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Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Millennial Workers

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, Nova Southeastern University, 2007

BS, Barry University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

As of 2020, millennials became the largest generation in the workforce, impacting the U.S. economy by $30 billion in turnover annually. It has become increasingly challenging to attract and retain millennial generation employees. Business leaders face financial and operational decreases due to millennial employee turnover. Using transformational leadership and generational theories as the conceptual lens, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. The participants included six business leaders in the southeastern United States who implemented successful retention and motivational strategies. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, a review of company public records, and the organizations' websites. Yin's 5-stage analysis was used to analyze the data, which enabled identifying three themes: competitive benefits, workplace values, and open communication and feedback. A key recommendation is for leaders to use transformational leadership tenets to recognize the millennial cohort's distinctiveness to support retention strategies that foster increased employee engagement to enhanced employee commitment and willingness to participate in their organizations' successes. The implications for positive social change include the potential for business leaders to implement transformational leadership strategies to improve the workplace environment, increase job satisfaction, and reduce turnover, thereby increasing organizational profitability and productivity and improving local economies.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my late mother, Maria D. Barbosa, who will always be my inspiration. I thank my kids, Mario, Jasmine, and Kyla, my daughter-in-law, Lauren, and my granddaughter, Niveya, who continue to be the driving force to be the best version of me. You have brought me joy, taught me patience, and been my purpose for living life to the fullest. I love you all for who you are and know that you are all my favorites.

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   My brothers, Sylvestre, Emanual, Joe, Luis, Eric, Virgilio, and Jorge, you are all my heart and soul; thank you for giving me your unconditional love. My love John, thank you for believing in me and being my cheerleader. My best friends: Justina (Juju), for being my lifelong sister and knowing no matter how far apart we are, we are always there for each other. Debbie, for the courage you gave me to start my educational journey; you believed in me before I believed in myself. Elisabeth (Lis), you have been my rock, my confidant, and my champion. I could not have done this without your support. Karin, thank you for all of your encouragement. You are a kind, giving, and generous person that I have had the pleasure to have in my life. Thank you to my military family, who challenged me to go further than I could have imagined. Many more people have seen me through this journey; your support means the world to me.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Approximately 75% of the workforce will be millennials by 2020, demanding relevant and meaningful work with strong coaching and leadership, personal development, flexible work schedule, and a sense of accomplishment as key job factors (Holmberg-Wright et al., 2017). Millennial generation employees may leave an organization when the work is not interesting or lack a supportive leader or environment (Guchait et al., 2015). High turnover from millennial generation employees creates operational instability for a leader (Brown et al., 2015). Thus, organizational leaders may use innovative strategies for attracting and retaining millennial generation employees.

Background of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore organizational leaders' attraction and retention of millennial generation employees. Organizational leaders face several challenges when trying to decrease turnover rates. The challenges include employees' experience, knowledge, training, perception of the organization, and job satisfaction, all of which can affect companies' ability to hire and retain quality and valuable employees (Najjar & Fares, 2017).

Organizational leaders need to understand more about millennial workers and how to attract them to an organization and retain them (Giambatista et al., 2017). Millennial generation workers' motivation differs from prior generations (Gallup, 2016). Millennial employees have values and worldviews different from other generations (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015). The practical implications of this study include providing

organizational leaders with innovative leadership strategies along with insight on attracting and retaining this generation in the workplace.

Problem Statement

It has become increasingly challenging to attract and retain millennial generation employees (Wong et al., 2017). Outcomes from a national sample show the average employee between the ages of 25 and 34 stayed with an organization for 2.9 years from 2006 to 2016 (U.S. Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2016). The general business problem is that business leaders face financial and operational decreases due to millennial employee turnover (Frankel, 2016). The specific business problem is that some organizational leaders lack the strategies to motivate and retain talented millennial employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders used to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. By identifying leadership practices, management will know how to manage expectations better and identify motivators and factors millennials perceive as supporting job retention and satisfaction. The target population was six managers who work for businesses in the southeast region of the United States with experience motivating and retaining employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential to increase employees' job satisfaction and to improve working conditions, which can benefit their relationships with managers, co-workers, families, and communities.

Nature of the Study

There are three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method (Yin, 2018). I chose the qualitative multiple case study design for collecting in-depth data on the participants' experiences. The qualitative method consists of a comprehensive approach to explore human experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) revealed that the quantitative method involves analyzing statistical data while examining a theory that considers relationships or differences among variables. A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because an understanding of the relationships or differences among variables would not address the specific business problem of strategies used to motivate millennial employees.

Additionally, a quantitative approach had constraints because participants do not respond to open-ended questions, which results in limited variables (Yin, 2016). Patton (2015) stated that the mixed method approach requires combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Consequently, neither quantitative nor mixed methods were appropriate for this study because each method uses statistics to examine relationships and differences among variables. This study centered on strategies organizations use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees successfully.

