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A Phenomenological Study of Millennials' Different Lived Perspectives of Employee Engagement

Delores Grant
Walden University

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Walden University

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Delores Grant

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Review Committee

Dr. Carol Wells, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. Salvatore Sinatra, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Stephanie Hoon, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

A Phenomenological Study of Millennials' Different Lived Perspectives of Employee

Engagement

by

Delores Grant

MPhil, Walden University School of Management, 2019

MPM, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2011

BS, DeVry University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

Employee engagement is vital to the success of organizations. Employee disengagement continues to contribute to organizational failure. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and report millennials' different perspectives of employee engagement by exploring the research question. The central research question dealt with the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States. The study sample consisted of 25 participants with at least 3 years of working experience in the United States. The data collection process consisted of semistructured interviews with participants of the millennial generation. Data analysis included coding of descriptive words by means of constant comparative method. The core findings and the gap both indicated that millennials are clearly redefining the accountability to employee engagement. Although there are many factors that impact employee engagement, the participants emphasized the significance of building engagement strategies that will empower them to have an impact and a sense of purpose, provide the opportunity to be creative, allow them to share new ideas with their organizations, and fulfil a desire to have some levels of excitement, passion, and motivation toward work. Applying engagement strategies that can continually assess and take advantage of opportunities to minimize disengaged employees will promote a positive workplace culture where millennials can feel a sense of value, high morale, be able to put their knowledge to use, and have a meaningful and creative job will strengthen employee relations and increase employee productivity. The results of this study will interject positive social change by reinforcing workplace engagement that which will strengthen organizations, societies, and thereby advance the well-being of families and communities.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends who have encouraged and supported me throughout this unbelievable doctoral journey. First, I would like to thank my 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Sandra Strange-Holzendorf, for believing in me as a young child, and introducing me to my husband, Archie Grant. Your spoken words inspired me to become a leader and not a follower. May you rest in peace.

To my mom, Bettye Hillman, thank you for encouraging me to look beyond the scope and reach for the stars. On May 28, 1980, you wrote in my senior book, *behind every dark cloud, the sun does shine, and to keep God first in whatever you do.*

To my deceased father, Dewitt Hillman, your spirit will forever be embedded in my heart.

To my beloved husband, Archie Grant, my greatest cheerleader, my rock, I thank you for your unwavering support throughout this journey. I will never be able to repay you for all the late nights proofreading my work. I thank you for your love and for believing in me that I would complete this journey. Thank you for reminding me not to sweat the small stuff and believe in myself. We did it!

Each of your voices are not only present in this dissertation but have also contributed to the person I have become, and who I am today. Thank you all for supporting me through this journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The term employee engagement emerged from Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement in which Kahn posited that employees' levels of engagement addressed both the organization's environment and its leadership. Simpson (2009) wrote that employee engagement is an effective aspect of an organization's productivity success. The intent of this study was to explore, identify, and report the lived experiences of employee engagement from the perspectives of millennials. Millennials (those between the ages of 18 to 34; born between 1981- 2000) are becoming a sizeable adult generation, and they were expected to constitute a population of 73 million by 2019 (Pew Research Center, 2018). Millennials have the desires and will to participate vigorously and appear at least slightly enthusiastic rather than being disengaged while at work. Understanding the perspectives of millennials' levels of engagement is fundamental to long term organizational sustainability and maintaining a certain level of productivity.

According to researchers, the current reduction in organizational productivity across the United States, caused by disengaged employees continues to challenge business leaders (Anitha, 2014; McAdam, Hazlett, & Galbraith, 2013). Leaders have underestimated the effect of disengaged employees and failed to address the challenges within their organizations (Crabtree, 2013; Garcia-Melon, Poveda-Bautista, & Valle, 2015). Church (2014) emphasized the importance of leadership comprehending how employee engagement influences organizational productivity. The lack of an engaged workforce makes it difficult for companies to retain talented employees. Ozelik (2014)

agreed it is important to retain highly talented employees who are passionate and willing to go beyond the boundaries of their job functions.

In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded approximately 83 million millennials currently residing in the United States. Millennials represent over half of the current workforce and outnumber both babyboomers and Generation X. Millennials are the first generation to come of age during the rapid rise of technology (Gomez, 2016). They are social media savvy, self-expressive, receptive to changes, and addicted to technology. Lacy, Haines, and Hayward (2012) indicated that emerging new skills, cognition, and mindsets are fundamental to accelerating, integrating, and sustaining organizational performance.

According to Yamamura (as cited in Ozcelik, 2014), the younger generation crossing into the adult threshold and joining the workplace is generating the following gaps in the workplace: (a) communication, (b) culture, and (c) skill sets. These gaps are becoming new organizational challenges (Nayar, 2013) and producing complications that are leading to a disengaged workforce (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Promoting engagement strategies for cultivating millennials has not been substantially addressed by recent literature; this is discussed further in Chapter 2. Some leaders have not been successful in applying strategies that could contribute to improving employee engagement and increasing productivity. However, as evidenced in the findings of this study, millennials have lived experiences and expectations of employee engagement that are similar to previous generations.

The findings of this study suggested that millennial perspectives of engagement have five primary components: (a) a sense of value, (b) good morale, (c) knowledge use, (d) meaningful work, and (e) creativity. According to the findings, millennial lived experiences are evidence of their effort, loyalty, persistence in their workplace, organization, and work-related mission.

Background of the Study

Millennials are a diverse group comprising of college or non-college students, married couples, and professionals born between 1981 and 2000. Many appear less enthusiastic about getting a payroll check than other generational cohorts (Pew Research, 2016). However, according to the findings of this study, they are pursuing a purpose, embracing changes, seeking innovative ideas, and striving to be challenged. Also, millennials are altering the social, ethnic, and personal characteristics of the workplace environment. They are particularly independent, more so than babyboomers or members of Generation X. Millennials are taking their place in the workplace, replacing babyboomers who are retiring. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study, therefore, was to identify and report on the lived experience of millennial employees and to determine the employers' strategies that may influence millennials' professional performance.

Some organizational leaders have identified increasing employee engagement as a prominent goal in management (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter (2011). The capability of motivating employees to achieve organizational goals is a component of managerial communication, and the deficiency of effective communication will lead to disengaged

employees (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Bisel, Messersmith, and Kelley (2012) pointed out that the inability to establish engagement in the workforce will lead to low employee and organizational productivity. Employee engagement is the extent to which employees feel enthusiastic about their jobs and allegiance to their organizations (Nasomboon, 2014). According to the Gallup Group (2013), employee productivity and engagement have continued to decline, and 55% of the millennial workforce is not engaged. Palanski, Avey, and Jiraporn (2013) maintained that disengaged employees cost companies billions of dollars in lost productivity. Cherian and Farouq (2013) indicated that United States organizations suffer approximately \$300 billion in lost annual revenue because of disengaged employees, and that disengaged employees are more likely to resign. Research has shown that, over time, disengaged employees' performance is substantially less than that of fully engaged employees (Gallup Group, 2016).

This study was conducted to explore the role millennials' perspectives play in the effectiveness and success of employee engagement, using a qualitative approach to understand the distinguishing characteristics of millennials and their commitment. According to Geldenhuys, Laba, and Venter (2014), millennials desire a sense of purpose, want to feel engaged at work, and seek a meaningful workplace. Leaders must make employees feel like their work really matters and that they are striving toward a worthy goal. When 70% of United States employees are disengaged and 55% of that number are of the millennial generation, this poses a challenge for companies. In general, millennials want more from their jobs; they want fulfillment.

The Shuck & Reio's theory of engagement served as the conceptual framework for this study. For the study I focused on employee engagement and explored how organizational leaders could alter existing strategies to support millennials' perceived engagement strategies. Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2014) suggested the use of new strategies, including selecting an innovative approach to designing and applying new tools, that can deliver performance methods to maximize engagement (Ozcelik, 2015). Siren, Kohtamaki, and Kuckertz (2012) asserted that active management is essential for integrating innovative concepts and can transform all levels of management. By combining both performance and motivation, business leaders can enhance employee engagement (Robertson, Jansen, Cary, & Cooper, 2012), thereby creating a workplace where millennials can become fully engaged. Allen and colleagues (2012) identified how employees feel and what recommendations can be undertaken to improve employee feelings about their workplaces. Bersin, Agarwal, Pelster, and Schwartz (2015) explained that companies need to enlarge their perception of what "engagement" means today by giving leaders identifiable best practices they can adapt, and by holding leaders accountable. By adopting new ideas and setting appropriate expectations, leaders can shape the environment and culture of their organizations.

In an optimistic workplace, employees can be seen as an innovation asset rather than a financial asset. According to Bembenutty (2012), there is a relationship between productivity, rewards, personal efforts (needs), and the level of employee participation. By leveraging rewards, recognition, and incentive programs, leaders will be able to improve the level of employee engagement. Management should evaluate new innovative

tools to activate and track the progress of engagement (Anitha, 2014). The five interview questions in this study focused on the relevant elements that influence employee participation. The results collected from these semi structured interviews were categorized by concepts, themes, and patterns using a phenomenological design (see Giorgi, 2009).

The rules and roots of employee engagement vary based on age, interests, and motivation. In congruence with Maslow (1943), engagement is dependent on motivations, interests, and goals wherein these things fulfill a higher purpose, and a person becomes a complete being. The three types of engagement are positive, negative, and discouraged. There are also five different perspectives whereby engagement can take place: interpersonal, psychological, marketing, journalistic, and public relations (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016). Millennials are more open to exploring how the world works based on sharing everything on social media, and they are less interested in social interaction (Gomez, 2016). The sensitivity millennials feel while at the workplace can be put into two different categories confident and negative engagement (Anitha, 2014).

The positive engagement of millennials made it easier to represent both the company and their self-worth positively (Gallup Group, 2016). According to Bailey, Soane, Delbridge, and Alfes (2011), negatively engaged with millennials does not make it easier to represent both the company and their self-worth. Engaged employees are loyal and enthusiastic (Gomez, 2016). Positive engagement is self-driven; it is how people positively identify themselves, how they socially interact with others, and, more specifically, how they use social media based on their desires and motivation (Muntinga,

Moorman, & Smit, 2011). Connecting disengaged employees with engaged employees can help organizations better understand how engaged employees are self-motivated to complete the assigned work (Langan, 2012). Specifically, with online tasks, millennials can become more self-driven and increase organizational productivity.

The research conducted by the Gallup Group (2013) confirmed that 30 % of employees are engaged in a variety of activities at work, and 55% of that number comes from the millennial generation. Millennials understand the values that motivate them to contribute to organizational success. Guinn (2013) suggested that when interviewing potential candidates, managers considered those individuals who have demonstrated engaged competencies in achieving the corporate objectives. Importantly, workplace cultures that do not foster engagement may encounter challenges in retaining top talent (Ozcelik, 2014).

Regarding retention of long-term employee commitment and retention, Guinn (2013) found organizations benefit from high performers and engaged employees. According to Jose and Mampilly (2014), committed employees exhibit that a positive emotional attitude is consistent with positive engagement. Therefore, organizations need to implement new strategies of engagement for better long-term employee commitment (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2014).

According to the findings of this research, leaders need to look at all aspects of why millennials are disengaged, as well as what drives them to remain disengaged. Organizations that implement new engagement strategies can recognize how committed, motivated, and emotionally invested millennials lead to the success of the organization

and their work. This phenomenon explored in this study using engagement theory was between millennials and their organizations. The remaining sections of this chapter include the problem statement, purpose of the study, the research question, the conceptual framework for the study, the nature of the study, the significance of the study, the significance to the practice, significance to theory, and the potential for social change.

Problem Statement

The recent finding of the Gallup Group (2016) indicated that disengaged employees are going through their workday unproductively and triggering added financial expenditures for companies. The Gallup Group (2016) increased the awareness of engagement, concluding that 70% of United States employees are not engaged, and 55% of this number comes from the millennial generation (Gallup Group, 2016). Geldenhuys et al. (2014) found that employee engagement has a clear relationship to organizational performance. The general management problem is that the decline in millennial employee engagement has contributed to reduced productivity and poorer organizational performance.

Building employee engagement has been inconsistently practiced, and it is the driving force that motivates and connects employees to their organizations (Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Gallup Group (2013) research has shown that 55% of millennials are not engaged. Specific factors may contribute to a decline in employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). The specific management problem is that some leaders lack the ability to develop strategies for improving millennial employee engagement. When 55% of millennials are not engaged, it is necessary to acquire an understanding of millennials' lived experiences

to construct and execute effective engagement strategies. Understanding the influences that lead to the engaged workforce and how millennials perceive workplace engagement can further identifying effective strategies. In this study I sought to explore the engagement experiences of millennials in the workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States. This study served to further conversations of the workplace engagement phenomenon (see Shuck & Herd, 2012). There are many quantitative studies on the topic of employee engagement, but only a limited number of qualitative studies focused on millennials' experiences in the current workplace settings. The research found that 30% of employees reported being engaged at work, leaving 70% as being actively disengaged or not engaged (Gallup Group, 2016). Howe and Strauss (2007) concluded that leaders should create a workplace that is favorable to engagement to improve organizational performance (Gallup Group, 2016). Yun, Won, and Park (2016) found that if employees are fully engaged, their job satisfaction increases. Leaders may encourage employees to maximize engagement and productivity (Smith, 2014) because higher levels of engagement lead to improved organizational performance (Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013).

The target population for this study consisted of 25 millennials located throughout the United States; however, I did not attempt to determine the cities with the highest population of working millennials as the core locations for this sample. My intent for this

study was to identify and report on millennials' perceptions of employee engagement. I used the comparative analysis method and compared the findings from each semi structured interview. Understanding the similarity and differences among the millennials currently in the workforce will enable leaders to leverage and align strategies to improve employee engagement and organizational productivity. The gap in the literature of understanding millennials' lived experiences with workplace engagement was addressed throughout this study.

Research Question

A qualitative approach was employed for this study. The research question reflected the need to capture the perspectives of millennials regarding their experiences and gauge their levels of engagement as employees. The central research question for this study was designed to extract pertinent data from the semi structured interviews of millennials. The research question was:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

This question guided this inquiry into the challenges faced by organizational leaders concerned with millennial employee engagement. A phenomenological research approach was appropriate for this study because my goal was to understand the millennials' lived experiences of employee engagement.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of employee engagement has gained attention from organizational leaders across all types of industries (Shuck, 2011). Shuck and Reio's (2011) theory of engagement served as the conceptual framework for this study. I selected their engagement theory as a framework because it reinforces the strategies organizational leaders need to achieve employee engagement. A greater understanding of employee engagement could support leaders in the development of strategies to engage millennials.

Shuck and Reio's (2011) and Kahn's (1990) theories of engagement both identified behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement as their basic concepts. The conceptual framework of this study established the core influence of engagement strategies and the primary strategic steps needed for organizational leaders to be successful in engaging and retaining (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2014). According to Maxwell (2005), a conceptual framework in qualitative research is the logic of expectations, beliefs, assumptions, concepts, and theories that inform and support this study. This study was set within the context of millennial perspectives from their lived experiences of workplace engagement (see Figure 1).

