Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Business Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Behavior

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Talent Retention:
An Empirical Examination of a 21st Century United States Department of Agriculture

Date: August 15, 2020
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
Federal organizations at all levels are experiencing difficulty retaining talented employees and must examine current strategies to retain talented high-performing employees. Thirty-one percent of government-wide employees will be eligible to retire by 2022 (GAO, 2019). As a result, organizations need to examine generational expectations and values related to talent retention, which may prove beneficial when developing strategies for the current workforce. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-five Generation X and millennial federal government employees to gain an in-depth understanding of their insights related to talent retention in the federal government context. Supplemental quantitative data were also collected that integrates leader-member exchange (LMX) research to help inform talent retention in the federal government. Findings from this study emphasize Generation X and millennial federal government employees’ experiences and identify seven categories outlining the reasons why they chose to stay: career growth, workplace culture, learning and development, organizational pride, job resources, communication, leadership. Some of these drivers of talent retention have been identified in previous literature; however, until now, they have not yet been shown to be relevant in the federal government context. The study also uncovered two novel drivers of talent retention termed organizational pride and 360 communication (sub-category of communication). Results expand previous talent retention research by providing new insights into federal government employees’ experiences and what drives them to stay. This study’s findings have numerous theoretical and practical implications which are discussed. Findings will serve as a foundation for future research on Generation X and millennial retention in the federal government. Based on the study’s findings, I conclude with seven lessons that reinforce the positive values of organizational pride, career growth, 360 communication, and learning and development.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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