Key qualitative research designs include phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, and case studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Narrative researchers use participants' illustrations, such as stories, to identify and explore phenomena (Morse, 2015). However, reconstructing participants' experiences into narratives was not the goal of my study. Phenomenological design involves how participants experience and

perceive a phenomenon (Ramani & Mann, 2016). Phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study due to the method to study human experience from a specific, definable phenomenon (Yin, 2016). Ethnography research involves a comprehensive illustration of cultural phenomena (Ramani & Mann, 2016). Researchers use an ethnography design to study the culture of individuals and groups, which was not the purpose of this study (Ramani & Mann, 2016). The case study design was most appropriate to explore strategies to increase retention and motivate millennial workers.

<div align="center">**Research Question**</div>

What strategies do organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees?

The following interview questions address the central research question:

1. Which of your strategies are most effective in motivating and retaining millennial employees?

2. How have you implemented these strategies for motivating and retaining millennial employees?

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for motivating and retaining millennial employees?

4. What barriers have you encountered in implementing your strategies to motivate and retain millennial workers?

5. How did you address the barriers to implementing your motivation and retention strategies for the millennial workers?

6. What additional aspects would you like to discuss regarding motivation and retention strategies affecting millennial workers?

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

Transformational leadership theory and generational theory were the primary theoretical components of the conceptual framework for this study. Burns (1978) developed the concept of transformational leadership theory, which initially distinguished between transactional and transforming leaders. Bodenhausen and Curtis (2016) suggested that transformational leadership theory addresses the strategic issues managers face when transitioning a workforce from baby boomers to millennials. A useful organizational framework integrates engagement strategies and thoughtful research into the connections between development and efficacy to motivate and retain a workforce (Yanfei et al., 2018). Transformational leadership addresses the difficulties, which business leaders face in developing and implementing relevant engagement strategies to transition a workforce (Frieder et al., 2018). Transformational leadership theory relates to the characteristics of the engagement strategy phenomena business managers use to engage a multigenerational workforce (Bodenhausen & Curtis, 2016).

Karl Mannheim (1952) defined the theory of generations with a fundamental principle, which affirms individuals born in the same period share common social and historical experiences. The principle of the generational theory is that individuals have a distinctive formative experience that creates common behavior and thought processes (Padayachee, 2018). Generational theorists postulate that early life experiences can shape generational cohort members' worldviews and behaviors (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015).

Behaviors may be consistent across members of the same generational group. The transformational and generational theory could underlie the strategies business leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are used:

Baby boomer: The term baby boomers refers to the generation born between 1946 and 1964 or a group of people with common characteristics attributed to people born during that period (Venter, 2017).

Generational differences: Generational differences define a recurring distinction between generations created through the collective impressions of notable historical experiences (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

Generation X: Generation X describes the generation cohort of people born between 1965 and 1979 or a group of people with common characteristics attributed to people born during that period (Becton et al., 2014).

Millennials: The term millennials refers to the generation born between 1980 and 1995 or a group of people with common characteristics attributed to people born during that time (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). The millennial generation is also known as Generation Y (Sherman, 2015).

Motivation factors: Motivation factors are job attitudes that reflect a person's intensity, determination, and perseverance in the quest for advancement, growth, learning opportunities, and achievement (Ujma, & Ingram, 2019). The six factors related to job

satisfaction are achievement, recognition, job duties, responsibility, advancement, and growth (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Multigenerational workforce: A multigenerational workforce describes multiple generations working together within an organization (Moore et al., 2016).

Organizational culture: An organizational culture is the shared values, beliefs, and customs of a group (Ujma & Ingram, 2019). Organizational culture provides individuals with the norms for practices and behavior (Ujma & Ingram, 2019).

The silent generation: The silent generation are members of the generational cohort born between 1922 and 1945 or a group of people with common characteristics attributed to people born during that time (Ng et al., 2010). The silent generation is also known as veterans and traditionalists (Kelly et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership theory: Transformational leadership theory describes leaders who articulate the vision of the organization's future and can use their leadership skills to influence their organizations (Burns, 1978).

<div align="center">**Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**</div>

Assumptions

Assumptions associated with a research study are conceptualized views accepted as accurate, despite limited evidence of this truth (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). My primary assumption for this study was the participants' attitudes, thoughts, and feelings represent the attitudes, thoughts, and feelings of managers who have experience retaining and motivating millennial workers. I assumed participants might influence leadership development for millennials in their organizations. I assumed participants would answer

all interview questions thoroughly and honestly. The assumptions identified presented the basis for obtaining purposeful samples for qualitative assessment.

Limitations

Limitations refer to conditions of a study not under the researcher's control, affecting the outcome of the study and results (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). Possible bias is a limitation of all research. My research biases could result from my perceptions, and my experiences could create the potential for ambiguous research results. Attitudes developed through experiences may impede effective data collection and analysis. Developing methods to mitigate research limits is valuable within the qualitative method and case study design (van den Berg & Struwig, 2017). To mitigate my biases, I transcribed the interviews and subsequently conducted member checking to ensure the authenticity of each participant's data. Member checking adds creditability to data analysis and reporting by having the participants review the analyzed interviews and data collected for accuracy (Morse, 2015).