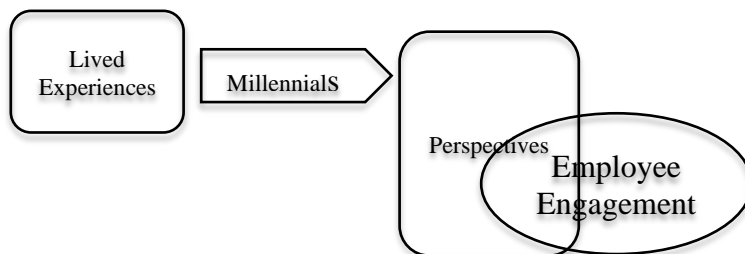


Figure 1. Context of millennial perspectives.

Kumar and Sia (2012) referred to cognitive engagement as the degree of effort shown by individuals while at work, and Shuck & Rose (2013) explained emotional engagement as the individuals' readiness to participate at work. Kahn's theory (1990) explained there are challenges to employee engagement and organizational productivity, which for this study suggests intangible and tangible influences could be overarching factors that are perceived by millennials.

The findings from the 25 millennials revealed that engagement had a positive correlation to meaningful productivity (Schuck, 2011). Zhang, Howell, and Lyer (2014) claimed that cognitively engaged individuals comprehend their level of engagement while at work. Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) asserted that behaviorally engaged individuals revealed their engagement would go further than the standard organizational performance. Shuck and Reio (2011) found that employee engagement strategies are broadly applied across all organizations and what was significant, meaningful, and challenging to older generations in some cases became, to some degree, unfulfilling, meaningless, and unpleasant to younger generations.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Qualitative studies focus on understanding the nature of the research problem (Baškarada, 2014), and this approach can be used to understand the phenomenon of employee engagement (Cronin, 2014). Engaging millennials in the workforce has become a challenge because 55% were found to be disengaged and have weak productivity (Gallup Group, 2016). This study used a qualitative phenomenological design to collect data from

25 millennial participants on their lived experiences. Rudestam and Newton (2015) indicated that qualitative methods are universal approaches to identify and report lived human experiences. Qualitative research was appropriate for exploring millennial perspectives of employee engagement. Dworkin (2012) suggested that one of the goals of qualitative researchers is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. This study used open-ended qualitative questions to explore the lived experiences of millennials regarding the phenomenon of workplace engagement (see Yin, 2014). The findings of the study supported using a qualitative methodology.

Quantitative research examines relationships among variables, tests hypotheses, and uses closed-ended research questions (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Venkatesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) employed a mixed methods approach, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research. Neither quantitative nor mixed methods methodologies were appropriate for this study as the purpose of this study was not to test hypotheses or measure the relationships between variables.

There are several qualitative research designs. According to Kolb (2012), grounded theory consists of collecting and analyzing data to inductively construct a theory. Ethnography is the study of a group's culture or way of life over an extended period. Neither a grounded theory nor ethnography were appropriate for this study, the purpose of which was to explore engagement strategies needed to engage millennial employees. Findings from this study emphasized that millennial employees are pursuing a purpose, embracing changes, seeking innovative ideas, and striving to be challenged in their work.

This phenomenological study resulted in an underlying understanding of millennials' lived experiences through semi structured interviews (see Gill, 2014). Duane and Brummel (2013) conducted empirical research into mindfulness from a workplace perspective, examining the degree to which individuals are mindful of their work setting. In a case study, Guinn (2013) sought to explore the influences that motivated and engaged employees in their work. Wiek, Withycombe, and Redman (2011) discussed the tools and methods used to create a talent management engagement program to develop, prepare, and engage employees.

Morokane, Chiba, and Klevn (2015) stated that, despite the popularity of employee engagement, there currently appears to be no consensus as to its meaning. A phenomenological design was appropriate for this study to understand, identify, and report the significance of the participants' lived experiences regarding their workplace engagement. The findings from this study extended knowledge about millennials in the literature. Understanding the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the workplace may enable organizational leaders to adjust and develop creative engagement strategies for that population. To achieve that, I explored engagement experiences from the perspectives of millennials.

Definitions

Engaged employees: Those employees who are fully dedicated to completing quality work (Gallup Group, 2013).

Employee engagement: The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs toward positive organizational outcomes (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

Personal engagement: The expression of an employees' self in work behaviors that support associations with others and work (Kahn, 1990).

Engagement: An employee's sense of energy and reason as obvious evidence of personal initiatives (Mone, Eisinger, Guggenheim, Price, & Stine (2011).

Assumptions

For this study, the participants were members of the millennial generation. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), assumptions are aspects of qualitative research that the researcher must accept as true without proof. The assumptions serve to frame how the research problem was considered and outline how the solutions emerged. The first assumption was that the millennials in this study represented the current workforce. The second assumption was that the participants would be forthcoming and provide honest responses. The third assumption was that the participants would be available for the semi structured interviews. The fourth assumption was that the participants would have more than 3 years of working experience. The fifth assumption was that the participants would share unbiased responses that accurately reflected their lived experiences. The final assumption was that these millennials' lived experiences of engagement would contribute to increasing productivity in the workplace.

Scope and Delimitations

Thomas, Nelson, and Silverman (2015) said that delimitations are choices made by the researcher that determine the scope of the study. Delimitations of this study included the participants being members of the millennial generation, having 3 to 5 years of working experience, having a direct supervisor, and having no managerial experiences. Those participants not included in this study were millennials or individuals who did not meet the study criteria. The study focused on the analysis of responses from a sample group of 25 millennials. The findings from this study may be transferable for organizational leaders throughout the United States (see Noble & Smith, 2015). However, additional research is required to determine the applicability of the conclusions on a larger scale of millennials in the United States or internationally.

Limitations

Limitations are those influences that cannot be entirely controlled in a study (Yeatman, Trinitapoli, & Hayford, 2013). This study used a qualitative, phenomenological methodology with semi structured interviews for data collection and data analysis. There were inherent limitations based on the methodology being used for the study. This study included current and retrospective views of millennials, and some participants could not accurately recall experiences that took place in the past. The second limitation involved the time constraints for each semi structured interview. Another limitation identified for this study was that some individuals interested in participating in the study did not have 3 or more years of experience with employee engagement or did not meet other required criteria for the study.

The study purposely explored the lived experiences of millennials to comprehend the phenomenon of their workplace engagement. The study included participants of different backgrounds, industries, and ethnicities. I disclosed and explained my prior experience in managing and supervising millennials. To control researcher bias and ensure internal validity, I used member checking during the data collection and data analysis (Merwe, 2014). The limitations notwithstanding, the study added to the literature on the emerging topic of the workplace engagement phenomenon by integrating the lived experiences of millennial employees.

Significance of the Study

In this study I sought to identify and report how millennial employees' perspectives influenced their choice to become engaged and committed to their organization. For the study I used a phenomenological design, allowing millennials an opportunity to share their lived experiences and perspectives of employee engagement. The data analysis revealed that organizational leaders should modify their engagement strategies (see Ghadi et al., 2013) and create an optimistic workplace that will increase millennials' engagement. This study is significant for organization leaders as they consider backfilling retiring leadership talent with competent, talented millennials. There could be organizational implications concerning altering engagement strategies to foster millennials that would reduce the effect of disengaged millennials. Counterproductive millennials contribute to the inefficiency of organizational output and reduce productivity, so as their contribution becomes increasingly essential, it is important that

millennials are eager to invest in their jobs. How millennials approach engagement addressed the gap in the literature.

Significance to Practice

The significance to practice of this study was to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of millennials. Gallup Group (2016) uncovered that 55% of disengaged millennial employees are less useful in contributing to organizational productivity and may negatively influence organizational culture. This study provided organizational leaders with data derived from the perspectives of millennials to modify engagement strategies to mitigate a lack of engaged employees. Current strategies may be perceived by millennials without much value. According to the data analysis of this study, leaders who can heighten engagement strategies by coordinating with the desire and goals of millennials could induce higher productivity. The findings of the study offered insights into disengaged employees, insights into engaged employees, and insights that could improve organizational performance.

Significance to Theory

There is a correlation between organizational productivity and employee engagement in the academic field of management (Anthony-McMann, Ellinger, Astakhova, & Halbesleben, 2017). The theory used in this study suggested that millennials are motivated by their lived experiences and their expectations (Gomez, 2016). The results of this study provided useful insights into the different perspectives of millennials and a fundamental interpretation of what drives millennials' engagement. Shuck et al. (2016), who focused on the engagement phenomenon, provided the

conceptual framework I used to explore the in-depth the meaning of employee engagement through the lens of millennials' perspectives.

Significance to Social Change

A significant percentage of United States employees remain disengaged from their jobs, thereby prompting organizational challenges. The findings of this qualitative study could contribute to a positive contribution to the field of management with knowledge of engaged and motivated employees who are more likely to foster positive organizational change and improve productivity. These potential influences could affect social change by having a positive impact on social change, families, and communities through increased productivity that could lead to long-term employment rates and less downsizing and can improve the financial performance of organizations and the sustainability of competitive companies within their marketplaces and communities. A more stable workforce could enhance the longevity of jobs, strengthen organizations, societies, and thereby advance the well-being of families, communities, and individuals.

As the workplace experiences a generational shift, millennials will have a greater global economic impact. The perceptions of social change could also change. Millennials have a global impact. To the extent that they are zealous about improving their communities, workplaces, friendships, and families, they will bring about positive social change. Millennials may offer new insights into social change via social media (Gomez, 2016). Gaining an understanding of their values and desires could lead to insights on how to better develop engagement strategies through the lens of their perceptions. This new generation is emerging in the workplace environment with a new spirit, and strategic

changes to produce more effective engagement are needed to embrace the unique characteristics of this generation. The improved engagement relationships between managers and their employees could also prompt more research into the concepts and practices of such engagement.

Strategies to increase self-motivation of millennials while raising the level of job satisfaction may lead to a long-term productive workforce that can stabilize the United States employment rate. The implications for positive social change include providing organizational leaders with an understanding of millennials' perspectives of employee engagement and aid them in formulating strategies that promote a culture of engagement.

Summary and Transition

This phenomenological qualitative study identified and reported the lived experiences of millennials' perspectives of employee engagement. Understanding the social implications of millennials' perspectives of engagement could help increase productivity in the workplace. Insights into employee engagement from the perspective of millennials offer new opportunities for organizational leaders. This chapter provided the background, problem statements, purpose, research question, conceptual framework, and significance of the study.

The engagement strategies should vary in conjunction with generational changes to foster positive engagement in the workplace. The unique attributes of millennials could contribute to organizational productivity resulting from higher job satisfaction (Gomez, 2016). Shuck and Reio's (2011) theory of engagement served as the conceptual framework for this study. Shuck and Reio (2011) identified behavioral, emotional, and

cognitive engagement as the basic components of their conceptual framework.

Organizational leaders who effectively engage millennials could improve their levels of engagement and productivity. Through this study I sought to further the understanding of millennials' lived experiences. Chapter 2 will include an overview of the literature related to millennials and employee engagement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research problem in this study focused on the need to identify and report the lived experience of millennials in the workplace. According to Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2010), there are compelling reasons for additional research into millennials' perspectives in the workplace. Understanding millennials' lived experience may be critical for organizational success (Gallup Group, 2016). How they interpret the workplace differently may redefined the meaning personal and professional success (Gomez, 2016).

Although there is sufficient amount of literature on employee engagement, the main goal of this chapter is to identify the gaps to support the current study. This chapter begins with the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework of the study and concludes with a review of research on leadership, performance, workplace generations, and the millennials. The goal of conducting this qualitative study was to make recommendations towards improving and enabling personal growth and organizational growth (Cattermole, Johnson & Roberts, 2013). The purpose of this study was to identify and report on lived experiences regarding workplace engagement. The literature review begins with an introduction, which includes information about the strategy for searching the literature for peer-reviewed articles and other sources. The key topics in this literature review are millennials, employee engagement theories, engagement strategies, organizational leaders, and productivity.

Literature Search Strategy

The purpose of this literature review was to explore similar and contrasting viewpoints related to employee engagement, leadership strategies, the theory of engagement, and generations in the workplace, and to identify the literature gap about millennials' lived workplace experiences. In searching for the word *millennial* over the Internet, over a thousand sources were found. However, although the literature review revealed the barriers organizational leaders are facing when addressing employee engagement, it failed to provide supporting literature regarding millennials' perspectives of employee engagement in the workplace.

The literature review was guided by using the following business and management databases: ABI/INFORM Global, ProQuest, EBSCO, Emerald Insight, and Sage Journals (formerly Sage Premier). Additionally, I consulted professional books, websites, and professional journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, *International Journal*, *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, and other business journals. A search of the literature returned thousands of scholarly articles on the topic. To scale down the topic of employee engagement, the following keywords were used in the search: *leadership, employee performances, leadership and engagement strategies, motivators, work environment, Kahn's theory of engagement, organizational performance, millennials, and employee engagement*. Several themes and subthemes emerged from the literature review around employee engagement and organizational productivity. These themes included the impact of engagement on organizational results and the effectiveness of engagement strategies.

Conceptual Framework

Organizational leadership has recognized that workplace culture influenced the engagement framework of any organization (Bianchi, 2013). The conceptual framework for this study was based on Shuck & Reio's (2011) theory of engagement. The authors identified behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement as basic concepts of their conceptual framework regarding the purpose of work. Shuck (2011) pointed out that the theory of employee engagement has gained interest for understanding organizational engagement and employee satisfaction. I depiction of the main problem, its critical factors, all concepts, and their relationship. Kumar and Sia (2012) referred to cognitive engagement as the degree of effort shown by individuals while at work, and Shuck & Rose (2013) explained emotional engagement as the individual's readiness to participate at work. The evidence from this study, in some degree, demonstrated as detached from their work and revealed problems of motivation.

Zhang et al. (2014) noted that cognitively engaged individuals comprehend their level of engagement while at work. Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) asserted that behaviorally engaged individuals would reveal their engagement by going beyond the standard organizational performance standards. Being able to identify cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement of millennials may contribute to increasing organizational performance. The findings from this study support that the issues of employee engagement have drawn considerable attention from both practitioners and academic researchers across the globe (Sharma & Anupama, 2010). In this study I examined the phenomenon through the perspectives of millennials.

Organizations are cognizant that increasing employee engagement can lead to greater organizational success (Heaney, 2010). An engaged workplace encourages employee commitment, improves organizational productivity, and positively affects the overall performance of the company (Kumar & Swetha, 2011). Organizational leaders understand that their workplace environment must enhance engagement to maximize the profitability of the organization (Kumar & Swetha, 2011; Lee & Ok, 2015). As discussed by Sundaray (2011), leaders should emphasize employee engagement to improve organizational performance, customer satisfaction, and employee motivation.

Bhatla (2011) argued that employee engagement theory goes beyond day-to-day tasks and organization activities. It involves (a) organizational communication; (b) reward for excellent performance; and (c) leadership development, organization, and team building for developing others. Ezell (2013) pointed out several drivers that could boost the levels of engagement in organizations. The drivers are (a) clear vision and mission from management, (b) career advancement, (c) employee participation in organizational decision making, and (d) recognition of employees with excellent performance. Bhatla (2011) and Ezell (2013) both drew a parallel to the five themes revealed during the data analysis. According to Mani (2011), engagement drivers are employee empowerment, welfare, employee interpersonal relationships, and growth. According to Sirota's employee engagement model (cited in Mirvis, 2012), engaged employees tend to perform most efficiently and effectively when they contribute their best skills, abilities, and knowledge toward achieving organizational objectives and goals, and are encouraged and motivated by organization leaders.

