers. Second, recruitment flyers were either mailed or hand delivered to the operations that had committed in the first step. Then, employees interested in participating in the focus groups contacted the project call center to sign up for the focus groups. Fourth, e-mail and phone call correspondence reminders were sent directly to employees. It should be noted that there were violations by two participants in Focus Group 1 where it was discovered that they worked at the same operation; therefore, data from this focus group was not usable. A second focus group (Focus Group 1b) was completed with this age group and recruitment was done in hospitality management classes where many students were also foodservice employees. A monetary gift of appreciation and educational tools were given to focus group participants.

Research Instruments

A paper questionnaire and focus group guide were used. Prior to beginning the focus group discussion, all focus group participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to determine their individual preferences for training and demographic information (for example: highest education level obtained and number of years of work experience). An experienced moderator facilitated the focus groups and an experienced assistant moderator observed the sessions and took notes using a form adapted from Krueger and Casey (2000). To maintain anonymity, participants used pseudonyms. Focus group questions were developed from a review of literature and previous research done by this food safety research group. Participants discussed five questions during the focus groups:

- Tell me what roles you play related to food safety.

- Could you talk a little about how you feel you do in these roles?

- Tell me what roles your supervisor (manager) plays related to food safety.

- How does your supervisor (or manager) impact what you do in relation to food safety?

- What might help your supervisor (or manager) be more effective?

Data Analysis

Following each focus group, the moderator and assistant moderator had a debriefing session to compare notes and perceptions. All focus groups were audio taped and transcribed. Five researchers independently reviewed all transcripts and determined themes that occurred within responses to the questions. Following individual review, researchers discussed and came to consensus on the final theme categories.

In addition to manual coding of themes, qualitative data analysis software was used. ATLAS.ti 6 was used to locate, theme, and annotate findings in the transcripts; to evaluate importance of themes; and provide visualization of relationships among them. A word frequency report was created for content analysis of the words used more often by the participants. Lewins and Silver (2007) noted that all Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) packages, of which ATLAS.ti 6 is one, offer coding and data retrieval functions. However, CAQDA does not remove the researchers from the data analysis process, but rather enhances data analysis and assists with visual display of the analysis (Arendt, Paez, & Strohbehn, 2013). Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 was used for quantitative data analysis, specifically calculations of demographic frequencies and training preferences. Age group category data were analyzed and reported on basis of age group reported on questionnaire. Focus group data were analyzed based on focus group age categories established as were reclassified for

purposes of data analysis and reporting of results: 18-25, 26-40, 41-60, and over 60 years of age.

FINDINGS

Data from four focus groups were analyzed (Focus Group 1a findings not used due to violation of selection criteria by two participants). Show rate of participants was high for all the focus groups with a total of 37 participants. Because focus group 1a data were not analyzed, input from a total of 32 individuals, among four focus groups, was analyzed. As observed in Table 1, Focus Group 3 and 4 had more individuals than those who committed.

TABLE 1. Employee Focus Group Recruitment

Focus Group	Age Range	Operations[a] Contacted	Operations Flyer Posted	Individuals Committed	Show Rate of Participants
Group 1a	18-25 years	84	58	4	100%
Group 1b	18-25 years	3[b]	0	8	100%
Group 2	26-40 years	48	35	7	100%
Group 3	41-59 years	66	36	10	110%
Group 4	≥ 60 years	157	35	5	140%[c]

[a] The number of operations contacted varies based on the size of town or city. Larger cities had more foodservice operations while smaller towns had fewer.
[b] Because it was found that participants in focus group 1a violated selection procedures, another focus group (1b) was completed. For this focus group (1b), recruitment was done in three classes at one university. Participants came from eight different operations.
[c] For this focus group, one individual showed up without committing to come first.

Demographics

The demographic information reported by the focus group participants in the short questionnaire completed prior to discussion is presented in Table 2. More than two-thirds of the 32 participants were female (n=23, 72%). The age groups with the highest participation rate were the 18-29 years old (n=9, 28%), 30-49 years old (n=10, 31%), and 50-59 years old (n=8, 25%). Most participants reported having at least some college education (n = 24) and most of them worked for restaurants or school foodservice

operations. Slightly less than half of the participants (n=14, 44%) reported having

completed a "Food Handlers Course" and 20% (n=6) reported having a "Current Food

Safety Certificate".