Delimitations

Delimitations are parameters that confine the scope of a research study (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). I used a marketing and research company in Coral Springs, Florida, to select six companies with experience in retaining and motivating millennial employees. I delimited this study by the research question and participants selected. Responses collected came from experienced leaders working towards motivating and retaining millennials. The participants selected had a minimum of 5 years of experience leading other employees.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Large and small businesses acknowledge that retaining a talented workforce is vital to their organization's success (Wong et al., 2017). Business leaders who develop effective retention strategies and implementation processes can attract and retain talented millennial employees (Anderson et al., 2017). These business leaders can reduce the workforce shortage stemming from retiring baby boomers and avoid turnover and replacement costs.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study could contribute to a positive social change by helping organizations understand the strategies for motivating and retaining a millennial employee, which could assist in improving work environments and reducing turnover, which has a direct effect on profitability, customer satisfaction, and the overall success of the organization. Providing leaders with insight into what they can do to improve employee motivation and retention can affect turnover and help an organization stay competitive. The ability for businesses to remain competitive allows companies to continue operating, which could significantly affect job creation and job retention (Rathi & Lee, 2015). Consequently, these organizations could continue to provide leadership roles within their community and help catalyze the local economy (Peloza et al., 2015).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies for leaders to motivate and retain the millennial generation workforce. The need to understand the

strategy for motivation and retention is imperative as employers are preparing for the boomer generation workforce's retirement and seeking to retain the millennial generation workforce. The review of the literature focused on transformational leadership, generational theory, and the historical backgrounds and characteristics of generations in the United States. The research completed is consistent in identifying that management sets the tone for the organization. Companies that invest time, money, and education may develop loyal and motivated employees (Ferrary, 2015). Based on this claim, large and small businesses everywhere can acknowledge that workforce retention is vital to their organization's success.

In this literature review, the professional and academic literature is the foundation for the topic of millennial generation motivation and retention. The organization of the literature is by topic and obtained through academic libraries, websites, and databases. The literature found included the search of keywords from Walden University's library; the organization of the literature review consists of headings for (a) transformational leadership theory, (b) generational theory, (c) generations characteristics, (d) millennials in the workforce, (e) managing and leading millennials, (f) motivation theories and millennials, (g) retaining millennial employees. I used Ulrich's Global Serials Directory to cross-reference each source to confirm peer-reviewed material. Table 1. summarizes the various types of sources.

Table 1

Calculation of Sources

Reference type	Number of references	Dates less than 5 years from completion date (between 2015-2020)	Number of references older than 2015
Peer-reviewed articles	108	100	8
Books	15	6	9
Other	2	2	0
Total	125	108	17

The study of leadership was integral to developing leadership styles between 1904 and 2005 (Bass, 2008). Leadership theories in previous generations do not address the means for motivating and influencing millennials (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). Given the significant differences, preferences, and unique needs of four generations of workers, the gap poses challenges for managers that emphasize leaders' need to understand each cohort (Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). Thus, organizational leaders must employ a multigenerational collaborative culture that allows millennials to flourish and eventually prepare them for leadership positions (Wiedmer, 2015). Organization leaders can use the data to understand the multigenerational workforce and incorporate leadership strategies to motivate and retain millennials.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Founded by James Burns (1978), transformational leadership is the most studied theory on leadership (Ennis et al., 2018). Burns (1978) believed that transformational leadership cultivated followership, leading to deeper engagement and commitment levels.

Transformational leaders are inspirational leaders who can motivate followers to share a vision on the importance and value of achieving a group or organizational goals (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) further developed the theory as a leadership process that fosters a deeper level of relationship with followers and a higher level of performance and commitment.

Transformational leadership denotes a method by which leaders motivate followers to identify with organizational goals and interests to perform beyond expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1994). According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders influence their followers' development and transformation through the four dimensions of leadership behaviors: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Bass, 1985). Further, individualized consideration is when a leader pays special attention to each followers' needs and acts as a mentor or coach (Bass, 1985). The leaders do this by personalizing their interactions with followers, communicating effectively, and challenging followers with meaningful tasks to help them develop (Geier, 2016). Intellectual stimulation refers to leaders that encourage creativity in their followers to the degree to which the leader welcomes challenges and solicits followers' ideas (Yanfei et al., 2018). Inspirational motivation involves influencing and energizing followers through a shared vision (Rudolph et al., 2018). Finally, idealized influence refers to leaders who put the followers' needs above their interests and are role models for high ethical behavior and moral conduct for their followers (Frieder et al., 2018). Through these leadership behaviors, transformational

leaders often achieve organizational outcomes by producing superior levels of employee

performance, commitment, motivation, and satisfaction (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leaders can achieve increased outcomes by taking their

followers beyond personal interest and aligning employee behaviors to develop a

corporate interest for the sake of the team or organization (Bass, 2008; Rudolph et al.,

2018). Northouse (2016) summarized the paradigm of transformational leaders by which

leaders transform their followers by making them more aware of task outcomes,

acknowledge followers' higher-order needs, and stimulate followers to perform tasks for

the good of the organization. Transformational leaders can articulate the organizations'

vision through their vision to empower followers to take responsibility for achieving that

vision (Buil et al., 2019). These leaders challenge followers to evoke a deeper

organizational commitment level and reach a higher vision through innovation and

creativity by relating to follower needs and providing mentoring and coaching

(Northouse, 2016). As a result, both the leader and follower strive to meet organizational

goals necessary to achieve the vision.