I used Shuck & Reio's (2011) theory to relate to the approach of the study and the research question that helped to evaluate engagement that could lead to an engaged organizational climate. When organizational leaders manage irresponsibly, the number of engaged employees decreases, and disengaged employees increases (Kahn, 1990). Using Shuck & Reio (2011) enhanced my evaluation of the gap in the literature where organizational leaders can improve strategies to increase millennials' engagement, organizational productivity, and workplace environment.

Literature Review

Employee engagement involving the millennial generation is an emerging research topic in various academic fields of management (Kopperud, Martinsen, & Humborstad, 2014). The literature review provided an overview of published articles, studies, journals, and other documents relating to the research topic. The literature review contributed to analyzing millennials' engagement and the lack of effective engagement strategies causing millennials to become detached, disengaged, and demonstrate low organizational productivity.

Kahn's Theory

The theory of engagement states that given the precise circumstances and environment, employees may become adequately engaged in their roles at work (Kahn, 1990). Kahn's approach was qualitative and was an exploration of the significant role employee engagement plays in building a relationship between peers and managers (Morokane et al., 2015). Cowardin-Lee and Soylop (2011) examined numerous employee engagement models, such as those by (a) Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2012), (b)

Wellins and Concelman (2006), (c) Macey and Schneider (2008), and (d) Kahn (1990), that focused on employee circumstances within an organizational context.

According to Kahn (1990), the satisfaction of employee engagement is related to the employee's intellectual, social, and emotional presence at work. Kahn used the social exchange theory in his qualitative study exploring the three psychological conditions of personal engagement (Saks, 2006). The three psychological conditions are availability, meaningfulness, and safety. Employee engagement cannot be disregarded as the main source of an employee's interactions at work, because circumstances remain equally influenced by tasks and millennials' roles in completing them (Kahn, 1990; Morokane et al., 2015).

Ford and colleagues (2015) suggested that organizations and leaders still face challenges with employee engagement regardless of additional research findings. They cited Kahn's triad of physical, cognitive, and emotional factors that must be present whenever performing a work role. Kahn (1990) stated that, to express the true self cognitively, physically, and emotionally, individuals must believe the venue is safe and that no harm will come to them. The author indicated that employees might become more engaged when their jobs had psychological meaning and safety. Clayson (2010) concluded that organizations with less than 40% of engaged employees have a lower return of 44% lower than the average return. Robust organizational performance is dependent on an engaged workforce (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014).

Byrne and colleagues (2016) acknowledged Kahn (1990) and suggested that employees strived for a relationship and personal fulfillment in work aspects that will

increase engagement. They indicated that employee engagement might be undermined by self-doubting relational models, affecting their own experience of psychological availability and safety in engagement. Allen and colleagues (2012) concluded that engaged employees are intrinsically motivated. In other words, they work for self-gratification, whereas external standards of self-worth mostly drive workaholics. It is the findings from this study that this particular generation, the millennials, is socially conscious, optimistic, highly educated, and mostly raised under supervision (Gomez, 2016).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In 1954, psychologist Abraham Maslow established the Hierarchy of Needs, which focused on how individuals are motivated. Maslow (1954) believed individuals would move to satisfy their needs in a hierarchical in the form of a pyramid, and that individuals have other requirements beyond only needing shelter and food. In Maslow's pyramid, the physiological needs, such as shelter and food, are at the bottom of the hierarchy. Safety needs to follow them, and are followed in turn by as esteem, social, and environmental needs. According to Maslow (1990), at the top of the pyramid, self-actualization is the supreme need of all, and it draws from a sense of satisfaction and value from one's work. (See Table 1).

Table 1*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

SELF- ACTUALIZATION	ESTEEM NEEDS	BELONGINGNESS and LOVE NEEDS	SAFETY NEEDS	PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
Self-fulfillment needs	Psychological needs	Psychological needs	Basic needs	Basic needs
Achieving one's full potential, including creative activities	Feeling of accomplishment	Intimate relationships/friends	Security	Food, water, and shelter

The various sections of Maslow's hierarchy consist of the following basic needs: physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. As needs are met during one's lifetime, individuals typically move further up the pyramid (Maslow, 1943).

A Gallup study found that 55% of disengaged employees come from the millennial generation. These attitudes constituted an actual opponent to the organization environment and indicated a sense of urgency. Nubold, Muck, and Maier (2013) found that employees with low core self-efficacy levels see tasks as impossible, and employees with high core self-efficacy levels see tasks as a challenge. Tuckey, Bakker, and Dollard (2012) discussed that in conditions where engagement was high, older employees could complete the tasks effectively. The data analysis from this study provided an additional explanation that identified engagement needs in the workplace.

Bennis (1998) and Stephens (2000) both discussed the implications of McGregor's management theory X and theory Y. According to Stephens (2000), theory Y assumed that if you give individuals responsibilities and freedom, they would enjoy their tasks and become productive. Bennis (1998) stated that theory X offered a

contrasting view, which still dominates in most of today's organizations: individuals are inherently lazy and untrustworthy, and they need constant micro managing to modify these behaviors. Bennis (1998) offered another explanation of McGregor's management theory. He found Douglas McGregor's book entitled *The Human Side of Enterprise*, stated that theory X and Y are not management styles, but rather assumptions, and agreed that management has total control over its employees. He agreed with Bennis' explanation of theory X: individual needs should be monitored and motivated. This study was designed to understand the concept of what motivates millennials to be well engaged in the workplace.

There are five specific dimensions of health that determine the overall well-being of human individuals. The two most prevalent dimensions are physical and mental health. Numbers, such as weight and the body mass index, determine physical health, and are the most tangible and concrete of Maslow's five dimensions (1943). Those particular numbers determined how individuals will execute their daily activities or even if they execute them at all. In contrast, the dimension of mental and psychological health is harder to determine. Psychological health can be further broken down into four sections; feeling, being, thinking, and relaxing. How individuals feel about themselves and how they interact with the world around them are instrumental in their mental and psychological health.

At the bottom of Maslow's pyramid can be found survival or physiological needs. Humans cannot function and would ultimately physically fail without their basic needs being met. These needs are food, water, shelter, and sleep. Maslow argued that humans

have a peculiar characteristic. When controlled by a need, humans' perspectives of their future change, and change the course of actions to reach goals (Maslow, 1943); in this theory, Maslow indicated that humans could not function without necessities and reduce to basic animal instincts. Once their needs are fulfilled, humans move to the next level of the hierarchy: safety.

Protection and safety needs include being financially and physically secure. In the absence of these safeties, perhaps due to childhood abuse or natural disaster, people may experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other trauma related mental issues (Kunreuther, 2007). Humans' safety requires fairness and justice, which can be affected by age, race, and religion. Individuals are not always in immediate danger, but this does not mean their instinct for self and familial protection lessens. When the feeling of immediate danger is no longer prevalent, and individuals feel comfortable in their environment, the focus on Maslow's safety needs diminishes, and they can move to the next level of the pyramid, which is love.

To fulfill this particular step in Maslow's theory, individuals need to feel belonging, affection, and acceptance. If love and social needs are met, good social health in human individuals becomes a necessity. Social health is essential in early childhood because poor social health may lead to drug abuse, parental discord, and psychological issues (Kahn, 1990). This idea of intangible social support is essential, just as having someone as a confidant is vital for accomplishing this stage in Maslow's theory (Pedersen, 1991).

Self-esteem is another deep level of Maslow's hierarchy. This particular need is divided into the need for accomplishment and freedom and self-respect, reputation, and appreciation. When people's safety needs are met, they begin to seek satisfaction in other areas, they feel comfortable, such as on the job. Seeking further satisfaction comes with responsibility and learned optimism. When the expected success does not happen immediately, mentally stable individuals will continue to strive for success and acknowledgment of their accomplishments (Pedersen, 1991). With this step, one of the five dimensions of health becomes easy to distinguish: emotional health. Rather than reacting irrationally to unpleasant situations, emotionally stable people will find different outlets and channel their emotions into greater productivity. The last level of Maslow's hierarchy is self-actualization. The aim here is for individuals to be spiritually successful, creative, and on their way to fulfilling their fullest potential. Different people have different aspirations in life, meaning this step can vary for everyone.

Maslow explained that the order in which the hierarchy is described appears to be rigid and concrete, based on the average human experience. The hierarchy can be fulfilled in a different order than initially presented, based on individual situations, including religion, familial ties, generation cohort, and childhood experiences. Maslow's hierarchy has been much studied and applied to a various of situations, including the theory of Humanism and Engagement (Shuck & Reio, 2011). The safety level of Maslow's hierarchy is applied to the medical field and the well-being of individuals. Because one's perceptions of health can change over time, patients may or may not take care of their physical bodies because their self-evaluations no longer focused on physical

appearance. How people and companies use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs may determine how productive, specific tasks would be in fulfill both company and personal goals (Kahn, 1990).

The flexibility of Maslow's theory allows the concept to be applied to engagement strategies. Maslow's theory could motivate millennials using the theory of engagement, creating a workplace where leaders feel comfortable pushing their employees to respond positively. The bottom two sections of Maslow's theory apply to engaged and disengaged employees in the workplace; however, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization must be met in order for employees to have an engaged workplace. Efficient leaders should have the willingness to push their employees up the Maslow's hierarchy, creating self-efficient employees who can maintain their higher positions. Millennials often have views on engagement that differ from those of previous generations (Deal et al., 2010) and the pursuit of career desires (Smith, 2005). Given these new expectations, leaders and organizations must adapt. To retain millennial engagement, leaders must understand this generation's perspectives toward engagement.

Leadership

According to Cerne, Jaklic, and Skerlavaj (2013), leadership strategies are valuable for building a comprehensive workplace to foster employee creativity and team innovation. The authors posited that team leaders or first-level managers have a direct influence on establishing the culture of the workplace. Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra (2014) suggested that such active communication as face-to-face interaction, where managers and the employees are conjoined, can encourage creativity. Operational

leadership strategies are fundamental to organizational sustainability (Aziz, Silong, Karim & Hassan, 2012).

Kopperud et al. (2014) stressed that engagement has a practical work-related effect and a close relationship to transformational leadership. By examining these influences and exploring the number of time leaders spend on the effects of employee engagement, researchers can explore how leadership can change and shape employee engagement through creative and innovative techniques (Aziz et al., 2012). Organizations and leaders who creatively communicate may influence engagement through an innovative strategy to foster employees' involvement (Kopperud et al., 2014).

Smith (2014) argued in favor of investing in employees and building a fully integrated strategy that leverages rewards, recognition, and incentive programs to improve engagement. In Smith's findings, 49% of workers are at least somewhat likely to look for a new job, and 51% were extremely likely to leave their current role. Also, 50% of workers indicated that employee benefits are highly influential in their decisions to stay or leave (Smith, 2014). Relatedly, companies must increase engagement and retention, reward higher performance, and promote overall job satisfaction (Smith, 2014). Doing so can help maximize productivity, engage employees, and regain or keep the commitment. Leaders with recognition and incentive programs have proven to be extremely useful, improving engagement by 22% and team performance by 44% (Smith, 2014). According to Smith, leaders may have reduced their abilities to obtain their employees' best potential and may lack relevant management knowledge for maintaining engagement with millennials. There seems to be significant value in these employees

unleashed potential and increasing their engagement, which could help increase organizational value (Smith, 2014).

Engaged employees deliver long-term usefulness, but they will not grasp their maximum potential without organizational leaders (Sparrow, 2013). In the book *Images of Organization*, Gareth Morgan (2006) argued that management had paid considerable attention to shaping the design of work to increase employee engagement while also improving the caliber of work delivery and reducing employee absenteeism and turnovers. According to Sparrow (2013), leaders should share their knowledge and experiences to encourage future discussions and organizational collaboration (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2013). According to Edwards and Turnbull (2013), there has been a shift toward leadership courses as a requirement for obtaining a four year academic degree. Kohtamaki (2012) suggested that engagement strategies are crucial for integrating and transforming all levels of leadership.

It is becoming increasingly common for organizations to attract, engage, develop, and build loyalty among their employees to retain a global competitive edge in the marketplace (Tangeja, Sewell, & Odom, 2015). Engaged employees work harder to improve overall performance and uphold the organization's values. Tangeja and colleagues (2015) stated that leaders of organizations should include engagement strategies to grow employee engagement in their organizations. The driving focus of engagement must promote employee involvement and employee rewards (Gallup, 2016). Therefore, a positive working relationship between millennials and leaders may have the potential of improving employee engagement.

Performance

The core value of an organization is its employees. According to Bandura and Lyons (2014), approximately \$287 to \$370 billion is lost due to disengaged employees. Ahmad, Farrukh, and Nazsir (2014) argued that observing internal motivation and external motivation, such as supervisory support and organizational funding for career development, will boost employee productivity. Their inquiry delineates the elements that encourage positive employee performance. In their theoretical model, prior studies have illustrated the positive impact of these factors on employee performance. This study explored one key research question on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Gibbs and Ashill (2013) concluded that an organization's reward structure could significant impact employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Indeed, while investing in leadership training, organizational leaders should expect improvement in productivity (Choy & Lidstone, 2013).

The perception described by Kotlyar and Karakowsky (2014) explored organizational satisfaction and the elements required to generate a leadership pipeline for the future. According to them, the first goal of leadership is to recognize the aspects determining organizational satisfaction, and determine how organizations perceive and interpret the quality of performance by exploring job resource adequacy, organizational communication adequacy, coworker relationships, time spent preparing performance evaluations, and actual preparation. Park and Kwon (2013) defined shared leadership as a framework for team effectiveness. Organizations that assigned leadership roles to employees will likely improve and heighten both team effectiveness and performance.

Pasha's study (2014) indicated that the concept of increasing employee productivity is vital, as is the organizational framework (Kopperud et al., 2014).

Employee engagement aimed to present individuals with an opportunity to utilize people skills and technical skills (Sim, 2013). By allowing leaders to start concentrating on driving through processes designed to transform the entire business unit. Gallup's (2016) research found that traditional performance strategies underlying causes have difficulty inspiring, equipping, and improving millennials' performance. High performing employees have demonstrated that selective performance development efforts compel managers' unwavering commitment to a useful approach (Gallup, 2013). According to the Gallup Group (2016), they revealed that millennials believe their lived experiences are a built-in function of life, and they are looking for a coach, not a manager. Sims (2013) agreed that the most critical value for meeting business needs is allowing all employees to reach their full potential. Millennials' perspectives could create an environment where they are valuable to the success of their organizations.

Engagement

According to Reissner and Pagan (2013), employee engagement remains a significant theory to increase organizational profitability and effectiveness. Therefore, employee engagement has become crucial for leaders trying to increase productivity, especially when employees are not engaged; and it continues to be one of the most commonly researched topics in management for boosting engagement and productivity (Gallup, 2013). Engagement in the workplace encourages employees to confirm their dedication and contribution to their organization's objectives, goals, and values. Engaged

organizations have adequate and reliable values with distinct evidence of trust and fairness based on shared respect (Gallup Group, 2016).

Social programs are required to meet employees' needs through a variety of engagement strategies (Nasomboon, 2014). If employees are comfortable with their peers in a working setting, they can construct a meaningful and unique organization (Sivapragasm & Ray, 2014). Gradually immersing millennial employees into the working social culture of an organization may ensure loyalty and improve performance. For millennials, social media are essential, so implementing everyday social life within the workplace can generate more interest and more excellent care (Deal et al., 2010).