TABLE 2. Demographics of Focus Group Participants (n=32)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	23	71.9
Male	9	28.1
Age		
18-29 years	9	28.1
30-49 years	10	31.3
50-59 years	8	25.0
$\geq$60 years	5	15.6
Educational Level		
High School Diploma	8	25.0
Some College	15	46.9
Bachelor's Degree	8	25.0
Graduate Degree	1	3.1
Workplace		
Restaurant	13	41.6
School	10	31.3
College	5	15.6
Other	4	12.5
Current Work Status		
Full Time	6	18.8
Part Time	26	81.2
Time Worked in Foodservice Operations		
Less than 1 year	2	6.3
1-3 years	11	34.4
4-7 years	6	18.8
8-12 years	4	12.5
13-20 years	6	18.8
Over 20 years	3	9.4
Time Worked in Current Operation		
Less than 1 year	9	28.1
1-3 years	14	43.8
4-7 years	3	9.4
8-12 years	4	12.5
13-20 years	2	6.3
Food Handlers Course [a]	14	43.8
Current Food Safety Certificate [a]	6	18.8

[a] Yes responses

Training Preferences

Preferences regarding frequency and type of training are presented in Table 3. Thirty-eight percent of the participants (n=12) preferred to be trained less than five times a year, followed by 5-11 times a year (n=9, 28%). Equal number of participants liked being trained either by self-direction or by guidance (n=16, 50%). Most of the participants preferred to be trained on-site at their foodservice (n=28, 88%). More than half of the participants (n=18, 56%) preferred to be trained by a manager or supervisor rather than by a coworker or outsider.

The training methods participants reported on the questionnaire as most preferred were: workplace in-service (n=25, 78%), computer as a learning tool (n=19, 59%), workshops (n=18, 56%), and informal employee meetings (n=14, 44%). The least preferred training methods were: formal employee meeting (n=7, 22%), trade show (n=5, 16%), and webinars (n=4, 12%). More than one third of the 19 participants who preferred computer as a learning tool belonged to the 30-49 years age group (n=10). Two-thirds of the 18 participants who reported workshops as the preferred training method were in the age categories 18-29 and 50-59 years old (n=12). Of those participants who reported informal employee meetings as a preferred training method (n= 14), half (n=7) belonged to the 30-49 years old age group.

TABLE 3. Training Preferences by Age Groups (n=32)