Transformational leadership is a more effective leadership style for encouraging

multigenerational engagement behavior (Buil et al., 2019). The leader develops specific

leadership engagement strategies at multiple levels, which creates a culture that promotes

learning through teaching, mentoring, and training (Lee & Kuo, 2019). Lee and Kuo

(2019) conceived that leaders develop their followers' organizational commitment and

job satisfaction through relationship building and trust development, thereby increasing

engagement levels. From this perspective, transformational leaders can directly impact

employee engagement and develop strategies for a transitioning multigenerational workforce.

Generational Theory

Mannheim (1952) introduced the early theory of generations from a sociological perspective. Mannheim surmised that social locations determined generational factors. He identified that feelings, thoughts, and behaviors were formative experiences that occur during youth. Mannheim introduced the concept of generations as the geographical and cultural location; they are actual as oppose to potential participation in social and intellectual currents of their time and place as constituting a generation (Bolin, 2017).

Ryder (1965) took Mannheim's generation theory one step further and depicted a generation as an observable collective group of people bound together by the same events and timeframe. Ryder presented the generational theory from a demographic generational cohort perspective. Consequently, the basis of generational cohort theory is the principle that shapes an individual's philosophy by the period of birth, hence values, ideas, and experiences shared by members of the same cohort coverage (Ryder, 1965).

Inglehart (1977) presented a different theoretical concept of generational theory, where he found a correlation between the philosophy of materialism and periods of recession. Inglehart noted that post-industrial societies shifted to materialistic goals by placing substantial importance on self-expression and quality of life rather than economic and physical security. According to the generational theory, generational cycles occur in the same order, and significant events shape generational characteristics (Inglehart, 1977).

Strauss and Howe (1991) expanded the generational theory to provide context to each generational cohort's thought processes, behaviors, values, and lifecycles. Strauss and Howe (1991) offered that a generational cohort comprises people born during a confined time of consecutive years that share historical events and social trends. Strauss and Howe (1997) observed that the United States has only had four generational cycles, *fourth turning*, since the 1620s, and they have been repetitive. Each generational type typically falls in order: prophet, nomad, hero, and artist, which repeats sequentially. Marked by a crisis, the fourth turning destroys social order, at which time a new cycle commences. Thus, the characteristics of the next generation are predictable.

Once separated by cohort, shared values, goals, and beliefs can classify these groups that differentiate them from other groups. According to Strauss and Howe (1991), similarities occur with people within age groups when they go through periods in their lives. Though not all members of each generation have the same traits, leaders may use generational theory as indicators of leadership strategies that may align retention and job satisfaction (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). The current workforce has four generations. Each generation has different characteristics, working together to accomplish collective organization goals that involve exchanging skills or experiences unique to each generation (Wiedmer, 2015).

Generational Characteristics

According to Rudolph et al. (2018), today's workforce includes representation from four generations: traditionalist (born between 1900 and 1945), baby boomer (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979), and millennial

(born between 1980 and 1995). Each generation cohort has different motivational factors, needs, values, and goals (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Additionally, each generation has a historical perspective, characteristics, and job satisfiers (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

    The Silent Generation. The Silent Generation, also known as Veterans, is a cohort born between 1900 and 1945 (Wiedmer, 2015). The Silent Generation is the oldest in the workforce. Although the silent generation only makes up 2% of the current workforce, this generation is known as hard workers, loyal and disciplined employees that make work a priority (Clark, 2017). The Great Depression of the 1930s had a significant impact on this cohort because it affected that generation's ability to work and make a living (Clark, 2017). Having overcome financial adversity, the silent generation developed a sense of pride and determination, striving for financial stability (Clark, 2017).

    Baby Boomers. Baby boomers are born between 1946 and 1964 (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Influenced by numerous political and social events, including the Cold War, Watergate, desegregation, the Vietnam War, the feminist movement, the sexual revolution, and the pursuit of the *American Dream* (Becton et al., 2014). Baby boomers are loyal, committed, dependable, and they respect authority and hierarchy and evoke reciprocity. This generation believes in stability, whereas their career is of the most considerable importance (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Baby boomers have a strong work ethic, sometimes staying in one job and using opportunities within this one career during their lifetime (Clark, 2017).

Generation X. Generation X as those born between 1965 and 1979. Generation X's influence by economic uncertainty, the energy crisis, the Cold War, Y2K, corporate downsizing, and witnessing their parents losing jobs after years of loyal employment (Becton et al., 2014). The first-generation *latchkey kids* due to single parenthood and an increase of two working parents (Becton et al., 2014; Zopiatis et al., 2012). This generation's work ethics include working smarter, not harder, as they strive for work-life balance. Generation X wants clear direction and structure and is suspicious of organizations (Zopiatis et al., 2012). Generation X employees strive to balance their personal and professional life with a work-to-live attitude and will only occasionally sacrifice this balance (Zopiatis et al., 2012).