When people are incentivized and persuaded, they should be motivated in the direction toward engagement. When social needs are met, leaders may see their employees fulfill their self-actualization needs. Fulltime employees spend on an average eight hours at work, and the pressures of work can affect their self-esteem (Maslow, 1943). Any feeling of inadequacy could be the result of an aggressive work environment. Carvalho and Chambel (2014) concluded that work-to-family endeavors and employee wellbeing may positively increase engagement and work performance by presenting an interest in their wellbeing. If reassurance is not offered, employees with low self-esteem may work more slowly, make more mistakes, and struggle to put their best foot forward (Deal et al., 2010). According to Rees and colleagues (2013) disengaged employees may lead to a decrease in customer satisfaction and employee turnovers.

Millennials believe in having a culture of recognition (Gomez, 2016). Social media fires the culture of recognition and can transfer to the workplace (Matsumoto et al.,

2003). Recognizing employees for good working performance is just as important as being recognized for good personal deeds outside of work. Therefore, leaders should create employee recognition programs that allow everyone to be seen, respected, and useful. Self-actualization depends on the tools and training offered and delivered by organizational leaders (Bennis, 1998).

According to Hewison and colleagues (2013), employee engagement is perceived as a commitment to other employees, organizations, and management. Nasomboon (2014) defined employee engagement as the relationship between and among management, governance, and employees. Engagement strategies should vary in conjunction with the changes occurring in the workplace culture to boost the participation levels. According to Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2014), leaders must equip, coach, and prepare their employees; Lacy et al. (2012) agreed that leaders should encourage employees to undertake engagement. Consequently, when leaders are inspired to improve employee engagement, this relationship promotes job satisfaction (Sivapragasm & Ray, 2014).

A portion of today's organizational challenges focus on productivity; a significant percentage of disengaged employees currently pose a menace to the relationship between management and organization (Gallup, 2016). According to the Department of Labor (2015), approximately 60% of today's workforce comes from the millennial generation. Sources indicated that only 1 out of 5 of these millennials is exceptionally engaged. Thus, 4 out of 10 employees are still not engaged, and 2 out of every 10 are actively disengaged (Brown, Hewitt, & Reilly, 2013). Brown et al. (2013) argued that a total reward approach

could positively influence engagement and corporate performance. Ahmad et al. (2014) observed that internal and external motivation, such as organizational and supervisory support, may boost employee productivity. Indeed, 70% of the United States workforce is disengaged (Gallup, 2013).

Brown and colleagues (2013) stated that employee engagement is a leading indicator of company growth, and each aspect of any reward requires maximizing the engagement levels of a workforce. Nevertheless, without a clear understanding, employees will continue to have inconsistent interpretations of engagement. The Gallup Group (2013) described engagement as shown by those employees who are 100% dedicated to completing quality work.

Vohs and colleagues (2013) agreed that self-affirmation may encourage employees who are disengaged. They believe that self-affirmation could affect both engaged performance and motivation of individuals. However, self-affirmation may not always increase performance and motivation. Individuals who have engaged in self-affirmation are inclined to view life from a different perspective. Vohs and colleagues (2013) agreed that individuals will accept information by changing the probabilities of success, and the perceptions of one's abilities may lead to decreased motivation.

Barrack and colleagues' (2015) comprehensive theory of collective organizational engagement is a management model that utilizes an integrative theory of engagement strategies and shows how employees can mutually share their observations of organizational engagement. Organizational engagement can become extremely challenging for management since it may not be clear how participation oriented

managerial practices impact engagement (Benn, Teo, & Martin, 2015). Those employees who are adjusted regarding their organizational objectives were found to be more engaged.

The argument made by Brown and colleagues (2013) noted that a total rewards approach has a significant possibility of positively influencing engagement and performance. In their article, the authors outlined evidence of employee engagement levels that are linked to other research studies on improving performance. 4 out of 10 employees not engaged, and only 2 out of every 10 were actively disengaged. Therefore, Brown and colleagues (2013) indicated significant potential for improved understanding of the relationship between engagement and productivity. Carasco-Saul and colleagues (2014) established that there are still multiple relationships between employee engagement and engagement strategies that have not yet been widely investigated.

The goal of conducting this qualitative study was to make recommendations towards improving and enabling personal growth and organizational growth and the company's ultimate growth (see Cattermole et al., 2013). This study is drawn on the principle of reporting and identifying lived experiences to increase engagement. If one entity and its employees are dysfunctional, then the other entities will suffer similar consequences (Maslow, 1943). Sambrook, Jones, and Doloriert (2013) suggested that an innovative approach to engagement strategies could repair both insufficient and dysfunctional organizations. They cited Kahn as a source of knowledge regarding organizational characteristics and why organizations fail to understand how, when, and why individuals may be disengaged.

DeKay (2013) presented another historical viewpoint by citing a study conducted by Elton Mayo (1968) to address the question and understand employee motivation's precise cause. The questionnaire used by the Gallup Group (2013) was restructured into multiple categories addressing teamwork, individual contribution, basic needs, and growth. As a result, individual's needs and values are shown to be different when it comes to engaging and motivating employees. Dekay (2013) noted that the results are unproven, and the Gallup Group (2013) agreed that additional research is needed.

Guest (2014) acknowledged Kahn's theory of engagement but suggested a new approach to employee motivation based on three dimensions; physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Guinn's (2013) sought to identify these influences. For instance, do employees feel good about the work they have completed, and do employees individually feel they have accomplished something, helped someone, learned something, and contributed to the organization? According to Guinn (2013), organizations must hire appropriate employees who may display engagement behavioral competencies during the interview and not individuals with predisposed ideas about engagement.

Inauen (2013) addressed these influences by arguing that religion may provide the following interests and is worth exploring. The interests are:

1. How the padres and brothers of the catholic church are motivated in general.
2. How self-determined motivation can be explained in a strictly regulated environment.
3. How religious orders emphasize agreement with constitutions and rules.

Slack, Corlett, and Morris (2015) concluded that corporate social responsibility's motives do relate to employee engagement. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) suggested that organizational leaders may benefit from constructing an environment where employees yield their best performance.

Kahn's theory of engagement, there are further opportunities for developing strategies that could offer employees and leaders a cohesive relationship (Keeble-Ramsay & Armitage, 2014). He believed that personal engagement rests with the purpose of work, and engagement theories and strategies provide only limited evidence of work intensification and disengagement. Shuck and Reio (2014) concluded that a full understanding of employee engagement in the workplace could offer a path to better productivity. For employee engagement strategies to be effective, the employees must engage in tasks and activities presented by the managers (Reissner & Pagan, 2013). Leaders' ability to build successful organizations creating an engaging environment in which millennials could achieve performance at a maximum level.

Motivation

The primary and psychological definition of motivation involves the reason why someone acts in a particular way (Maslow, 1943). To understand how motivation affects everyday life, one must understand how motivation is categorized, how motivation functions, and why motivation is critical to human interaction (Bennis, 1998). Motivation can be separated into two categories: internal and external. Internal or intrinsic motivation means participating in certain activities because they are personally rewarding (Mitchell, 1982).

Having the satisfaction of completing a task, feeling pride, and personal growth have all been related to intrinsic motivation. In contrast to internal motivation, there is external or extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation means participating in behavior or performing a specific task to earn a tangible award or avoid punishment (Mitchell, 1982). Unlike intrinsic behavior, individuals may engage in this type of motivation, even if they do not find it satisfying. Regarding employment, the types of motivation and the goals being pursued are defined and executed differently by each employee.

As previously mentioned by Bennis (1998), motivation can have various functions depending on the circumstances. For example, the motivation behind employees can be intrinsic and extrinsic. Employees are working to sustain themselves with the tangible reward of money and employment; if one's job satisfies one's personal needs; those rewards are intangible. If highly motivated, whether the motivation is tangible or intangible, all other human interactions will be more meaningful and productive (Gordon, 2004). With such positive motivation, individuals are incentivized to perform better and thus benefit the company.

Motivation can function as a factor in determining the success of cross-cultural interactions (Bennis, 1998). For international employees or students, the motivation to leave their home country and take on a whole new culture causes action. Without the initial motivation, their impulse and desire would not exist, and their desired opportunities would be missed. Once in a new situation, these individuals must adjust to a new culture, and this effort can come from either motivation or necessity (Gordon, 2004).

With the power of motivation, international employees and students can overcome difficult situations and interact with the natives in the new country (Gordon, 2004).

People with high motivation and purpose are open to experiencing a new environment and have few or no issues adjusting (Bennis, 1998; Gordon, 2004). Udechukwu (2009) argued that human interactions and motivation coincide at the most basic level of Maslow's hierarchy. How people communicate, and whether they are willing to communicate, are based on the initial motivation, either because of internal or external motivation. Cross-cultural interactions depend on the motivation to adapt and obtain trust. The interactions of individuals have meaningful engagement, and they will increase self-development, self-efficiency, and self-actualization. It is important to note that positive motivation may have a significant impact on employee engagement.

The Workplace Generations

Each generation has a lasting effect on the workplace environment to remodel the workplace culture, skills, competencies, values, and outlook (Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015). The authors identified World War II (WWII) generation as the last generation to enjoy job stability and a promised pension. According to Baruch and Bozionelos (2011), the WWII generation received job security and career progress for their long-term dedication. This dedication was to build a working legacy by earning long-term employment (Lyons et al., 2015).

According to DeCaluwe and colleagues (2014), the baby-boomer generation has lived experiences were different from their parents' experiences in the workplace. In 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau identified that the baby-boomer generation is the nation's

older population born between 1946 and 1964, and they represent approximately 15.2 % of today's growing population. They often advanced to management early in their careers, allowing them to move upward to other organizations (Lyons et al., 2015). The authors recognized that the baby-boomers extended their skills to stay competitive, had considerable knowledge of business needs, and had more control of their career advancements than their parents.

According to Woo (2018), Generation X is the forgotten generation, born between 1965 through 1979. Who saw the beginning of ATMS, more extensive cell phones, and the Berlin Wall fall. When Generation X arrived in the workplace, they were outnumbered by the baby-boomer generation (Arellano, 2015). As a result, Generation X adapted and focused more on accomplishments that could be transferable rather than promoting their careers (Lyons et al., 2015). Benson and Brown (2011) noted that the baby-boomer generation brought years of valuable skills, working experience, and industry knowledge, and Kaur and Verma (2011) revealed this generation to be invaluable due to its commitment and loyalty to management. As Generation X moves up in organizational management, baby-boomers are retiring; and the millennial generation will challenge the status quo as it takes on more responsibilities (Singh & Gupta, 2015).

The Millennial Generation

The millennials are sometimes called the narcissistic generation (Gomez, 2016), and they are between the ages of 18-34, born between 1981-2000. Today, they are the newest, youngest, and largest generation present in the workforce. They are tech-savvy, indeed the first generation to be versed in digital technology (Alexander & Sysko, 2013).

They grew up with smartphones, lived with social media and reality TV shows, and rapidly changed the fashion culture and society's values (Bolton and colleagues, 2013). According to the authors, the millennials are significantly different from the baby-boomers and Generation X.

Millennials are not necessarily motivated by the same intrinsic rewards as their parents, and Krahn and Galambos (2014) contended that intrinsic rewards are associated less with a particular generation, but more so with age. Millennials have more of a sense of achieving rather than working until retirement (Gomez, 2016). Thus, there is a feeling of entitlement to be selfish and less motivated (Alexander & Sysko, 2013). Their needs are a crucial influence on their fulfilling and satisfying their professional careers and lives. According to Campione (2014); and yet, they need clear directions to understand the appropriate expectations (Langan, 2012). The challenge is developing the best engagement strategies to keep them well engaged. According to Cattermole, Johnson, and Roberts (2013), millennials intend to acquire and explore new innovative ways to work and improve ways to enable personal growth, organizational development, and society.

In the workplace, millennials enjoy socializing in a comfortable environment and partake in conversations using social media networking sites (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). The millennial expectations are high regarding social and personal connections at work, and they seek to establish a better balance between personal and work goals (Smola & Sutton, 2002). According to the study conducted in 2013 by The Hartford, companies can no longer wait to tap into this growing workforce talent (Pollak, 2014). The study found that 78% of millennials consider themselves leaders already, and 22% aspire to be

leaders. According to Kong, Wang, and Fu (2015), millennials are self-directed concerning their careers, and they are impatient when it comes to career advancement within the company.

Young and Hinesly (2012) stated that critical indicators in early childhood provide millennials insights. Langan's (2012) theoretical approach considered millennials to be the most entitled, if not the most privileged, generation. Campione (2014) and Langan (2012) agreed that it is essential for millennials to feel empowered, allowing them to be involved in the process. Millennials are now defining a good leader as someone who mentors and does not dictate (Pollak, 2014). They are open to coaching, training, mentoring, and are more accepting of diversity. Walden, Jung, and Westerman (2019) revealed that similar studies had shown that receiving regular feedback regarding performance is essential and fostered collaboration and employee engagement. The authors also indicated that millennials have high expectations for training, development, and career advancement.

Millennials do not use local area phone services; they have multiple social profiles; send and receive text messages more than 30 times a day; have their website-blogs; and consider their parents their best friends forever, whom some call by their first names (Gomez, 2016).

Gomez quoted the following:

Maslow's work makes us question whether we understand when we have come to the crossroad. A crossroad, wherein our effort to just keep pace, we will need to be committed, educated, and highly motivated people at all levels; crossroad

where compliance or authoritarian means of leadership no longer work; crossroad where the needs of society and the needs of a business are becoming so intertwined if one entity is dysfunctional the other will suffer the consequences.

While this is a meaningful study of the millennial generation, there is little known about lived experiences that will develop employee engagement. This study aimed to learn more about the lived experiences of millennials and their impact on organizational engagement.

Gap in Literature

This qualitative phenomenological study addressed the gap in the existing literature of employee engagement. There is an abundance of knowledge on how employee engagement impacts organizations, but there is less known about the direct impact of millennials' lived experiences on improving engagement. The literature confirmed that millennials have an extremely different perspective from their predecessors on what they expect from their organizational leaders to remain engaged. The difference between the generational is that millennials have a more optimistic view of the world (Gomez, 2016). The study addressed this gap from the participants' perspectives regarding employee engagement. This difference has a distinctive impact on employee engagement (Labor, 2015). The specific problem addressed in this qualitative study was that leaders lack the ability to develop strategies for improving millennial employee engagement. I focused on identifying and reporting the lived experience of millennials. This study concluded that employee differences in engagement do exist across generations. The results of the study are confirmations that engagement strategies were viewed mainly as shared processes.

In this study, I presented an illustration of the responsibilities of millennials' interpretations for employee engagement and organizational productivity. In particular, this study examined whether leaders can influence millennials participation in organizational engagement through specific engagement strategies. Although such leadership strategies potentially enhance performance and encourage employees, fewer have observed how they affect millennials' attitudes toward engagement. Ozcelik (2015) noted that different sources of literature from generational and organizational studies illustrated millennials' personalities and presented the potential of organizational challenges by this generation.

Informed by the participants' responses, this study builds and identify how millennials could positively influence the relation of employee engagement, social issues, and future research. The first means of influence is that the participants emphasized the significance of building engagement strategies that will empower them to have an impact and purpose to influence their workplace engagement. Millennials are more analytical than the generations before, and they are often the ideal target and most significant employees for organizations' engagement (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016). Secondly, the participants acknowledged how engagement shapes the workplace culture, creating a more significant cause of moral problems, and the lack of participation. Finally, the participants also indicated that millennials aspire more to than a job; they desire to have some excitement, passion, and motivation toward work; and described their inability to be creative and share innovative ideas with their peers and organizational leaders. Collectively the findings contribute to the research body of knowledge and could guide processes to improve

workplace engagement. This research was needed to understand the impact of engagement strategies that could guide the criteria to engaged millennials to be more productive.