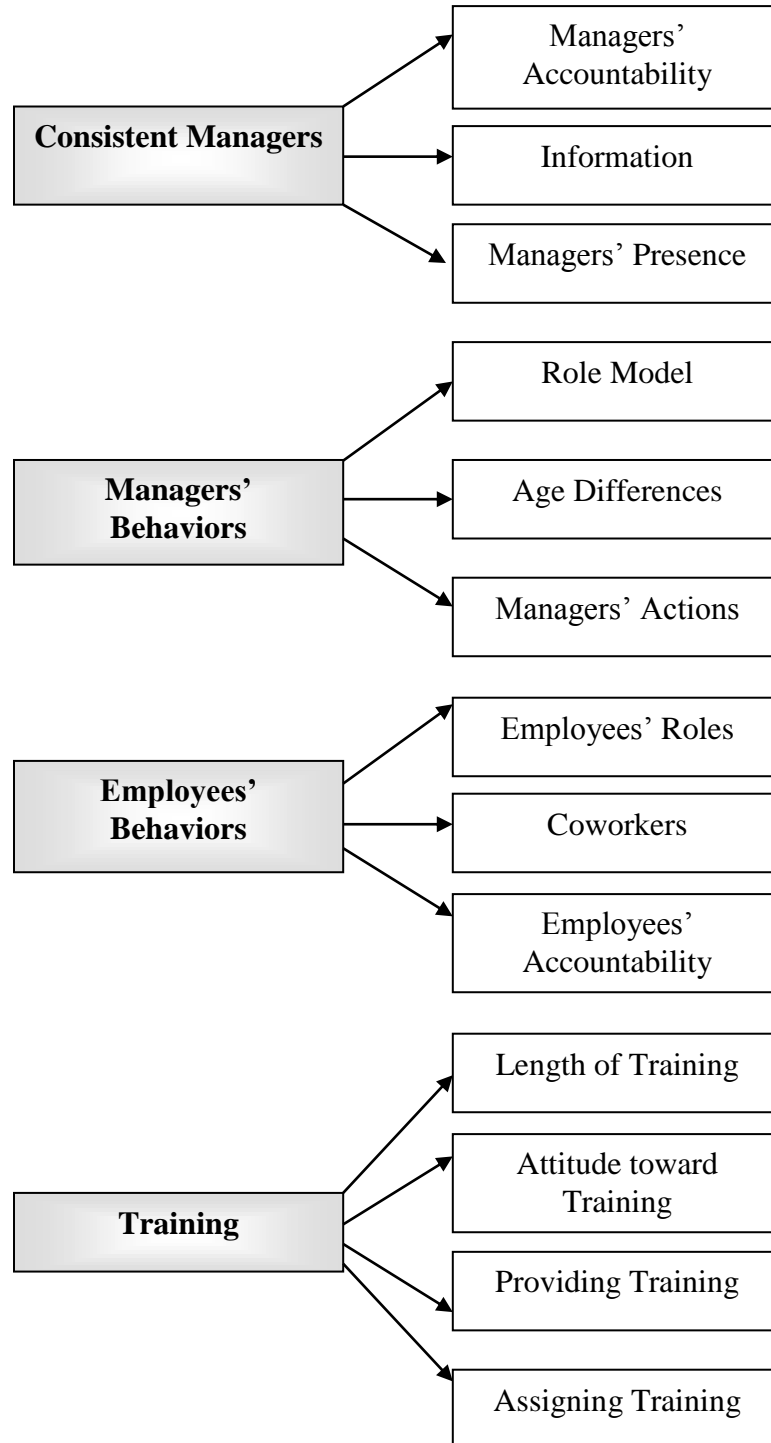| Age groups	18-29 years (n=9)	30-49 years (n=10)	50-59 years (n=8)	60 years or older (n=5)	All ages
Category	Frequency (%)				
Frequency					
Once a week or more	1 (03.1)	2 (06.3)	0 (00.0)	0 (00.0)	3 (09.4)
Once a month	2 (06.3)	2 (06.3)	3 (09.4)	0 (00.0)	7 (21.9)
5-11 times a year	3 (09.4)	4 (12.5)	2 (06.3)	0 (00.0)	9 (28.1)
Less than 5 times a year	3 (09.4)	2 (06.3)	3 (09.4)	4 (12.5)	12 (37.5)
Not at all	0 (00.0)	0 (00.0)	0 (00.0)	1 (03.1)	1 (03.1)
Type					
Self-directed	5 (15.6)	6 (18.8)	2 (06.3)	3 (09.4)	16 (50.0)
Guided	4 (12.5)	4 (12.5)	6 (18.8)	2 (06.3)	16 (50.0)
Location					
On-site	8 (25.0)	9 (28.1)	6 (18.8)	5 (15.6)	28 (87.5)
Off-site	1(03.1)	1 (03.1)	2 (06.3)	0 (00.0)	4 (12.5)
Trainer [a]					
Coworker	5 (15.6)	2 (06.3)	1 (03.1)	0 (00.0)	8 (25.0)
Outsider	2 (06.3)	2 (06.3)	5 (15.6)	1 (03.1)	10 (31.3)
Supervisor or Manager	3 (09.4)	7 (21.9)	2 (06.3)	4 (12.5)	16 (50.0)
Method [ab]					
Work place in-service	8 (25.0)	8 (25.0)	5 (15.6)	4 (12.5)	25 (78.1)
Computer	3 (09.4)	10 (31.3)	4 (12.5)	2 (06.3)	19 (59.4)
Workshops	6 (18.8)	5 (15.6)	6 (18.8)	1 (03.1)	18 (56.3)
Informal Meeting	3 (09.4)	7 (21.9)	3 (09.4)	1 (03.1)	14 (43.8)
Computer Base	3 (09.4)	4 (12.5)	3 (09.4)	2 (06.3)	12 (37.5)
Classroom Instruction	4 (12.5)	1 (03.1)	4 (12.5)	1 (03.1)	10 (31.3)
Manual or Workbooks	1 (03.1)	3 (09.4)	2 (06.3)	2 (06.3)	8 (25.0)
U-tube Videos	5 (15.6)	1 (03.1)	1 (03.1)	1 (03.1)	8 (25.0)
Formal Meeting	2 (06.3)	3 (09.4)	0 (00.0)	2 (06.3)	7 (21.9)
Trade Show	1 (03.1)	2 (06.3)	2 (06.3)	0 (00.0)	5 (15.6)
Webinars	1 (03.1)	3 (09.4)	0 (00.0)	0 (00.0)	4 (12.5)
Topics [a]					
Hand washing	5 (15.6)	8 (25.0)	8 (25.0)	4 (12.5)	25 (78.1)
Cross Contamination	4 (12.5)	8 (25.0)	5 (15.6)	4 (12.5)	21 (65.6)
Temperature Zones	4 (12.5)	6 (18.8)	5 (15.6)	3 (09.4)	18 (56.3)

[a] Total is more than 100% due to multiple responses. [b] Preferred training methods.

Themes Identified

ATLAS.ti 6 allowed a deeper analysis of the quotations associated with the

themes and exploration of the relationships between themes. Four theme families

(consistent managers, managers' behaviors, employees' behaviors, and training) and thirteen themes were identified based on the researchers' analysis (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Emergent Themes from Employee Focus Group Data

Consistent Managers	→ Managers' Accountability
	→ Information
	→ Managers' Presence

Managers' Behaviors	→ Role Model
	→ Age Differences
	→ Managers' Actions

Employees' Behaviors	→ Employees' Roles
	→ Coworkers
	→ Employees' Accountability

Training	→ Length of Training
	→ Attitude toward Training
	→ Providing Training
	→ Assigning Training

Eleven of the 13 themes were identified in all of the focus groups, thus there were similarities among generational groups. The 11 common themes are: managers' accountability, information, managers' presence, role model, managers' actions, employees' role, accountability of employees, length of training, attitude toward training, providing training, and assigning training. Two other themes also emerged from focus group 3 (41-60 years of age); these were coworkers and age differences.