The Millennial Generation. Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) defined the millennial generation as those born between 1980 and 1995. The end of the Cold War influenced the millennial generation, electronic media, social media, school shootings, terrorist attacks, AIDS, 9/11, children of divorce, and economic expansion (Sherman, 2015; Zopiatis et al., 2012). The first generation of children with schedules raised in a child-focused world where they want it all and want it now (Smith & Nichols, 2015). This generation learned to multi-task and expect immediate answers due to the Internet, cell phones, and social media (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017). This generation's work ethic is balancing work, family, life, community involvement, and self-development (Ozcelik, 2015; Sherman, 2015). Millennials value prospects for flex time, job sharing, and vacations, appreciating their way of life over promotion in the organization (Sherman, 2015).

Millennials in the Workforce

Kosterlitz and Lewis (2017) found that leaders must adapt their practices and expectations of millennials to motivate and retain top talented workers. Warshawski et al. (2017) noted the importance of leaders gaining a perspective on workplace behaviors and millennials' unique characteristics. Exposure to educational, economic, social, and political environments makes millennial generation traits different from previous generations (Holmberg-Wright et al., 2017). For instance, this generation, shaped by frequent positive feedback and reassurance, helicopter parents, technology advances, and political and economic turmoil, impacted millennials' attitudes, preferences, and expectations (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). The challenge of developing millennials through leadership goes further than motivating and retaining them; this requires understanding them, which creates an environment where they thrive (Smith & Nichols, 2015).

The millennial generation pursues meaningful work experiences, career development opportunities, work-life balance and thrives on teamwork, recognition, and frequent feedback (Stewart et al., 2017). According to Smith and Nichols (2015), millennials value meaningful work instead of money and titles. Millennials expect to advance their careers and are more likely to look for better career opportunities (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Wong et al. (2017) argue that millennials seek new employment opportunities when they feel that their current working conditions are no longer satisfactory. Even in cases where they do not leave an organization, millennials seek career-enhancing opportunities within the organization (Tan et al., 2019). Similarly,

LaCore (2015) suggested that millennials tend to prefer challenging jobs, which provides them avenues to advance their careers.

      Work-Life Balance. Twenge (2010) found that work-life balance is crucial for millennial retention and job satisfaction. Millennials are likely to stay in an organization with flexible work hours, telecommuting opportunities, and unique holiday hours (Moore et al., 2016). Friedline and West (2016) believed that millennials have little need for high-paying jobs versus having a job that allows them the flexibility to work from home when needed. Moreover, they prefer the reward of time off from work to enable them to take vacations, spend time with family, and avoid working long hours like the boomers ahead of them (Srivastava & Banerjee, 2016). Moore et al. (2016) determined that millennials will choose an organization that provides a work-life balance and work opportunity to achieve their professional and personal goals (LaCore, 2015),

      Meaningful Work. According to Tan et al. (2019), a characteristic that stands out from the millennial generation compared to the older generations is the appreciation of meaningful work. Millennials' motivation lies with their need to belong (Srivastava & Banerjee, 2016). They desire self-actualization and want to work in a meaningful role (Tan et al., 2019). Millennials seek to work in an environment that is enjoyable and fulfilling over financial gains (Clark, 2017). Thus, Tan et al. contend that millennials prefer to work for an organization with social awareness and social responsibility commitment.

      Communication. Millennials are digital natives who grew up with a vast knowledge of technology and social media dependency more than older generations

(Clark, 2017; Devaney, 2015). According to Kosterlitz and Lewis (2017), technology and communications had an unprecedented impact on this generation. The Internet provides an outlet to social media and other digital technology, keeping millennials informed of current events and a platform for others to hear them when they speak (Ojo et al., 2019). As a result, millennials see the Internet as a motivator for social change and awareness, which has incited them toward a desire to make the world a better place (Karakas et al., 2015).

Another important aspect of communication is the millennials' expectations of technology in the workplace (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017). Weber (2017) maintained that 53% of millennials would likely work for an organization with enhanced communication and drive innovation. Millennials expect an employer to provide state-of-the-art technological devices and believe that technology makes them more effective in the workplace (Wong et al., 2017). Nevertheless, millennials are not averse to using their own technological devices to ensure increased mobility, flexibility, and satisfaction (Rosa & Hastings, 2018).

Motivations. Influenced by technology, millennials are solution-oriented, innovative, and self-organized, yet motivated by personal relationships and human connection (Devaney, 2015). Abbas Saeed et al. (2018) identified millennial motivators as challenging work, flexible working hours, friendly and objective supervisors, a pleasant working environment, and an increased opportunity for group collaboration. Anderson et al. (2017) noted that millennials' educational upbringing involved group work and presentations. Millennials thrive on the social aspects of work, such as fun and

friendly coworkers, where they can develop lasting relationships with their coworkers (Stankiewicz & Lychmus, 2017)

Reward Preferences. Millennials view rewards as communication of appreciation and recognition from organizational leaders (Anderson et al., 2017). This generation appreciates acknowledging all the efforts they put into work (Jauhar et al., 2017). Millennials prefer rewards from the organization and leaders in the form of being pleased over a job assigned and recognition of their actions or contribution (Pregnolato et al., 2017). Jauhar et al. (2017) described this generation's reward preference as the ability to acquire stock options, formal and informal feedback, social network opportunities, and flexible work schedules that allow for work-life balance. Millennials relish supportive settings that provide every opportunity to achieve and succeed (Devaney, 2015).