Engagement research trends revealed a new interest in the need to identify engagement theories to engaged millennials (Gallup Group, 2016). Saks (2006) acknowledged that employee engagement is somewhat still a new research topic by many companies. According to Cortez and Costa (2015) by the end of 2020, approximately 40 million millennials will have joined the workforce challenging engagement strategies. Related studies found that organizational leaders evaluate engagement strategies with their strengths and weaknesses and becoming greater engagement accountability (Blattner & Walter, 2015). Because of these two factors, organizational leaders will need to improve and develop engagement strategies to meet the demands of millennials (Twenge, 2010). This study acknowledged the significance of engagement strategies, addressed disengaged millennials, and the potential missed opportunities for employee collaboration. These findings addressed the gap in engagement strategies and organizational processes to increase productivity.

This study present recommendations for fostering millennials' creativity and encouraging collaboration. More specifically, the millennials' perspectives provided a sense of challenges of being fully engaged and motivated in one's work. The previous literature did not include the lived experiences of millennials. Leadership is a significant factor in building and establishing workplace engagement. The concept of having satisfied employees versus engaged employees is not sufficient for leaders to maintain high levels of organization productivity. According to Peterson and colleagues (2012), to have a

successful organization, both managers and employees must become fully engaged. Leaders who failed to build employee engagement underestimated the effort needed to make it work (Tuckey et al., 2012). According to Lee and Ok (2015), employee engagement is a new human strategy that companies often manage with uncertainty in an unstable environment. Nevertheless, the millennial community still needs to discover their interpretations of employee engagement and how they want to be respected in the workplace (Gallup Group, 2016).

The literature and early studies are defined and discussed herein. Chapter 2, however, they do not clearly show how existing leaders can successfully transform and offer significant improvement of millennial engagement. The findings from this study could broaden leadership knowledge that could increase workplace engagement of millennials. Data analysis confirmed that millennials perceived engagement strategies as a means to process, empower leaders, and not to collaborate with social exchanges among employees. Understanding the social implications of millennials' engagement begins with the understanding of generational behaviors and engagement related to specific leadership behaviors (Xu & Thomas, 2011). Therefore, millennials are changing the narrative of workplace culture, workplace engagement, and understanding their generation is essential for organizational success. According to Zagenczyk and colleagues (2011) millennials are eager to go beyond their job descriptions to enhance their skills.

The study conducted by the Gallup Group (2013) found that employee engagement is more than just being satisfied with one's jobs. The Gallup (2013) research did not provide adequate qualitative data to understand the influences of millennials' lived experiences.

Scheffer and colleagues (2015) noted that the recent phenomenon of millennial engagement required more than one approach to dual leadership thinking and suggested additional research on engagement. When certain obstacles are not removed, and little progress is made, fewer employees become engaged (Tourish, 2012). Too often, leaders fail to recognize the positive and negative aspects of engagement. Perhaps even more importantly, creative and innovative engagement strategies could enhance organizational engagement. Some literature does indicate that certain individuals circumvent job responsibility and need to be micro managed, perhaps causing a common misperception of power conflicts and personality clashes (Tuckey et al., 2012). This manner of engagement reinforcement is outdated, and it does not offer a clear sense of direction to millennials. Engagement strategies start with involved leaders who are aware of millennials' workplace needs, want, and values (Shuck & Herd, 2012).

According to a study conducted by Ford and colleagues (2015), disengagement comes from a lack of knowledge sharing. They agreed that existing approaches are failing because the existing approaches are not addressing all the reasons that employees are disengaged. According to the Gallup research (2013 & 2016), millennials are looking for a job with a purpose, not just a paycheck. This leads to disengagement when 55% of millennials are still disengaged; the key to engagement is to determine what they need to hear and receive from their leaders (Gallup Group, 2013). Shuck and Herd (2011) and Tuckey et al. (2012) found that a need exists for additional research and that a gap remains in understanding which strategies enhance employee engagement levels.

DeKay (2013) argued this point of view, even though over thirty years later, the problem remains unsolved, as companies try to re-position themselves for greater success in the marketplace. According to the Harvard Business School's (1998) discussion on change, historically, there are eight steps for transforming an organization, which may improve workplace engagement. They are (a) establishing a sense of urgency, (b) forming a powerful guiding coalition, (c) creating a vision, (d) communicating vision, (e) empowering others to act on the vision, (f) planning for and creating short-term wins, (g) consolidating improvements and producing still more change, and (h) institutionalizing new approaches.

Since companies need to establish a greater sense of urgency, organizations are now at risk of losing knowledgeable employees, a decline in productivity, and lack engaged and talented employees to fill the workforce. The goal is to prepare the incoming millennials. According to the Gallup Group (2016), 90% of millennials agreed that baby-boomers had extensive knowledge and experience. However, disengaged employees will continue to have a devastating impact on organizational behavior, resulting in a dramatic increase in employee turnover, loss of productivity, and additional costs for recruiting and training. Preventing disengaged employees, employee turnovers, and unwarranted control of organizational behaviors will help to sustain organizations and make companies more profitable overall (Lee & Ok, 2015).

The millennial generation could offer an additional resource, empowering leaders to gain new insights and develop transferable engagement strategies throughout the company. By exploring the millennials' lived experiences, stakeholders, companies,

organizations, human resource professionals, and leaders could begin to establish and implement recommendations to foster a favorable environment that ultimately increases the overall level of engagement (Shuck & Herd, 2012).

Collectively, the study's findings contribute to and extend the literature and the body of knowledge to improve workplace engagement. This research acknowledged the importance of building engagement strategies that will empower millennials to have an impact and purpose to influence their levels of engagement, ability to be creative, share innovative ideas, and desire for excitement, passion, and motivation toward work activities. No previous studies covered these findings, yet many studies covered more than one aspect of millennials, employee engagement, and organizational productivity. It is significant to take these findings collectively when considering the development of engagement strategies.

Summary and Conclusions

In this literature review, influential articles were noted. The articles' choice was discussed in sections as follows: Kahn's Leadership Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Leadership, Employee Performance, Employee Engagement, and the Millennial Generation. The critical interest in employee engagement continues to be pursued. Although the literature presented an enormous amount of information related to the research topic of employee engagement, the findings of this study provided a new perspective on employee engagement, and the correlation between millennials and organizational productivity. The literature review extends the research to design an engagement model to improve leadership strategies in organizations. Each article

delivered different explanations on the research topic and explored strategies to understand employee engagement contributions.

Kahn's (1990) concept of engaged millennials' social aspect endorses the value of management's ability to engage their employees. In this chapter, employee engagement is noted as the learning dynamic for organizational effectiveness. Giorgi (2009) stated that research characteristics serve to identify, explore, and examine unanswered questions or phenomenon. Organizational leaders evaluate engagement strategies with their strengths and weaknesses and becoming greater engagement accountability (Blattner & Walter, 2015). When 30% of the workforce is actively engaged, the literature supports the need to conduct new studies. The chance of improving performance is significantly reduced and affects organizational performance and productivity.

This research topic continues to receive extensive research in management. For better understanding, managers must incorporate engagement objectives into their millennial day-to-day tasks. This study's findings could additionally research and build further knowledge on understanding millennials' perspectives as a means of workplace engagement. Therefore, the organizational focus should be set to further and foster employee engagement to increase productivity, retain talent, and sustain progress. Maslow's work anticipated the culture of the digital age. Although Kahn's theory of employee participation and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs may or may not be entirely relevant to the millennial generation, this research will identify specific new factors that can determine the degree of interest and needs and the relationship commitment of millennials.

The goal is to provide practical to organizational leaders and gain new insights from millennials' lived experience fostering an engaged workplace that can find attractive and meaningful. Constructing strategies to engage millennials compels a different approach to employee engagement. Therefore, understanding millennials' lived experiences proves to be especially relevant and supports adjusting current organizational engagement strategies. Chapter 3 will be describing the researcher's role, a discussion on issues of trustworthiness, a description of the participants, the research methodology chosen, a description of data collection, analysis of the data, and the preferred tool.

Chapter 3: Research Method

For this study I adopted a qualitative phenomenological study method. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to identify and report how the lived experiences of millennial perspectives of workplace engagement influence their performance at work in the United States. In this chapter I discussed the scope, the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the participants, the research method, and the research design. In addition, I reviewed the population and sampling, reliability and validity, research instrument and technique, and data analysis. In this chapter I also described the criteria for the selection of participants. The findings may generate new knowledge about the continually emerging topic of employee engagement, in this study from the perspectives of millennials. This chapter concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The conceptual framework that I chose for this study was Shuck & Reio's theory of engagement (2011) about employee engagement. The focus for this study was the perceptions of millennials on their lived experience of employee engagement. The stated research question, as presented in Chapter 1, was:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

I used a qualitative methodology to explore the central phenomenon of millennial employee engagement. The qualitative approach is one of the most common research methods. A phenomenology design describes lived experience, grounded theory

discovers theory, case study explores processes, ethnography seeks to interpret, and narrative reports an account (Maxwell, 2013).

According to Saldana et al. (2014) there are more than 20 different qualitative research designs. A qualitative methodology often involves a semi structured interview setting as its main instrument of data acquisition to explore the research question. A qualitative study must have a sufficient number of participants to allow for a meaningful study (Boddy, 2016). The qualitative data are thus exposed to many different types of analytic thinking.

The phenomenological design revealed the detailed work-related influences associated with engaged millennial employees. This study incorporated the influences significant to the research problems that is necessary to understand the internal and external validity (Kozleski, 2017). The rationale for selecting this design was to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of motivation on millennial engagement. Preliminary data were required on organizations' behaviors to evaluate the full effectiveness of the levels of engagement. The results of this study offered new insights into the millennials' perspectives on workplace engagement, which could help leaders foster more engaged employees who are focused on improving organizational performance.

Role of the Researcher

In performing this qualitative phenomenological study, I served as the research instrument for data collection and analysis. My obligation was to report accurate and reliable findings about the perspectives of millennials. Campbell (2014) stated that qualitative research was appropriate for exploring new subjects; Shuck et al. (2014)

allowed the researcher could use it to explore the experiences of unique participants. To fulfill this role with positive research integrity, I applied qualitative standards of dependability, conformability, credibility, and transferability to the process while collecting, analyzing, and presenting the findings. As the researcher, I interviewed the participants using open-ended questions during the semi structured interviews. My responsibilities were to listen carefully and to achieve a richness of data from an in-depth semi structured interviews. As stated, the participants came from a diverse group of 25 fulltime millennial employees, thereby providing equal and viable representation of the general population. I described relevant aspects of self, including background and values, assumptions, expectations, and lived experiences that may identify research bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2015).

Due to various geographic locations, I used certain social media platforms were used to acquire millennial participants. These social media platforms allowed me to navigate geographically through prospective participants who answered the recruitment letter. Participants who replied to the recruitment letter and met the study criteria were selected as qualified participants. The interview setting was conducted in a semi structured, audio recorded manner; each participant was asked to provide a four-digit code unique to them for transcribing the data. I had an ethical obligation to protect the anonymity of all participants, as well as an ethical obligation to protect their confidentiality. According to Rowley (2012), the researcher should refrain from using data that may jeopardize the identification of participants. The intent of the data

collection was to understand how the perspectives of millennials may help to increase the levels of engagement. I used member-checking techniques to mitigate researcher bias.

I used a journal and field notes while recording the data gathered from the millennials' responses. The open-ended nature of a proper semi structured interview allowed for an in-depth evaluation of each millennial's thought process and understanding of engagement. As a manager who has hired, trained, and managed millennials, I carefully attended to how the semi structured interviews were conducted, applying member-checking techniques to mitigate researcher bias.

I monitored all personal views, backgrounds, and lived experiences were monitored to avoid research bias or act as any potential influence on the research output. In my final responsibilities as a researcher, I ensured that I had met all ethical considerations set by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I completed a thorough exploration of the study topic to make a meaningful contribution to the literature, particularly with regard to the literature on management with a focus on leading organizational change.

Instruments

The predominant research instrument used in a qualitative and phenomenological study is the researcher (Kaufers & Chemero, 2015). With the initial interviews I used the millennial protocol (Appendix). For the interview portion of this research, I was the primary instrument to collect and analyze the research data. The open-ended nature of the questionnaire was intended to collect data about millennials' perspectives regarding employee engagement. Semi structured interviews require a set schedule and guide to

insure consistency among participants and maximum use of the limited time (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Using the millennial protocol, I asked five specific interview questions to prompt the participants to deliver both structured and interpretive responses. The selected interview questions (IQ) were as follows:

IQ1: What is your lived experience of employee engagement?

IQ2: What is your experience of how disengaged employees affect organizational performance?

IQ3: What is your perspective based upon your experience of how your management team implements strategies to improve performance?

IQ4: What is your experience of the key job-related influences that affected your decision to be engaged or disengaged in your current position?

IQ5: Please share any additional assumptions based upon your experience of why you and your peers may become disengaged in the workplace.

The predominant concept of the phenomenon in this study revolved around Shuck & Reio's (2011) theory of engagement. The data were analyzed at the participant level and I used the comparative analysis method to ensure that saturation was achieved.

Data Collection and Processing

Before commencing the data collection process, I received approval from the IRB of Walden University. This process ensured that the data collection adhered to the ethical values and principals of research and all IRB standards. I contacted potential participants by using various social media platforms and providing a recruitment letter, including a phone number and an e-mail address. If interested in the study, the participants replied to the recruitment letter consenting to the interview. After meeting all qualifications, I

contacted 25 participants to schedule a date and time for the interview; an additional 10 participants were placed on hold as backup if needed.

The recruitment letter stated the consent process, which I must follow throughout the interview process. Participants were asked to grant their permission to be tape-recorded. All participants were told they would receive a copy of their audio-recorded interview upon their request. The recruitment letter also included instructions on how to handle emotional distress during the interview process. If the participant was no longer able to complete the interview process, the participant could withdraw from the study.

Prior to the actual interviews, each participant was vetted through social media platforms based on the following criteria: millennial age, geographic locations, and 3 years of nonmanagerial working experiences with a direct supervisor. All concerns and questions of the interview process were addressed prior to the interview. Each participant agreed to one interview, expected to last about 1 hour. During the interview, if a participant decided not to answer all the questions, the interview would be terminated.

According to Merwe (2014), member-checking should occur after each interview to ensure dependability. This process allows the researcher to update and validate all the responses from the participant in real-time and then transcribe shortly after each interview. Each participant was given a verbal personal thank you note for participating in the study and agreed to participate if needed in a follow-up interview. No additional follow-up interviews were needed. Each audio-recorded interview was saved on a digital recording device to an encrypted protected hard drive for the duration plus the time required by IRB. Data will be kept for a period of 5 years, as required by IRB.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative methodology that involved extensive data to addressing the central research question and discovering meaning through the millennials lived experiences. There were multiple approaches from which the researcher could have chosen the appropriate design and method. The three core approaches for conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods (Petty, Thomas, & Stew, 2012). The research approach for this study was qualitative. According to Rudestam and Newon (2015), a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design delivers an actual human experience.

This study intended to identify and report the lived experiences of millennial perspectives of engagement. For social science research, Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) identified the two most common approaches. A qualitative research method usually produces an abundance of detailed quality data about smaller sample sizes. The details in qualitative research method permit a greater understanding of the study but eliminate generalization. In contrast, a quantitative research method measures the responses to open-ended abstract questions. This method allows for the comparison of data and numerical output. As opposed to the qualitative method, the quantitative method allows the generalization of data sets when given concise and carefully evaluated.