Themes were then grouped in the four theme families, based on the quotations associated to each one. The theme families are: consistent managers, managers' behaviors, employees' behaviors, and training. Family themes and themes with supporting participants' quotations are described below.

CONSISTENT MANAGERS: Participants noted that it was important to have managers that held employees accountable, were able to provide food safety information, and were available. Therefore, this family theme was divided into the following themes:

Managers' Accountability: This theme represents respondents' perspectives on their managers' responsibility for safe food handling behavior.

"Like sometimes the supervisor would ask you to show how to do certain jobs that you have to know what you are doing or explain to them the proper techniques, make sure that it is getting on the correct way" (Emily, Female, 18-25 years old)

*"They should at least hold people accountable if they have the knowledge
or people accountable even during slow times and not just inspection
times"* (Ann, Female, 26-40 years old)

*"So the manager is, is like the first person that can actually stop that food
from going contaminated"* (Rex, Male, 26-40 years old)

*"When it relates to the supervisor and your food…that is her job at the
very beginning to make sure that food is there so that you do have that
piece on mind"* (Sue, Female, 41-60 years old)

Information: Participants noted it was important for managers to have correct
food safety knowledge and information so they can relay it to the employees and follow
the proper procedures if needed.

*"A lot of managers don't know proper safety procedures in restaurants,
they don't know temperatures, and they don't know cooking time. All they
know basically is that they are managers of the restaurant and that they
are making up the schedule, they are doing the food inventory and that's
all they know"* (Jack, Male, 26-40 years old)

*"I think having meetings once in a while is a good way to make sure that
the information that they've been trained is given down to all employees"*
(Ms. Bradley, Female, 41-60 years old)

Managers' Presence: Participants discussed the importance of having someone supervising. They also discussed the drawbacks of not having the manager involved in the operation.

"I feel like we said we are all more conscious when there's somebody watching us and that's probably the biggest role that they play like impacting our relationship" (Diane, Female, 18-25 years old)

"They are there and is more like the kitchen crew is going to do the right thing when someone is around so I feel like they play a huge role in keeping things safe" (Brenda, Female, 18-25 years old)

"Like when the boss is around you work harder, when he is not around you tend to slack off a little more, take short cuts that sort of stuff" (Humphrey, Male, 18-25 years old)

"Like she said, if they are around you are doing a better job of everything and where I work is only one manager, he's always in his office unless it gets busy and that's when it's hard to when you are flying around to remember every little thing to do" (Craig, Male, 18-25 years old)

"The managers hardly be ever around so it's very, you have to take it upon yourself to make sure that you are always reminding yourself to

make sure you are doing everything properly" (Abby, Female, 18-25

years old)

MANAGERS´ BEHAVIORS: Participants noted the importance of manager behaviors

with three themes emerging from this family theme area. These were as follows: role

model, age differences, and managers' actions.

Role Model: This theme is about the manager acting as a food safety role model

for how an employee should perform on the job. Employees noted watching the manager

practice food safety behaviors.

"*when the inspections are coming that's when the management start caring about*

safety issues and everything else food safety." (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

"…[supervisor] *showed me everything and he knew it all* [talking about safe food

handling], *but I don't know I don't work with him much, I don't know if he*

practices it but he knows it. I think all the managers know it, they just I don't

know if they go by it …"(Craig, Male, 18-25 years old)

"*he* [supervisor/manager] *dropped the spatula and he just ran over to the sink and*

washed it off, you know I was like get a clean one and sanitize that one send that

one through the dishwasher it's not like you don't have fifty spatulas." (Ivy,

Female, 41-60 years old)

Age Differences: Participants reported that food safety behaviors can vary among employees of differing ages and managers need to recognize and handle these differences.

"They're younger and, you know, they, I mean, they aren't with that kind of stuff all the time. But when they come back and they are putting a dish there or they are doing something else, stacking a whole bunch of dishes and they are gonna run it through and they are all dirty dishes and then they walk away and then I am saying "wash your hands" (Betty, Female, 41-60 years old)

"Just the young ones that seem they just hasn't got it, they've been trained and everything else, it just hasn't got into their system of naturally doing it" (Betty, Female, 41-60 years old)

"We may be a little slower (note: she was making the comparison to younger employees) but we are better. The cleanliness is better; the kids tend to rush it because they are fast" (Alice, Female, 41-60 years old)

"They are quick and they are but they're not quite as good, but I do think this just a part of the young" (Alice, Female, 41-60 years old)

Managers' Actions: Participants discussed the desire for a manager to create an environment that encourages employees to have fun in the workplace, while taking

his/her job seriously; yet taking the time to train employees on key issues such as safe food handling.