Millennial Stereotypes. Millennials have difficulty getting respect from the older generations, mainly attributed to the younger generation's stereotypes (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Differences in work values and motivation may account for many of the common stereotypes associated with millennials (Twenge, 2010). Thompson and Gregory (2012) detailed other common stereotypes associated with this generation as entitled, needy, casual, and disloyal. According to Gallup (2016), unlike the previous generations, 6 in 10 millennials will seek new employment opportunities, which can account for the generational differences. Nevertheless, millennials exceed the other generations in educational attainment, adaptability to change, creativity, and innovation (Rosa & Hastings, 2018).

Unlike any previous generation, millennials rearing involved praise, guidance, and encouragement, ultimately affecting their workplace behaviors (Clark, 2017). van Ingen et al. (2015) disclosed that millennials' parents are baby boomers, also referred to as helicopter parents. van Ingen et al. (2015) conducted a study of 190 undergraduate students ages 16-28 with helicopter parenting effects on peer attachment and self-efficacy. The authors revealed that helicopter parents inadvertently foster dependence and negatively affecting their adult childrens' ability to become independent (van Ingen et al., 2015). Additionally, the authors conceded that children of these overbearing parents are unprepared for real-life experiences because they do not deal with the consequences of making a poor decision, as their parents fix all their problems (van Ingen et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Schiffrin and Liss (2017) report the adverse outcomes of helicopter parenting and millennials' overall well-being. Schiffrin and Liss found that over-involved parents are associated with increased depression, anxiety, interpersonal dependency, and self-entitlement (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017). van Ingen et al. (2015) found that helicopter parents continue to coddle their children in every aspect of their lives, which has caused the millennial generation to have a financial and emotional dependency on their parents. Nevertheless, once millennials enter the workplace, this generation seeks more individuality and self-sufficiency than previous generations (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). The manager quickly fills a guiding parent's role for millennials in the workforce (Ng et al., 2016).

Entitled. With positive reinforcement, rewards for participation rather than performance, and attention received by parents, millennials earned the label of trophy

kids (Holmberg-Wright et al., 2017). Thompson and Gregory (2012) report that millennials perceived entitled description as having intense ambition from years of pressure to perform and high expectations from their parents. In a study conducted by Rentz (2015), the author describes millennials plagued with stereotypes such as having a sense of entitlement, narcissistic, materialistic, and poor work ethic. According to Gallup (2016), 55% of millennials lack engagement at work, which has led to their indifference. Indifference and entitled are not synonymous but are often confused because millennials come across as wanting more (Gallup, 2016). If there is another job opportunity, they will take advantage, as millennials look for a job that makes them feel worthwhile (Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

Needy. Millennials have a distinctive need for specific and frequent feedback and direction, which is why they carry needy and high maintenance as a stereotype (Anderson et al., 2017; Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Anderson et al. (2017) studied the characteristics of the millennial generation entering the workforce while exploring effective communication methods for leaders to provide feedback to millennials. Anderson et al. summarized that millennials raised with constant encouragement and praise had brought the workplace demand. Twenge (2010) revealed that millennials viewed supervision as job involvement and normative commitment, unlike older generations who believe less supervisor is empowerment.

Moreover, changes in the American education systems, specifically the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, could explain this stereotype (Gamson & Hodge, 2016). Koltz et al. (2017) stated that the focus of education shifted from learning to performance, and

millennials learned that outcomes matter more than the process of learning itself.

Additionally, Koltz et al. found teacher effectiveness lowered based on millennial

students being more dependent on frequent guidance and motivation. Millennials have

become accustomed to this type of feedback and come to work expecting that their

managers will not be any different (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Hence, millennials

became accustomed to receiving frequent feedback on their performance (Ng et al.,

2010).

     Disloyal. During the recession of 2008, millennials witnessed many adults losing

their jobs, losing homes, and experience the disappearance of 401(k)s and pensions

(Holmberg-Wright et al., 2017). Coincidently, the Great Recession forced millennials

into unemployment or under-employment just as they began to enter the workforce

(Gallup, 2016). Consequently, millennials were more receptive to a meaningful life than

a meaningful job (Ng et al., 2010). Weeks and Schaffert (2019) conducted two studies to

understand generational differences in defining meaningful work. The first study

examined what each generational cohort defined as meaningful work through qualitative

in-depth interviews, which revealed that each cohort defined their jobs differently and

negatively perceived the other cohorts' desires for meaning. The second study mapped

generational cohorts on the comprehensive model of meaningful work, which revealed

that the cohorts are similar in their desire to develop into independence. Weeks and

Schaffert found that millennials believed a meaningful job includes personal happiness,

fulfillment, and helping others. According to Weeks and Schaffert (2019), a millennial

would likely switch employers or jobs or ensure that they are the proper fit for the job.

Nevertheless, by contrast to older generations, millennials were averse to staying loyal to one corporation for decades only to have the potential of a layoff (Frankel, 2016; Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). Furthermore, Frankel (2016) found that millennials would leave their employer if they felt that leadership was outdated and asked to dedicate an unnecessary amount of time at work just for the sake of being there.