The research into the leadership strategy is exploratory. Therefore, a qualitative approach was selected, which provided a unique perspective on the research question being explored. This study incorporated a homogenous sample strategy, metaphorically bringing individuals together who have similar backgrounds and experiences. The

qualitative approach reduces discrepancy, streamlines analysis, and simplifies the interviewing. According to multiple sources, in conducting case study research, the researcher should collect a mixture of data from various sources and use triangulations to accomplish convergence involving the different sources (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Yin, 2014). These authors indicated that a case study limits focus, and generalization becomes more challenging to use.

The purpose of having an adequate sample size in this study was to incorporate currently working individuals who were already part of the studied population. The emphasis of this design was to analyze the levels of engagement relative to the levels of disengagement. This qualitative study used a phenomenological design to collect, analyze, and interpret data for implementing strategies that could measure employee engagement and productivity.

It was suggested that the sample sizes used in qualitative studies usually are smaller than those used for quantitative studies (Yin, 2014). This study used a sample size of 25 participants. According to Yin (2014), the sample size is homogeneously fundamental to the data collection process. Thus, for Campbell (2014), qualitative research was appropriate for exploring new studies; Shuck et al. (2014) allowed the researcher to explore millennials' experiences.

Qualitative sample sizes must have a sufficient number of participants to ensure that most of the determined interpretations may be vital to the study are revealed. However, if the sample size is too large, data can become repetitive. Giorgi (2009) recommended guidelines for sample sizes in qualitative research. For this reason,

numerous factors warrant consideration when determining the appropriate sample based on a research topic and goal. For instance, researchers interested in studying the survivors of alcoholic parents may interview a random sample size of approximately ten participants. This sample size may not generate enough data to continue with the study. For this reason, researchers may have a greater need to conduct in-depth interviews using 30-40 participants to gather the desired results (Giorgi, 2009). Researchers must remember that qualitative studies, the research questions, and the period are available resources (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Maxwell (2013); Kolb (2012); Gill (2014); and Guinn (2013) suggested the following sample sizes for participants:

- Ethnography sample size-- 20-30
- Grounded theory sample size-- 20-30
- Phenomenology sample size up to 50
- Case study sample size of 1 or more participants

The appropriate sample size for the current qualitative study was 25 participants or to the point when no new data of themes emerged. During the data collection, the following steps were tested for saturation: (a) conduct 12 interviews; (b) run the data and identify themes; (c) conduct three additional interviews; and again (d) run the data and identify themes. Data saturation was reached after conducting 15 semi structured interviews, and there was no logical reason to conduct more interviews.

Participant Selection Logic

The participant population consisted of those who replied and agreed to the recruitment letter. The validity of the results depends on the responses collected during the interview process. The participants in this research had at least three to five years of working experience, were at least 21 years of age, had a direct supervisor, and had no managerial experience. Cities with a high population of working millennials were not considered as the core locations for the sample. The selected population group was appropriate for this study, contributing positively to the existing literature on employee engagement.

The research process initiated 25 semi structured interviews of millennials or until data saturation was achieved. This population was appropriate for the study to identify and report the millennials' lived experiences, as they represent over 50% of today's workforce.

Data Types and Sources of Information

- Semi structured interviews with a diverse group of 25 full-time millennial employees provided an equal representation of the general population.
- Each interview session was documented using an audio, journal, and field notes to ensure that transcripts of interviews were accurately interpreted.
- To minimize and prevent participant bias, random sampling was used as the selection criterion.
- The participants answering the recruitment letter were recruited from professional social media networking sites.

- All interviews were conducted, recorded, and analyzed by the researcher.

The responses from the five open-ended interview questions conducted during the semi structured interviews were included and analyzed in the data collection. Semi structured interviews with 25 millennials located throughout the United States created the research design or until data saturation was achieved. This study reached saturation after the 15 interviews. According to Trotter (2012), saturation has occurred if no new themes or concepts emerge from these interviews.

The handling and transcribing of data were kept confidential during this study, with all participants' privacy protected. Each participant was asked to provide a 4-digit number to replace the formal name. According to Miles et al. (2014) a qualitative inquiry code is most often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and evocative attribute to a portion of language based or visual data. The data collection process did not contain names or any personal data by which participants could be identified. All recorded audio interviews were placed on a protected encrypted private drive with password protection. As a back-up, a printout was stored for each interview in a locked file not accessible to others, in case it was needed during the final research analysis. All online files were deleted after the study was completed, according to the national standard research guidance outlined by Walden University.

Instrumentation

As in all studies, dependability, transferability, and credibility are critical to the emerged findings. According to Qu and Dumay (2011), the most critical data collection design in a qualitative research is the interview. I used semi structured interviews as the

data collection instrument. According to Targum (2011), qualitative research interviews involve collecting data and facts.

This study intended to conduct in-depth interviews with the participants who volunteered for the study. This parameter ensured that research participants were not directly associated with the study, and all participants were independently selected (through the use of volunteer criteria) without bias and prejudice, thereby not jeopardizing the integrity of the outcome. The layout of the semi structured interviews required approximately one hour and was undertaken by phone.

Qualitative interviewing was the process of collecting specific, detailed information. The semi structured interviews provided valuable details and depth than a standard conversational survey, allowing greater insight into the chose research topic (Owen, 2014). Further, qualitative interviews were explicitly designed to address the interviewee's knowledge and experiences. Sutton and Arnold (2013) further suggested that qualitative interviews should be an array of open-ended questions to address specific research theory and answer the research questions.

The semi structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain insight into another person's perspective (Xu & Storr, 2012). In this regard, there are three approaches a researcher can use when designing an interview. They are informal, conversational general interviews, and standardized open-ended interviews (Yin, 2014). An interview can range from being structure to unstructured. Unstructured interviews are most appropriate for early stages, while structured interviews increase the likelihood that the research findings will be generalizable (Rowley, 2012).

Synchronous communication, such as phone calls and e-mails, are defined as real-time communication. The chance of a spontaneous answer to a question is less in the online environment because the interviewee has more time to reflect on the question(s). E-mail interviewing has, of course, an extra advantage for the researchers in that the interviewer can formulate the questions, and the interviewees can answer the questions at their convenience. There can be no significant delay between the question(s) and the answer(s) in face-to-face interviews. The interviewee and interviewer have direct and immediate contact. This study's finding emerged as logical reasoning based on the details from the semi structured interviews are transferability.

Advantages

Goble and colleagues (2012) identified several advantages of using computer software for qualitative data analysis. These included (a) providing an organized storage system, (b) retrieving and reading data, and (c) producing concept mapping that provides a visual depiction of the engagement. Historically, field notes, along with other related documents, must be converted into analyzable text, which then needs to be condensed, displayed, and used to draw and verify conclusions, according to Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014). Researchers can utilize qualitative analysis software such as NVivo, MAXQSA, or CAT, to assist in the qualitative data analysis (Goble et al., 2012).

Today this process is completed expeditiously by keeping and handling the original data within NVivo software. Otherwise, storing research data would require the use of large file cabinets and a plethora of file folders. The software allows the researcher to process, categorize, retrieve, search, segment, and annotate the documents and all the

categories. Qualitative analysis software tools by themselves are reliable for qualitative research (Xu & Storr, 2012). Conversely, many have argued that there are certain disadvantages when using software tools. According to Sutton and Arnold (2013), new software tools are available that do improve upon the previously existing tools.

Contemplating the best way to organize qualitative data collected involves uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon as experienced by human by identifying essential theme, according to Giorgi (2009). It means gaining permissions, conducting an excellent qualitative sample strategy, developing the means for recording information digitally and on paper, storing the data, and anticipating ethical issues that may arise (Eide & Kahn, 2008). The most significant component of any qualitative research is the actual interviewing process (Janesick, 2011). The potential volume of research data and other information must be well organized and managed efficiently and conveniently to prevent data overload. Data overload can cause difficulty in analyzing the data when too much similar information is collected.

This study applied fieldwork and had organized data allowing the researcher to assess accurately, then replicate, and evaluate the study findings (Petty et al., 2012). For instance, there were data types, data forms, file formats, file naming, data identifiers, data storing or data backing-up, and data. These new tools implied new ways of doing qualitative analysis, but these were not intended to be a method in and of themselves.

Compare Software Tools

Comparing data was vital to conducting the data analysis. The ability to compare data from studies and using phenomenological theory was built into research methods' structuring and process. Software tools, such as NVivo, MAXQSA, or CAT databases, can store and manage data effectively and also prevent data loss and data overload.

Miles and colleagues (2014) offered advice on what software tools work best to clarify concepts and set priorities for actual data collection. They described and compared several software tools for Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). CAQDAS is a simple and accessible way to manage data, and it functions through various programs. It can place matching datasets, inputted by the user, on a visual display. The visual display is specifically called an at-a-glance graphic. Throughout the CAQDAS program, the service and retrieval functions create structured categories, permitting the researchers to test their qualitative data. The two most common tools are (a) NVivo, which provides the following functions – manages and organizes data and ideas taken from many field notes, raw data conducted from interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. In other words, NVivo combines the research data and places them into categories and (b) MAXQDA, which is designed to create graphs, data analysis, thematic clustering, and trend analysis. MAXQDA software is used to analyze qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods. Given the MAXQDA software diversity, the approach or method for categorizing and evaluating data seems unlimited.

The selected instrument to collect the data for this study was processed through semi structured interviews. Interviews are an attempt to acquire reliable and valid verbal

data from selected participants. At the start of the interview, the participants received a summary explaining the study's purpose and to help reduce any potential stress; and I obtained participant permission to record the interviews. All personally identifying information (such as names) was removed and replaced with a precoded four digits number to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Participants' comments were audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of their responses for transferability coding. Each participant received a hard copy of their transcript within five to seven days to validate before data were entered in NVivo (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Descriptive words and or expressive words were then used to describe coding to prevent any overlapping. The data were tabulated and transferred to NVivo for storing and for accurate interpretation and analysis. The NVivo tabulated the data into themes and subthemes to identify the five interview questions' relationship.

Data Analysis Plan

Given the phenomenological study's nature, the design consisted of semi structured interviews that collected personal data from millennials, allowing them to disclose their lived experiences through a guided conversation using a qualitative analysis approach (Seidman, 2013). The five open-ended interview questions were tailored to obtain data on how engagement strategies influence millennials' ability to perform at work and were used to report and identify their perspectives.

I analyzed the semi structured interview data by conducting open coding, in which consistency occurred to ensure the credibility of the process. Descriptive words and or expressive words were used for description coding to prevent overlap. The data

were tabulated and transferred to NVivo for storing and for accurately interpreting and analyzing. I manually assigned codes to the field notes to identify recurrent themes and subthemes for saturation and placed the other data in coded subgroups, using a categorical structure to search for keywords and patterns (Miles et al., 2014). During this process, I became sufficiently familiar with the data to capture significant themes. I used NVivo to tabulate the data into queries and reports and identified the relationship (types) collected from the five interview questions. At the end of the interview, I conducted member-checking by replaying the recorded interview, allowing participants to validate their answers, thus ensuring accuracy. All relevant statements were grouped to create themes and sub-themes, preparing the data tabulation of the participants' responses.

Issues of Trustworthiness

This study adopted recommended procedures for qualitative research (Creswell, 2013) for confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility, ensuring the study's trustworthiness. A member check was conducted for each audio-recorded transcript, and each participant was asked to review for accuracy. I used a journal for logging how data were collected, analyzed, and how I arrived at the findings to establish consistency. The participants in this study did not experience any apparent human harm or risk during the interviews. Participants were asked to refrain from using any names (business or personal) in the interviews and were informed that I would use a fictitious name to preserve confidentiality.

Credibility

Participants received the recruitment letter to ensure research credibility, including IRB approval, to read before the interviews. I utilized an original interview protocol (see Appendix) taken from the conceptual framework of this study. Heale and Forbes (2013) pointed out that qualitative researchers have used triangulation approaches to analyze data. They are (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) methodological triangulation, and (d) theory triangulation. As the researcher, I used methodological triangulation for this study, which included collecting data from 25 millennials or until data saturation was achieved (Manganelli, et al., 2014) via interviews. To prevent errors in transcribing and transferring participants recorded responses, all participants reviewed their audio recorded interviews to ensure that their responses were accurate. Member-checking was conducted before completing the data analysis (Houghton et al., 2013).

Transferability

Transferability in data collections is the ability and degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be transferability to other contexts (Holloway & Galvin, 2017). This study examined the responses of millennials at all levels of engagement within their lived experiences. Employment history, race, age, experience, and other factors did not limit participation in this study. The study received a significant number of responses to the recruitment letter. Data triangulation was used to safeguard against threats or risks during the transferability process. I used the appropriate procedures for ensuring consistency in data interpretation, abstaining from expressing any personal biases. The

findings from this qualitative study are credible, transferable, and accurate interpretations of each participant's lived experience.

Dependability

Qualitative researchers must address dependability matters to avoid fabricated findings and to confirm stability (Anney, 2014). In most qualitative studies, the researcher applies member transcript review, member-checking, and triangulation to ensure the study's dependability aspects (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I shadowed the same technique for analyzing each interview. According to Yin (2013), the process of improving dependability includes the following: clarifying the selection criteria of the participants, conveying the position of the researcher, and expounding on the approach applied to the study. Three stages of this coding were conducted to strengthen the findings of this study. Koelsche (2013) stated that the process of member-checking improves the dependability of the study, wherein the participants obtain and review the concluding document to validate their responses.

Confirmability

The confirmability of this study refers to the extent to which the 25 participants confirmed the findings. These findings offered evidence and suggested that confirmability was achieved through an audit trail and journal notes. According to Elo and colleagues (2014), confirmability in qualitative research is the point where the results of the study are not the biases of the researcher, but rather the results from the research. Houghton and colleagues (2013) agreed that confirmability offers an approach of logic for its methodology and clarification by the researcher. I determined that the

confirmability of this study was auditable by other researchers; and that they will be able to follow the research methodology, the data analysis, and the interpretation process. Noble and Smith (2015) contended that researchers could achieve confirmability in qualitative research after addressing the study's applicability, value, and consistency.

Generalizability

Qualitative studies are tools used in exploring, understanding, and describing human experiences. This study aimed to understand the social world from millennials' lived experiences through detailed descriptions of their cognitive and emotional actions. The data in this qualitative research method permit a greater understanding of how the findings can be generalized from the millennials sample to the entire population (Rowley, 2012). The knowledge generated in this qualitative research is significant in its sampling, permitting theory building from the findings.

Ethical Procedures

Studies are not without particular ethical concerns. The IRB approval was obtained for the research proposal before data collection. The purpose was to ensure that the study complied with ethical standards, including the ethical treatment of humans, i.e., the study participants. This study did not pose any human harm or risk to the participants, and no conflict of interest existed for the researcher. The participants received a recruitment letter, including a full description of the study. Their written consent came via a replied e-mail with the words "I consent." They were informed that they could withdraw from the study and that their verbal consent was recorded. Personal information was replaced with a precoding four-digit number at the start of each interview to prevent

any ethical concerns and to protect their confidentiality. The researcher is not a member of the millennial generation. However, during the study, the researcher had experience supervising, managing, and mentoring millennials. The researcher disclosed all personal information that could be considered ethically relevant.