"...if your supervisor or manager is a little more light hearted you have a little more fun and it's just about what he said about (you know) it doesn't seem like a big deal to have to wash your hands if you are having a good time at work" (Abby, Female, 18-25 years old)

"*I would rather have a manager that took time, was really serious about something and showed me all the right ways to do something so then I feel like I need to follow those instead of having a manager that is like, oh yeah we are suppose to do this so if the vice president is around, whoever is around you should do that but like I don't know, I think I will have more pride in my job if I knew I was always doing something right instead only some of the times and they shouldn't worry about if their employees are gonna be mad at them*" (Brenda, Female 18-25 years)

"I think they need to remember that we can't read their minds, that always bugs me they think we know everything" (Jessica, Female, 18-25 years old)

"Well she [supervisor/manager] gives us guidelines on what we should do and what not do and like I said she shows up and if you are not doing you'll hear about it" (Libby, Female, over 60 years old)

EMPLOYEES´ BEHAVIORS: This family theme areas or employees' behaviors were noted by focus group participants, particularly their worn roles as an employee related to food safety, the impact of their coworkers, and level of accountability established for employees.

Employees' Role: Participants discussed their own role in food safety.

"….try to changing my gloves periodically, boat or not, because like I am going from touching is cooked food but I am going from touching chicken to hamburgers and French fries. I am, just me, I am a safety freak. I don't, I wouldn't want someone to touch a steak and then hand me a hamburger at the same time, using the same hands". (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

"… we coordinate and work together to stay neat and I think a lot of this you have to take yourself as an employee (you know) you do you feel about your job? And you should try to do your best and look your best and have been working for many years and I'll tell you is it your dress code has to do a lot with your attitude" (Libby, Female, over 60 years old)

"And then (you know) here on one side of the kitchen, the dishwasher with the dirty dishes and the garbage you step three feet over you've got all the clean stuff now. These hands that have been here they are going there but they have to go

through a wash, a hand sink, before you can go to the other side of the dish

washer." (Coop, Male, over 60 years old)

Coworkers: Participants noted the importance of their coworkers in getting the job done and handling food safely.

"I think if you can find a good coworker that is really good at safety and

(you know) just a well concerned person for the food what you are serving

you can build a really good team …" (Sally, Female, 41-60 years old)

"You need a coworker that will step in if you're two minutes behind."
(Shayla, Female, 41-60 years old)

"My coworkers are very good, we always, ask if anybody needs help, we

step in we help because we all need it at one time or another and we all

know that and so (you know) it's like we are always constantly who needs

help, what do you need done (you know), you have no fear of asking

anybody for help because you know they are going to come over and

help" (Sue, Female, 41-60 years old)

"I still think you have to get along with everybody and even the worst

thing I hate to hear is "is not my job, is not my job" because it is very

aggregating" (Alice, Female, 41-60 years old)

Employees' Accountability: This theme represented data that addressed what aspects employees need to be accountable for, irrespective of what the manager did**.**

"We have to wear gloves (emphasis), when you touch food at school you have to wear gloves at all times, (you know) for some reason something drops on the floor and you got to pick it up, change your gloves, and wash your hands" (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

"like temperature wise, you have to make sure that the food is going out at the right temperature, that the chicken breasts are actually cooked at (you know) all the way through so that (you know) they will kill the bacteria…" (Jack, Male, 26-40 years old)

"if we see something wrong in the facility we can contaminate a lot of people (you know) so it's very important to make sure that every time we go to the bathroom wash your hands, change your gloves" (Paco, Male, 26-40 years old)

"if we shut the door we have to change the gloves, we have to wash our hands every time we touch something that is not related to food we have to wash it every time" (Sue, Female, 41-60 years old)

"I think the go with that is as far as sanitizing and (you know) doing the, I think we just go a little further than maybe what we have to because we are not gonna let somebody come in and say (you know) you didn't do something right and all these kids are sick" (Bob, Female, 41-60 years old)

TRAINING: This family theme area encompassed issues related to training within the operation. This included the length of training, attitude toward training, and providing and assigning training.

Length of Training: Participants discussed the length of food safety training, emphasizing the need for shorting training sessions.