  Casual. Advances in technology impacted societal awareness for the work-life-social value with the millennial generation (Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). The work-life-social balance movement became prevalent once mobile technology and the importance of knowledge workers combined (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). According to Thompson and Gregory (2012), technology eliminated distance and time challenges, allowing the ability to work anywhere. Additionally, the shift in technology-enabled knowledge workers created a preference for a less formal workplace (Ertas, 2015). Stewart et al. (2017) stated that as millennials sought to find a manageable balance of work and life demands, work no longer became a place but a thing. Millennial workers desired a casual workplace with less structured hourly schedules and dressed casually (Stewart et al., 2017). Adding to the millennials' mindset of performance, not appearance; what they are wearing does not matter; performance and results should (Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

Managing and Leading Millennials

  Organizational leaders must develop a strategic focus on millennial characteristics, essential in millennials' motivation and retention (Wong et al., 2017). However, perceived stereotypes associated with the millennials may present difficulty for leaders if they continue to misunderstand millennials' characteristics without paying

attention to the attitude and skills of millennials in their workplace (Rentz, 2015). Many

criticize millennials as needy, disloyal, entitled, and casual (Thompson & Gregory,

2012). Stewart et al. (2017) described millennials' additional characterization to require

personal attention and feedback along with the desire for social relationships at work,

which can challenge leaders. Thompson and Gregory (2012) noted that leaders who

identify millennials' traits are more likely to develop strategies to engage them. The task

of engaging millennials through leadership goes beyond attracting them; leaders must

create an environment where they thrive (Gallup, 2016). Fu and Deshpande (2014)

revealed that the link to millennial engagement is managers and their ability to support,

engage, empower, and care about them not only as an employee but as a person. Leaders

that manage millennials with stereotype-based judgments are likely to fail in attracting

and retaining talent (Rentz, 2015).

Leaders must have a deeper understanding of the new generational cohort's

environment and context to gain better perspectives on their work motivation (Thompson

& Gregory, 2012). Millennial's motivation develops with the need to belong and desire

self-actualization (Samanta & Lamprakis, 2018). Rosa and Hastings (2018) identified that

millennials are innovative and individualistic and have a different attitude toward work

than older generations. As discussed previously, millennials prefer a work-life balance

with flexible working hours, meaningful work, and understanding leaders (Stewart et al.,

2017). Millennials are more socially and culturally aware and respect ethnic and cultural

diversity (Rosa & Hastings, 2018). Holmberg-Wright et al. (2017) found that millennial

engagement increased when working conditions allow millennials to succeed personally

and professionally. The engagement requirements included a clear career path, mentoring and leadership, strong coaching, alignment of organizational mission and vision statement, and a semistructured work environment (Holmberg-Wright et al., 2017). Leaders must recognize that these working conditions are in line with the millennials' need to gain more responsibility and advance rapidly in their careers and prepare to engage this cohort (Wong et al., 2017)

The organization's ongoing success and sustainability are dependent on the leaders' ability to adapt leadership styles that are suitable for younger workers (Wong et al., 2017). The consideration of transformational leadership, which promotes communication, individual needs, and relationships, intuitively appears to be a model that will attract and retain millennials in the workplace (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015). Bodenhausen and Curtis (2016) recognized transformational leadership as preferred by millennials due to mentoring and coaching through repeated feedback to the followers. Organizational leaders with the ability to adapt their leadership style to this model will achieve more with millennial employees (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015). Based on the existing theoretical framework, transformational leadership uses engaging behaviors to build trusting relationships by coaching, feedback, and individual attention (Bass, 2008). Transformational leadership increases the leader-follower relationship quality, which is prudent to attract, motivate, and retain millennial workers (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015).

Motivation, Theories, and Millennials

Herzberg Two-Factor Theory. Herzberg et al. (1959) theorized that certain workplace factors cause job dissatisfaction, while other factors cause job satisfaction. In

their study, Herzberg et al. (1959) examined the motivation of the workers. Based on

their study, they developed the motivation-hygiene, also known as the two-factor theory

of job attitudes. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory consists of two factors: motivators

(intrinsic) and hygiene (extrinsic). Herzberg et al. (1959) identified job satisfaction

features as motivators and aspects of job dissatisfaction as hygiene factors. Motivating

factors include achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth, and advancement

(Herzberg et al., 1959). The hygiene factors are working conditions, salary, supervision

style, status, job security, company policies, and relationship with supervisors and peers

(Herzberg et al., 1959). By eliminating the hygiene factors identified by Herzberg et al.

(1959), the worker will then move to a neutral state of job satisfaction. The worker will

not become satisfied until the use of motivators is in place.

Motivation can increase through changes in a worker's job and responsibilities

and job enrichment (Porter & Steers, 1973). Herzberg (2008) revealed that the

underutilization of a worker's talent is the most common organization's failure.

Underutilization of a worker's talent is prevalent in the younger workforce, recent

graduates, and entry-level employees who need to prove themselves before receiving

more responsibilities (Herzberg, 2008). Leaders who do not provide the motivators to

their employees hinder their creativity and desire (Herzberg, 2008; Porter & Steers,

1973). Work that is not stimulating or meaningful reduces employee motivation and job

satisfaction. (Herzberg et al., 1959; Putra et al., 2015). Additionally, Najjar and Fares

(2017) found that supportive dealings with supervisors can promote retention and

suggests using reward and incentive programs as a retention strategy for millennial employees.