Summary

This chapter included discussion of the methodology, issues of trustworthiness, the researcher's role, data collection and analysis, and the research design and rationale. I used a qualitative, phenomenological approach to address the research question using Shuck and Reio's (2011) theory of engagement framework. The sample population consisted of 25 millennials and collected data until I reached saturation. I acknowledged and conducted a self-reflection to any potential biases having mentored, supervised, and managed millennials. My role as the researcher included collecting and analyzing data, and the data collection instrument was a semi structured interview. I performed the data analysis using NVivo software and followed the data analysis process outlined by Creswell (2007). The process included addressing issues of dependability, transferability, credibility, confirmability, and concluded with ethical considerations. Chapter 4 present the results from the semi structured interviews denoting the five themes and 10 subthemes that emerged during the study.

Chapter 4: Results

There is no uncertainty that employee engagement is crucial to high organizational productivity from the workforce. The Gallup Group (2016) demonstrated that over time, engaged employees significantly outperform disengaged employees. Many research studies have revealed the percentage of disengaged and engaged employees. Few studies have looked at what really drives millennial's workplace engagement and identified or reported the lived experience of millennials. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore employee engagement through the lived experiences of millennials. The central research question investigated was:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

The data analysis indicated that millennials have significantly different perspectives from those of older generations on what they expect from their organizational leaders to remain engaged. The following findings emerged as a result of this study.

- Finding 1: The participants emphasized the significance of building engagement strategies that will empower them to have an impact and purpose to influence their levels of engagement.
- Finding 2: The participants acknowledged how engagement is shaping the workplace culture, according more significance to moral problems and the lack of participation.

- Finding 3: The participants recognized that managers are promoted based on favoritism and not skills.
- Finding 4: The participants indicated that millennials aspire more to than a job; they desire to have some levels of excitement, passion, and motivation toward work.
- Finding 5: The participants described their inability to be creative and share innovative ideas with their peers and organizational leaders.

The perspectives of millennials shifted the hierarchy orders of Maslow's needs in Table 2. (See Table 2).

Table 2

Millennials' Hierarchy of Needs

ESTEEM NEEDS	BELONGINGNESS and LOVE NEEDS	SELF-ACTUALIZATION	SAFETY NEEDS	PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS
Psychological needs	Psychological needs	Self-fulfillment Needs	Basic needs	Basic needs
Feeling of accomplishment	Intimate relationships/friends	Achieving one's full potential, including creative activities	Security	Food, water, and shelter

Table 2 shows that millennials are more interested in feelings of accomplishment, achieving their full potential, and finding more meaning in their work. Therefore, self-actualization is at the top of the pyramid, shifting the order of the Maslow's pyramid. Maslow did not include money as an element within the hierarchy. For some people, money is considered a means to meet their basic day-to-day needs, whereas others may see money as merely a form of self-gratification. This research filled a significant gap in

the literature of employee engagement. The data analysis indicates that millennials have different perspectives of employee engagement and that they are often not aligned with their current engagement strategies. In this chapter, I discussed significant findings that emerged from the data analysis of the 25 interviews I conducted. The chapter will present a description of the study sample and research setting, and how the data were collected and analyzed. The concluding Chapter 5 provides a summary of the research findings and pointed recommendations for organizations use.

Study Sample and Research Setting

The study sample came from members of the millennial generation who represent employees across the United States who have three to five years of working experience with no managerial experience. Millennials (those between the ages of 18 to 34 born between 1981- 2000, although there are some variations in the definitional data range) are becoming the largest generation currently in the workforce (Pew Research Center, 2018), although inconsistencies on the years can be seen. The birth years for this study were between 1980 and 2000.

It was established that a sample size of 25 participants would be adequate to reach data saturation during the semi structured interviews (Giorgi, 2009). Data saturation transpires when no new themes or subthemes emerge from research (Trotter, 2012). The participants were recruited using a recruitment letter announcement on social media websites. I used social media sites was designed to find millennials who met the inclusion criteria. The participants who responded to the consent letter fit the inclusion criteria.

Each selected participant was contacted via email as a reminder of the upcoming scheduled interview and confirmation of their willingness to participate in the study.

The semi structured interviews began by providing each participant with a description of the research and my engagement experiences as a manager who supervised millennials. Participants who were identified and scheduled for the semi structured interviews understood and agreed to the confidentiality agreement and were required to provide a unique four-digit code (Table 3). The average interview lasted no more than 45 minutes, and each interview was recorded using the free conferencing feature. Participants were not offered funds or in-kind gifts for participating in the study.

Table 3

Participant Four-Digit Codes

Group 1		Group 2	
Participant# (P)	Participant code	Participant#(P)	Participant code
P1	0729	P15	1980
P2	1737	P16	0928
P3	1325	P17	2019
P4	8823	P18	1985
P5	7291	P19	1322
P6	1213	P20	1218
P7	2562	P21	3015
P8	0123	P22	1007
P9	1234	P23	3344
P10	1934	P24	7210
P11	1976	P25	0406
P12	0925		
P13	9531		
P14	2929		

As part of the confidentiality agreement, the semi structured interviews identified each participant by their unique four-digit code. All interviews were completed within the scheduled timeframe and were conducted without interruptions. One interview did start late due to technical difficulties with the participant's mobile service, and 2 interviews were rescheduled due to the participants' work schedules. To avoid additional mobile charges, participants dialed into a free conference bridge. All participants indicated their lived experience in response to the 5 interview questions. By incorporating the lived experience of millennials, new engagement strategies emerged from the interviews that could contribute to the employee engagement phenomenon. The next section describes the data collection and data analysis process, then the results.

Data Collection, Data Analysis Process, and Results

Approval was received from the IRB of Walden University under IRB approval#07-31-19-0365996. The data collection process consisted of free teleconferencing, and audio-recorded semi structured interviews expected to take no more than 1 hour. At the start of each recorded interview, the participant was introduced using their unique four-digit code to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The average time to complete each recorded interview was approximately 45 minutes. The instrument used for recording the interviews was a feature offered by FreeConferenceCall.com. In addition to the recorded interviews, I took field notes were taken to capture themes allowed for manual coding.

During the interviews, the comparative analysis method was applied to ensure that saturation was achieved. According to Merriam (2009), the purpose of comparing within individual interviews is to develop and label categories, themes, codes, and rules. Each audio-recorded interview was transcribed, coded, and analyzed in the same format for consistency and compared to identify similarities in categories and codes. It was a recurrent process repeated until all recorded interviews were coded. Each interview was pre-encrypted using the unique four-digit code selected by each participant and downloaded to a secure locked file. The raw data collected were organized by themes and subthemes using NVivo for further analysis to assist with managing, organizing, and analyzing the in-depth data (see Petty et al., 2012).

The data analysis consisted of coding, transforming, organizing, and analyzing the data to find new information necessary to address the literature gap and answer the research question (Merwe, 2014). I used the recommended procedures for qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2007, pp 156-157) as displayed in (Table 4). The central research question for this study was:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

The semi structured interviews were most appropriate for this study, and they allowed participants to concentrate on what they thought was most pertinent to the interview questions, providing a clear set of perspectives. This approach is valuable in a framework where little is known about the research topic.

To address the research question, the following interview questions were answered:

1. What is your experience of employee engagement?
2. What is your experience of how disengaged employees affect organizational performance?
3. What is your perspective based upon your experience of how your management team implements strategies to improve performance?
4. What is your experience of the key job-related influences that affected your decision to be engaged or disengaged in your current positions?
5. Please share any additional assumptions based upon your experience of why you and your peers may become disengaged in the workplace.

Table 4

Data Analysis Process

Reading the data	The researcher read through all the transcripts to gain a general sense of the data and made notes to start the initial coding process using the NVivo software.
Managing the data	Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Data were collected/stored on secured drive and only the researcher has access to the recordings and journal notes.
Describing the data	The researcher began the basic descriptions of the participants' experiences
Classifying the data	The researcher identified significant statements and quotes that described how the participants' experienced the phenomenon of employee engagement. The researcher then grouped the significant statements to generate themes and sub-themes.
Interpreting the data	The researcher utilized themes and sub-themes to interpret the data and wrote descriptions of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon of employee engagement within its setting and context (see Chapter 1).
Representing/Visualizing the Data	Based on the analysis, the researcher developed findings that resulted from this study (see Chapter 5).

Note. Adapted from (Creswell, 2007, p 156-157.

In this study I explored the phenomenon of employee engagement by millennials, using Shuck and Reio's framework of engagement. Overall, millennial participants shared their perspectives on employee engagement that can contribute to new engagement strategies. Based on the data analysis, the following five themes and ten subthemes emerged during the semi structured interviews. The interaction between leaders and millennials affected organizational engagement, leading to improved productivity. Themes deemed outside the research scope were removed. Themes and subthemes are listed in (Table 5).

Table 5

Themes and Subthemes

IQ#	Findings		Subthemes
	#	Themes	
IQ1	1	Sense of Value	Personal contribution/choice
IQ2	2	Morale	Workplace culture Lack of participation
IQ3	3	Knowledge Use	Skilled/unskilled
IQ5	4	Meaningful Work	Lack of enthusiasm Actively commitment
IQ5	5	Creativity	Team activities Establish/better working relationship

It is important for organizational leaders to understand how employees of the millennial generation identify with employee engagement in the findings.

While there is significant research on employee engagement and how employees value their work, little known about what lived experiences lead millennials to become engaged. To ensure that their perspectives and lived experiences of engagement are

incorporated into strategies, the findings suggested recommendations, which can be found in chapter 5. When I asked about their lived experience of employee engagement, all participants expressed similar reactions. They replied, I am engaged if there is flexibility and creativity in what I am doing. Otherwise, I am disengaged and see no need to push above the standard measurement. When I asked how disengaged employees affect organizational performance, the participants had mixed reactions.

- Participants 0925, 1934, 7291, 9531, 2929, and 0406 indicated that disengaged employees affect the overall organization's morale and outlook of employees who are engaged.

Engaged millennials preferred a creative workplace where they can be more productive, making a measurable impact on performance. Organizations should focus on creating a learning culture that will stimulate employee engagement. When I asked about how their management implements strategies to improve performance, the participants experienced similar reactions, as follows:

- Participants 1976, 1234, 0123, 2019, 1980, 1322, and 1985 indicated a gap in knowledge of skill sets; the strategy sounded great on paper but provide no definite instruction to execute.
- Participants 8823, 0928, and 1218 all had mixed responses indicating a lack of preparation and engagement accountability. There is no consistency amongst organizations and no emphasis on establishing a more collaborative workforce.

When I asked about key business-related influences that affected their decision to be engaged or disengaged, the participants expressed similar reactions.

- Participants 1737, 0729, 1213, 2562, and 1325 indicated that compensation, flexibility of working hours, and feeling of being appreciated affected their decision to be actively engaged or disengaged.

When I asked to share additional assumptions about why they or their peers would become disengaged in the workplace, the participants responded with mixed reactions, revealing a different outlook on workplace engagement. They include accepting the concept of what the vision and mission of the company represented. Zopiatis and colleagues (2012) described the millennials as being trained and self-motivated, and participants 7210, 3344, 1007, and 3015 echoed this description of self-motivated.

The abilities and skills of millennials are desirable to encourage companies to acquire new innovative strategies to stay in touch with this generation. Given that millennials desire to be heard and valued for their ideas, to engage millennials is to listen actively to them. Participants 0406, 0925, 9531, 2929, 7291, 0123, and 2562 all concurred that organization leaders need to move toward technology solutions that motivate millennials to use their tech-savvy skills to improve performance and boost employee engagement. They reiterated the importance of using an internal social media platform for daily work activities and internal communications.

Employee engagement becomes a favorable topic because in striving to deliver more productivity with fewer employees, companies have no alternatives but to engage all employees. Kahn (1990) was the first to publish research on employee engagement in

the *Academy of Management Journal*. It took another decade before others adopted the topic in academia, and the Gallup Group is credited for reflecting on the perceptions of employee engagement in the workplace (Schaufeli, 2013).

Millennials are unlike preceding generations, such as Baby-Boomers or Gen Xers. Their lived experience of work is different, and they have redefined the importance of personal and professional success. Organizational leaders are still baffled about the millennials' unique perspectives and competencies in the workplace. These characteristics are misunderstood more than was the case in preceding generations. The findings indicated that millennials are self-directed and that their primary motivation is to balance work and life. Organizations that foster engagement strategies for long term commitment should consider involving millennials in the decision-making process that involves their values, cultures, goals, expectations, and perspectives toward employee workplace engagement. Engagement strategies, organizational leaders, and millennials' support were all an essential underlying subject in this research. Chapter 5 will provide research recommendations and the conclusion of this study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As communicated in Chapter 3, I used several methods to confirm the trustworthiness of the study data. I addressed researcher bias, transcribed recorded interviews to have accurate interview responses, and included sources for data triangulation to develop a thorough understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 1999). I also used the same process for data coding and analysis. The areas of trustworthiness for qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

As described in Chapter 3, I followed the study protocol to ensure credibility during data collection. I practiced the same interview process (Appendix) for each participant, allowing them to confirm responses for accuracy and member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I asked probing questions in an unbiased manner to ensure accuracy from each participant.

Transferability

According to Petty et al. (2012), the research findings' ability to shift to future studies is transferability in qualitative research. Yin (2018) researchers can conclude if research is transferable by the comprehensive findings of a study. In Chapter 1, I included a full description of the background of the study for possible transferability. As stated in chapters 1, 2, and 3, the study focus was specific on millennials' lived experiences.

Dependability

To support the study's dependability, I detailed the study methodology, data collection and analysis, and interpretation of the findings. I utilized data triangulation and member checking to warrant in transferability. The assurance of dependability, I transcribed recorded interviews and analyzed data in the same manner following the research protocol (Houghton et al., 2013).

Confirmability

Confirmability occurs when the finding results from millennials' lived experience rather than the researcher (Houghton et al., 2013). To ensure confirmability, I disclosed and maintained my role as the researcher to minimize bias. I examined the recordings and transcripts to aid in disclosing, isolation, and eliminating personal biases during the review, coding, and analysis of the data to guarantee confirmability. I performed member checking to ensure the interview transcriptions' accuracy, collected the data using the research protocol, and auditable.

Generalizability

Researching with individuals dealing with lived experiences is the value of a qualitative study to explore, comprehend, and understand the phenomenon. Because this study consisted of 25 participants, they involved in-depth interviews in gathering an abundance of data from their lived experiences. However, since the findings came from a small number of participants, it is challenging to exhibit how they apply to other situations and populations. Rather than generalizability, one characteristic, this qualitative study's value rests in the specific descriptions of five themes and ten subthemes, making the generalizations produced no less legitimate.

Summary

This qualitative, phenomenological study aimed to identify and report the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States. I reviewed the recorded transcribed interviews to identify the shared views of the 25 participants toward workplace engagement. There were several comparisons related to responses from the participants. This chapter encompassed details of the study's data collection processes for gathering, transcribing, and coding of the data, and the findings related to the research question were achieved by analyzing the transcribed recorded interview data.