"I think when you go through the endless hours of sitting and absorbing all that information, it's right there in your head and (you know) it's like (you know) wash your hands, you take the temperatures, you do this" (Bob, Male, 41-60 years old)

"sometimes I don't know what, what is going on but a new supervisor, the news come for now they don't want to spend too much time with the new people. They just put the new person one day (um), that's it" (Paco, Male, 26-40 years old)

"...for the short time I did is they threw me back there on a salad station that this things posted on how to make the salads but they don't train the safety issues at

the time I was there. Well, horrendous, (you know), no glove wearing, no this, no

that. I would watch people, seriously, blow their nose and go back to work and

that is why I lasted a week …" (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

Attitude toward Training: Participants provided perspectives on the method of
food safety training and the need for training.

" I feel where I work they don't give a lot of directions on what to do; they

just kind of assume that you knew what to do and then if you do something

wrong they usually always corrected you so it's like they don't know they

just assume you know or they want to see how you do something first"
(Diane, Female, 18-25 years old)

"I think when it comes to restaurant business you need more hands on

trainers to train you. Forget the movie" (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

"So I watched a video on how to make sandwiches and then it's like "ok"

go and make sandwiches and so I am taught now to physically make

sandwiches but I am not taught on cross contamination or any sort of like

temperature stuff or anything like that" (Ann, Female, 26-40 years old)

Providing Training: Participants made comments about training provided by
managers to employees in the right way and at the right time.

"*…especially in the restaurant business you have to train the people right the first time because you can't take shortcuts when it comes to safety*". (Cy, Male, 26-40 years old)

"*I guess I feel like our like supervisors or manager were more like at the very beginning "here is what you need to do." But now that I have worked there longer so they assume you know everything and they don't really come make sure you are doing the right that kind of thing, it's more like they are more focused on the new people and once you are there for a while they figure you don't need any more reminders*" (Emily, Female, 18-25 years old)

"*Well, it starts with your training program and then is one of the things that you're trained how to do it and then he follows up on you and if you are not doing it right, you get told you are doing it wrong.*" (Coop, Male, over 60 years old)

Assigning Training: Participants described the person who served as trainer or who was assigned to do the food safety training for the foodservice.

"*Like when there's new people that come to work, like sometimes the supervisor would ask you to show how to do certain jobs that you have to know what you are doing or explain to them the proper techniques*"
(Emily, Female, 18-25 years old)

"That's true because you want to be the one that show them the right way to do it so if your manager does ask you like to case show how to do some things you are obviously are going to show them the right way" (Brenda, Female, 18-25 years old)

"They put it on the responsibility of the more experience people that have been there to train other people, whereas me the managers should be the ones, the one that is doing the training" (Jack, Male, 26-40 years old)

"I was trained by a lady that was very strict, very knowledgeable and she kept you on your toes and you knew what you had to do" (Betty, Female, 41-60 years old)

Figure 2 represents the relationships among the different themes and associations of the themes with each family theme. Dashed lines show the relationships between themes and solid lines show the connection between the theme and the family theme. The Managers' Actions theme was the one with the most relationships. It related to nine themes: age differences, accountability of employees, employees' role, role model, presence, information, accountability, providing training, and attitude towards training. The theme of Information was related to six other themes: providing training, attitude toward training, accountability, manager's actions, role model, and employees' role. The visual representation illustrates how themes were interrelated with other themes within the same family or with themes of other families.

FIGURE 2: Relationships of Themes and Families Based on Employee Focus Groups[a]
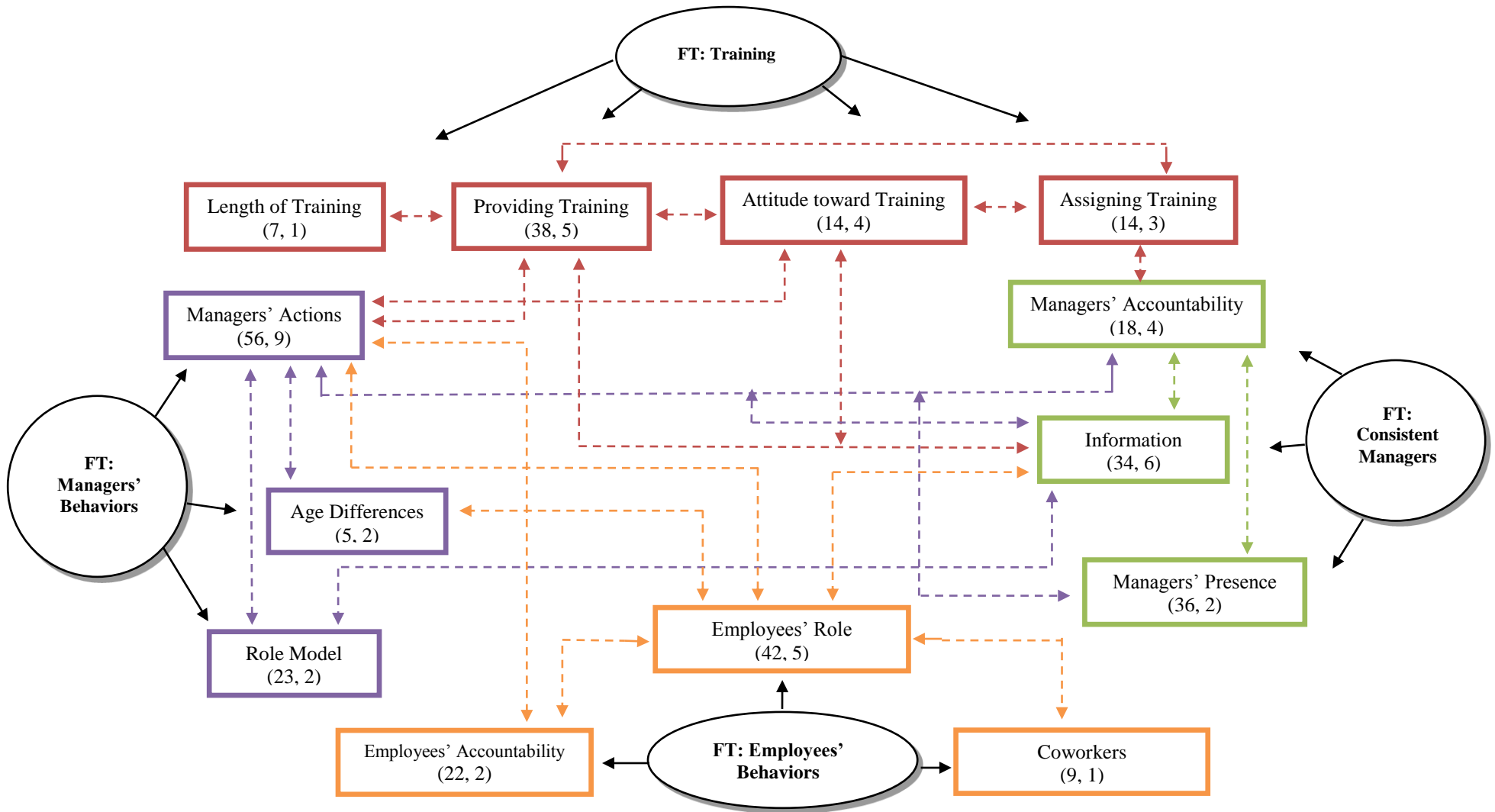
[a] The numbers in parenthesis represent: (Number of quotes associated to that theme, number of relationships)
FT: Family Theme
---- Relationship between themes
___Relationship between themes and family theme

Of particular interest is that all family themes evolved from all focus groups with the exception of the 18-25 year old group. While identifying family themed areas for this focus group, there were no themes related to employees' behaviors family theme. Thus, aspects of employees' roles in food safety, their coworkers' influence, and accountability of employees were not brought up or discussed within this focus group. Other focus group data comparisons revealed that the 41-60 years old group was the only one where themes of age differences (in major family theme entitled Managers' Behaviors) and coworkers (in family theme of Employees' Behaviors) emerged.

It should be noted that there may be differences in how employees perceive food safety issues due to factors other than age. For example, segment of the foodservice industry (e.g. restaurant or school foodservice) or motivations for working (e.g high schooler seeking spending money or a long-term employee working to pay the bills) may be other variables to consider. However, the purpose of this study was to assess different age groups of employees' views. The study was not intended to assess impact of segment of foodservice or employee work status.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The implications for this research potentially extend beyond the area of food safety, with particular relevance to human resources management. Consistency among managers, accounting for generational differences, and the establishment of acceptable norms are themes that resonated throughout the data and are the basis of implications for industry.

Implication 1: Need for Management Consistency

Managers must be consistent in three different facets of their jobs: coworkers, information, and managers' accountability. Having the proper policies and procedures in place related to food safety is important. However, it is even more important that managers consistently follow-up on these policies to assure that employees are compliant. As noted in the focus groups, it is important that food safety and the policies surrounding food safety become part of the culture of the organization, not just something that needs to be completed when the manager might expect a health inspection or a particular manager is on duty. Monitoring that all employees follow the company's policies and procedures is vital to ensuring safe food. If the managers do not consistently assure that the policies and procedures of the operation are being followed, employees will likely revert to the old way, and often-incorrect way, of doing things. Consistency not only implies that one manager must be consistent with how he or she handles employees, but all managers within the operation must be on the same page to offer internal managerial consistency related to how the management team enforces food safety policies. For example, one manager may stress employees restrain hair completely with hair nets while another may be more lax in complying with the organization's policy. This lack of consistency can create tension within the work force and between management team members.