Based on the findings, the participants' responses could positive impact organizational productivity and workplace engagement. The study resulted in five core themes and ten subthemes. The findings revealed a common perception that workplace engagement is beneficial to all companies and could be useful for organizational leaders involved in the developing strategies to include workplace engagement. Chapter 5 includes a detailed discussion of the interpretation of research findings, recommendations for future research, and positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendation, and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States. Chapter 1 contained a detailed introduction to the research, the conceptual framework, and the research question. In Chapter 2, I provided a review of the literature on employee engagement, Kahn's theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, leadership, performance, engagement, motivation, workplace generations, and the millennial generation. The focus of the literature review was the evaluation of leadership strategies and employee engagement studies. Chapter 3 contained an in-depth review of the research methodology and Chapter 4 contained a detailed analysis of the research findings. Chapter 5 summarized the five findings as they related to the research question and interpreted the interview responses. The research question was:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

This chapter also included the limitations of the study, the recommendations, and the implications for social change.

Employee engagement is still a challenge for too many companies. According to the Gallup Group (2016), 70% of United States employees are not engaged. Engaged employees are the driving forces that create company sustainability (Macey & Schneider, 2008). The outcomes from this study extend the literature in the field of management, address the literature gaps, and build a compelling conceptual foundation (Duffy & Dik,

2013). Leadership should begin to understand that the degree of employee engagement does impact the whole organization. The results of this study revealed the lived experience of millennials and the key influences of employee engagement. The data analysis indicated that millennials have a different perspective from prior generations on what they expect from their organizational leaders to remain engaged. The key contributing influences of employee engagement that emerged from the 25 interviews are Sense of Value, Morale, Knowledge Use, Meaningful Work, and Creativity. From these interviews, it is apparent that millennials seek to be challenged and desire to be creative.

Although the millennials have generated a reputation for having a different attitude in the workplace, employee engagement, and productivity (Ozcelik, 2015), all employees are engaged at work when they feel a sense of worth, that their work is meaningful, and they feel secure (Kahn, 1990). In contrast, millennials see the world in a more optimistic way than other generations. Millennials grew up with technology, and social media applications are a part of their life.

In the following section I establish the levels of engagement, explain the five key influences, provide recommendations to raise employee engagement, and discuss implications for social change. A study conclusion then follows.

Interpretation of Findings

Finding 1

Millennials desire a sense of value, to have a purpose, and to feel engaged at work. While this is a personal feeling, leaders must make employees feel like their work matters, and that they are working toward a worthwhile goal. According to Chalofsky (2010), when employees feel valued and involved, their performance and engagement increase (p 135). All 25 participants in this study shared that they felt valued when leaders gave them respect, included them in the decision-making process, and expressed appreciation for their ideas. Jolton (2014) stated the importance of showing millennials the value of their sense of worth. Throughout the study's interviews, it was evident how millennials measure *sense of value* as being engaged in their organizations. A sense of value and employee engagement go hand-in-hand. When employees feel valued, it positively affects their levels of engagement. Therefore, organizational leaders should incorporate value-added strategies to help motivate employee engagement by demonstrating their support.

Finding 2

Measuring workplace morale can become a complicated task for organization leaders. The vast majority of the participants agreed that fostering a team environment will boost morale and productivity and employee engagement. When employees have a friendly working relationship, they work well together, and they are more likely to be engaged in their jobs. This connection does not always happen, and some millennials find

it difficult to remain engaged (Benn et al., 2015). Leaders must create an environment that supports employees (Xu & Thomas, 2011).

Twelve of the 25 participants believed the attitudes of their immediate supervisor constituted a key influence on workplace morale. In alignment with participant 1976 and others, workplace gossip and favoritism are the two biggest influences that hurt morale within the organizations, creating a culture where employees are disengaged. Ibrahim and Falasi (2014) stated that, leaders should address the importance of engagement because it will enhance morale, employee performance, and job satisfaction. According to Kahn (1990), it is necessary for employees to have a positive and meaningful personal engagement at work. Engaged employees generally are enthusiastic, loyal, empowered, and passionate about their jobs (Anitha, 2014).

Finding 3

It appeared from the semi structured interviews that the millennials do not view their managers or organization leaders as experts. Instead, they see them as mentors or coaches. All business leaders should have a set of skills to assist them positively to relate to employees with the flexibility to motivate, delegate, listen to feedback, and solve problems. Leaders should create a solid plan of communication with their employees. Millennials are continuously learning; they are socially conscious to achieve higher education and are achievement oriented. It is significant for organizational leaders to have strategies to be proactive, ensuring career development opportunities are available for future positions.

Participants 8823, 0928, 0925, 3344, 1007, and 1218 stated that effective strategies should provide directions that will engage employees and train them within 30 days. All participants shared that leaders must demonstrate their competence and ability to manage. They believed that leaders must speak from experience. A lack of commitment from employees can challenge the goals set by the leaders; therefore, keeping employees engaged in the process warrants their commitment. According to Cogin (2012) millennials should take part in the decision-making process. Their attitudes about work and receiving training empowered them to be engaged.

Finding 4

Twenty-two of the 25 participants stated they struggled with having a meaningful job. They shared the importance of having work that is meaningful, which is characterized by connection (Geldenhuys et al, 2014). Employees are often stressed and struggle to be happy at work. Millennials want a healthy workplace, particularly an environment where employees are happy. The data also revealed that a meaningful job allows for flexible working hours, as well as flexible personal and vacation time.

Participants 1234, 0123, 2929, and 8823 stated this includes working from home a few days a week. Millennials seem idealistic when it comes to employee engagement.

An effective strategy for building an engaged culture should include what employees would like, and it would be alarming to neglect their workplace needs (Moreland, 2013). Moreland (2013) and Arellano (2015) agreed that companies with a purpose-driven workforce will retain younger employees, such as millennials, than

companies in a traditional workplace. There is a relationship between morale and a sense of meaningfulness.

Finding 5

The data analysis confirmed that millennials desire creativity to complete their daily tasks at work. Millennials value teamwork and a creative working environment and that indicators of creativity programs impact employee engagement, morale, and productivity (Park & Kwon, 2013). As outlined in Chapter 2, there are gaps in the existing literature about millennials values in employee engagement. Having the flexibility to try new approaches can be invaluable to the organization.

All 25 participants in this study identified and expressed their concerns of creativity offered to motivate employees. More active engagement strategies would compel millennials to participate, which is associated with increased employee productivity. Findings showed creativity encourages the millennials to be fully engaged at work. Each participant declared there were times they found themselves disengaged in their current job. Companies and leaders who focus on creating an environment where employees can be flexible could stimulate innovation and creativity and could encourage conversations that will support productivity and engagement.

Finding 5 suggested that creative engagement strategies can lead to higher levels of employee motivations, and higher productivity (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), lower absenteeism, fewer turnovers (Shuck, 2011), and long-term employee engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The emotional, physical, and cognitive vigor that millennials bring to their workplace is dependent on the support and resources provided by their

organizational leaders (Saks, 2006). From the findings from this study recommend that organizational leaders should be well-informed about the perspectives of millennials.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. This study included 25 participants from the millennial generation. As a manager, my feelings and experience did not influence the results of this study. I limited the research search to include external data sources to assist in mitigating research bias (Yin, 2018). I disclosed my experience in managing and supervising millennials. A limitation identified for this study included current and retrospective views of millennials. The data analysis identified participants who could not accurately recall experiences that took place in the past. Therefore, the participants responded to the questions based on their current working experience. The second limitation involved the time constraints for each semi structured interview. Another limitation identified for this study was that some individuals interested in participating in the study did not have 3 or more years of experience with employee engagement or did not meet other required criteria.

Recommendations and Social Change

The study results have provided insights into the views of millennial's lived experiences. These views have practical implications for organizational leaders. The conceptual framework was the theory of engagement, which links strategies and goals to employee engagement (Shuck &Reio, 2011). Engagement strategies are an organizational intervention that can be used to promote productivity stability.

All of the participants identified the challenges affecting employee engagement and organizational productivity. The key challenges were (a) sense of value, (b) morale, (c) knowledge use, (d) meaningful work, and (e) creativity. Disengaged employees are seen as a risk and engaged employees as a competitive advantage. Highly-engaged employees increase the success rate of ventures or organizational productivity. The findings could positively help organizational leaders become prepare for future potential challenges and affect employee engagement and organizational productivity. Each theme and subtheme contributed to addressing the concept of the research question:

RQ: What are the lived experiences of millennials about employee engagement in the United States?

It may be worthwhile to consider these themes and subthemes that could influence millennials levels of engagement.

The benefits of employee engagement are critical focal point for organizational leadership that could lead to engaged performance concerning engagement strategies and a ripple effect throughout the company. According to the Gallup Group (2013), disengaged employees are causing reduction in organization productivity. Engaged employees can improve productivity and feel a sense of meaningfulness while performing their job. All participants shared their different perspectives of employee workplace engagement, which can enable leaders to gain an understanding of the scope of the research problem. The findings revealed that engaged employees are more likely to feel festive at work and supportive of their leaders.

Bandura and Lyons (2014), organizational success depend on disengaged millennials who lack motivation and are dissatisfied in their current positions. The findings indicated that organizational leaders still face engagement challenges in the workplace, including low morale, low productivity, high turnovers, lack of participation, and millennials requires more than a paycheck.

Recommendation for Change

According to Lacy and colleagues (2012), companies that continued to use traditional leadership strategies to increase millennials productivity will not remain sustainable. Organizations should explore strategies that will engage employees to be more productive (Williams & Cothrel, 1997). The findings from the semi structured interviews revealed that millennials have a significantly different perspective from those of their predecessors. They see the world as more optimistic than older generations in this study. The literature gap is that millennials have a significantly different perspective from their predecessors on what they expect from their organizational leaders to remain engaged. The difference is that millennials see the world as more optimistic than other generations. Current engagement strategies do not permit millennials with the required outcomes to remain fully engaged, given they see the world as more optimistic than other generations.

Recommendation 1

This study explored, reported, and identified millennial employees' characteristics and strongly recommended applying engagement theory of Schuck & Reio. The basic of the engagement theory facilitates workplace engagement for employees to be

meaningfully engaged in completing daily activities through interaction with their leaders and peers. The engagement theory could potentially control the influences in which millennials remain disengaged in the workplace.

Recommendation 2

The following five themes were revealed during the semi structured interviews. They are a sense of value, morale, knowledge use, meaningful work, and creativity, providing insights into millennials' lived experiences. All employees need social time with peers and friends for their emotional and well-being to support workplace engagement (Kahn, 1943). This study revealed that the dynamic use of ineffective engagement strategies would not motivate millennials and exposed effective strategies that could engaged all employees in workplace activities.

Recommendation 3

Fostering long term employee engagement continues to challenge organizational leaders. The findings of 1, 4, and 5 strongly suggested using the theory of engagement. According to the theory of engagement, leaders should effectively communicate the expectations of engagement and create an environment where millennials can thrive. Employee engagement is a two-way interaction between leaders and employees. However, workplace engagement remains a critical challenge for leaders that are not practical to engage millennials. By reviewing these findings, organizational leaders can understand the influences by which millennials are not aligned with existing engagement strategies.

Recommendation 4

Millennials strive more when they have job satisfaction and happiness at work. The problem with this approach is that managers often fail to foster a workplace culture where millennials are compelled to engage. The recommendation is to establish a balanced relationship between leaders and millennials in organizational decision making. Leaders must actively want to contribute to the success of millennials and challenge their ideas and perspectives. A practical engagement strategy model requires organizational leaders to create the appropriate workplace culture that could positively engage millennials.

Recommendation 5

The basic of having effective engagement strategies is for organizational leaders to (a) develop an innovative vision that could guide employee engagement and (b) create strategies that challenge millennials to set personal goals that would increase engagement and productivity. To have an engaged organization, leaders need to lead by example, be goal oriented, and focus on creating strategies that could achieve organizational objectives. Therefore, leaders must construct strategies that could improve workplace engagement and productivity from their millennial employees.

Implications for Social Change

The general and specific management problems in this study addressed the gap in the effectiveness of engaging millennial employees. The semi structured interviews explored the theory of engagement of how millennials could positively influence their interaction with their organizational leaders. The results revealed that engagement begins

by clearly defining millennials' accountability to employee engagement. In this study, the millennials emphasized the significance of building engagement strategies that will empower them with a driven purpose. They acknowledged how innovative engagement could positively shape the workplace culture, reduce low morale, and increase millennial participation.

Millennials, in this study, agreed that some leaders are promoted based on favoritism and that they have limited opportunities to advance their careers, aspiring more than a job. They want the ability to be creative and share new innovative ideas with their peers and organizational leaders. When millennials show up for work unprepared, unfocused, distracted, disinterested, unmotivated, and uncommitted, they could impact engaged employees.

These social implications have a financial impact on companies. According to Cherian and Farouq (2013), disengaged employees cost United States organizations \$300 billion in lost annual revenue and working hours. The implication for positive social change should include improving employee engagement, thereby improving millennials' value of life and work. This study's findings could enhance millennials' engagement by creating an influential workplace culture and improving leadership strategies while performing work activities.

The themes and subthemes identified by the participants present a need for a change in engagement strategies, and organizational leaders are compelled to implement effective strategies. This study extent the literature to improve the millennials' level of engagement and productivity. Social change implications may consist of using the

findings to develop engagement strategies to positively affect the millennials, organizational leaders, and their communities and add to knowledge.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study aimed to identify and report the lived experience of millennials and the intent of engagement strategies. This study's research findings came from conducting semi structured interviews with 25 millennials located throughout the United States to explore the phenomenon of millennials' different lived perspectives of employee engagement. The findings of this study revealed a need for clarification surrounding millennials' engagement.

The literature gap revealed that millennials have a significantly different perspective from that of older generations on what they expect from their organizational leaders to remain engaged. Millennials desire a sense of value and purpose of life, causing a shift in Maslow's hierarchy. They see the world more optimistically than other generations. The results of this study provide tangible insights into organizational productivity, including critical takeaways, to guide millennials toward increasing workplace engagement. When millennials enhance, their involvement and commitment could have a significant effect on employee engagement.

According to the responses toward engagement strategies, the participants feel organizational leaders have failed to contribute values that support their workplace needs, interests, and well-being. Aligning engagement strategies to the findings and involving millennials in organizational decisions could positively impact their engagement levels.

In closing, this study contributed to the existing literature by interviewing 25 millennials and their lived experiences of employee engagement. Each generation within the workplace has distinct wants, needs, and generational values regarding workplace engagement. This research could contribute to the continuously emerging discussions and analysis of the engagement phenomenon. This study revealed that millennials' different lived perspectives of employee engagement, and future research should strive to understand employee engagement from a larger group of millennial subjects.

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Appendix: Millennial Interview Protocol

The intent of the millennial interview protocol in this research is to conduct a dialogue to identify and report the millennials' lived experiences and perspectives of employee engagement. Exploring the leadership strategies needed to build and improve employee engagement.

Interview Protocol Process:

1. The interview session will begin with greetings, introduction, and a review of the research topic.
2. A review of the consent form.
3. The participant will be told that the interview will take approximately one-hour and the interview will be (audio) recorded.
4. The participant will be given a unique identifier four-digit number for recording confidentiality.
5. At the end of the interview, an appreciation will be shown by thanking them for participating in the study and asking for permission (if needed) to contact them for additional information, and if they would like to know the results of the study.
6. Follow up interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

Interview Questions:

Please explain your answer to the best of your experience

1. What is your lived experience of employee engagement?
2. What is your experience of how disengaged employees affect organizational performance?
3. What is your perspective based upon your experience of how your management team implements strategies to improve performance?
4. What is your experience of the key job-related influences that affected your decision to be engaged or disengaged in your current position?
5. Please share any additional assumptions based upon your experience of why you and your peers may become disengaged in the workplace.