Employees also noted that managers need to be knowledgeable about food safety and should display that knowledge on the job. Findings from this study indicated that employees felt frustrated when managers did not follow food safety behaviors they expected from staff; managers must show their commitment to food safety by practicing

what they expect of their employees so that employees can see food safety is more than just talked about, Proper role modeling by management helps create a positive food safety culture within the operation. For example, if a manager expects employees to wash hands before donning a new pair of gloves, he/she should do the same, even if there is a sense of urgency.

Implication 2: Addressing Multigenerational Differences

Managers must take into account generational differences in their management style and how they handle interactions with employees in each generation group. For example, Generation X members value flexibility and professional growth (Bova & Kroth, 2001) while Generation Y members are generally technologically competent and have propensity for multitasking (although research is showing they do it, but not well (Junco & Cotton, 2012). This reliance on technology and the need for immediate feedback by learners often frustrates experienced trainers as this challenges traditional approaches to training. As O'Reilly et al. (2000) explained, Generation Y members know they do not want to live or work the way those who came before them did. Also called the "me-generation," Generation Y members can be perceived as difficult to manage because of their short attention spans.

Industry trainers need to realize that if they want to reach Generation Y learners, then they will need to meet their demands to be entertained and to do work in short blocks of time. Infusing engagement activities within the training process can address these demands. Those providing food safety training in the work setting must consider these adaptations. For example, a short "turn down" related to food safety can be included in a pre-service meeting with staff, such as "don't forget to … ". Generation Y

and New Millennial learners also place emphasis on personal experience rather than performance, claiming that they should be rewarded on the basis of their own capabilities and inputs rather than against a prescribed system of objectives (Hill, 2002; Twenge, 2010). Those providing training should attempt to tie information to work experiences of those in the session, such as "remember when we had to get a new cutting board to prepare the food for the guest with the food allergy?" Oblinger commented "Results and actions are considered more important than the accumulation of facts" (2003, p. 40). Thus, trainers and managers must communicate to workers in a personal way the role each plays within the organization, and why they are expected to follow established standard operating procedures and meet prescribed expectations.

The themed areas identified in this study and the differences in some of the responses indicate that managers must recognize that each generation may be motivated differently. Best practices for managers to ensure employees follow safe food handling behaviors would be to include the following: develop customized training for different age employees, motivate employees using different strategies, and build on the positives that each generation of employees brings to the workplace. For example, a mentoring process may be established whereby the older employees teach and role model organizational practices for the younger employees, or a process where a younger employee trains older workers on new food safety technology in the work place. By utilizing the strengths of each generation and addressing the fact that generational differences exist, the management is able to move the company and programs related to food safety to a higher level.

Implication 3: Establishing Accountability

The establishment has to set acceptable norms of employee behaviors (recognizing external regulations as well as internal organizational goals) and communicate these to employees in a way that they are heard and followed. Managers holding employees accountable for following the prescribed standards the operation has established relates to Implications 1 and 2 (management consistency and addressing multigenerational differences). Coworkers must work as a team to provide safe food and be held accountable (individually or as a team) if they fail to meet the communicated expectations within the operation. Managers must stress that the livelihood of each employee is dependent upon the success of the foodservice.

While training and communications strategies must be targeted to the preferences of each generation, younger employees have forced organizations to re-engineer their training programs to be able to "explain why people need to learn X or Y" (Beaver et al, 2005, p. 601; Bova & Kroth, 2001). Trainers must communicate why employees should care about information, as it impacts them personally and the organization. One of the recommendations from Strohbehn et al (2008) is to design training "that includes reasons why proper hand washing and other safe food handling behaviors are important" (p. 1649). Younger employees (Generation X and Y or Me) want to know specifically why such behavior is required. For example, "Why must the work surface be washed thoroughly and sanitized after handing raw meat?". These generations are unlikely to wash and sanitize the surface simply because they have been told it is required. Rather, in order to elicit true behavior change, it is important to inform them of the rationale

about why such behavior is recommended (reduction in microbial logs) and impacts of failure to do (punishment or someone, even themselves or a coworker, becoming ill).

Findings from this study show that differences exist in views held by different generations of foodservice workers about food safety training and what motivates them to practice safe food handling behaviors. As educators prepare future managers to effectively oversee foodservice operations, it is important these students recognize they not only need to have food safety knowledge, but they must work with multigenerational staff and motivate them to ensure it is practiced regularly. Likewise, current managers should recognize that employees of different age categories will be motivated to follow food safety practices for different reasons. For example, because Generation Y and New Millennials place more emphasis on personal experience, it is necessary to relate the need to follow proper food safety practices to their experiences and to ensure they understand how the role they play is vital to the organization in developing and maintaining a culture of food safety. Conversely, employees in the Baby Boomer generation like to obtain results and are likely to follow proper practices because it is a workplace expectation. While recognizing these differences, it is important that managers provide a consistent and united food safety message and hold employees accountable for food safety practices. Without this diligence, a food safety catastrophe (outbreak) could occur.

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