Based on Herzbergs' theory, organizational leaders use motivators that are intrinsic to develop retention strategies. For example, Yang et al. (2012) derived that to retain employees, leaders must use intrinsic motivation such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and growth. Extrinsic motivation, such as salary and excellent work conditions, increased job satisfaction, and commitment. Moreover, Abbas Saeed et al. (2018) presented a study to understand better millennials' motivation factors and retention in the workplace. One hundred fifty respondents revealed four factors: job security plans, salary increase, accountability, working conditions, and impact the millennial employee's retention in the workplace. Abbas Saeed et al. (2018) determined that it may lead to millennials having a level of commitment and confidence towards an organization by improving those motivation factors.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need. Abraham Maslow (1943) established a set of needs that describes motivation as stages of growth that lead to self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a way to describe the natural progression to be motivated (1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs has five components: (a) physiological needs, (b) safety needs, (c) social needs, (d) self-esteem needs, and (e) self-actualization needs (1943). Each step's achievement is necessary to elevate to the next level, and an individual cannot move to the next goal without meeting a lower need. Maslow (1943) believed that everyone's motivation first began with the most basic physiological needs. These needs include the basic needs for human survival: food, air, water, clothing,

shelter, and sex (Maslow, 1943). A person cannot move to the next step of safety until their basic needs are satisfied. Safety for an individual includes not having a feeling of threats, a positive economic condition, and limited opposition (Maslow, 1943). When the physiological and safety needs are satisfied, then the social level of the hierarchy of needs (belonging and love) follows (Maslow, 1943). Social needs can come in interpersonal relationships, large social groups, and gatherings, mentors, colleagues, close friends, or lovers. An individual's need to love and receive love is strong enough that, if left unmet, it may lead to depression, loneliness, or anxiety (Maslow, 1943).

An employee with physiological, safety, and social needs satisfied may look for respect from others at the next level, self-esteem. Esteem is the need for each human to feel respected and to have self-respect. Esteem also refers to the recognition one receives when he or she is part of a group or relationship. The fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy is self-actualization. Maslow (1943) described self-actualization as a situation in which an individual discovers the full potential for self-fulfillment and growth. Management strategies for helping employees achieve self-actualization include employee engagement strategies, group coaching programs, and help individuals pursue life goals (Seheult, 2016).

Najjar and Fares (2017) investigated millennials' perceptions of workplace motivation using motivators detailed by Maslow and Herzberg. The authors discovered that millennials prioritized intrinsic motivation over the bottom line, valued meaningful work over the recognition of their contributions, and appreciated a collaborative team-based environment along with challenging work above pay (Najjar & Fares, 2017). Ennis

et al. (2018) conducted a study on transformational leadership and its indirect effect on an

employee's retention and organizational commitment. The results determined that

transformational leaders did increase the individuals' organizational commitment and

increased engagement (Ennis et al., 2018). Additionally, the authors identified

transformational leadership as a vital tool for transferring and retaining intuitional

knowledge from one generational cohort to another (Ennis et al., 2018). Ennis et al. noted

that transformational leaders took the time to understand each generation's uniqueness

and then adapted the interaction to match the preference of each cohort. Burns (1978)

insinuated that transformational leaders address Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs by

fulfilling followers' lower-level needs of safety and security and elevating them to the

higher-level needs of self-esteem self-actualization. Transformational leadership

positively affects organization commitment by developing employee's loyalty and

satisfying the employees' various needs through innovation, encouragement, and

involvement in decision making (Rudolph et al., 2018).

Job Satisfaction. An employee's overall job satisfaction is measured and defined

in many aspects. Job satisfaction can link to how individuals view their job or facets of

their job (Al-Shammari & Al-Am, 2018). Benevene et al. (2018) examined the impact of

employee satisfaction on organizational commitment and intentions to stay in the same

organization. Benevene et al. (2018) found the job satisfaction has a significant impact on

job performance, directly impacting organizational commitment.

Additionally, job satisfaction can improve job performance, motivation, increase

employee retention (Ujma & Ingram, 2019). Fu and Deshpande (2014) examined the

direct and indirect relationship of a caring climate and the impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance of 476 employees. Fu and Deshpande observed a profound impact on employee well-being, commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction when leaders gave public praise, personalized remarks in writing, or had a personal follow-up. Furthermore, developing a caring climate directly impacted organizational commitment and indirectly impacted job performance (Fu & Deshpande, 2014).

Pasha et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study to determine the transformational leadership style's effects on job satisfaction. Study findings indicated that transformational leadership was highly influential on job satisfaction due to leaders creating an environment where ideas, collaboration, and good communications. Similarly, Samanta and Lamprakis (2018) researched the attributes of 4 leadership models and the effect on followership. The researchers concluded that transformational leadership successfully increased followers' job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness compared to transactional leaders (Samanta & Lamprakis, 2018). Similarly, Deschamps et al. (2016) confirmed the link of employee motivation in the workplace with transformational leadership and its reciprocal relationship to job satisfaction.

Retaining Millennial Employees

Millennials are quickly becoming the largest group in the workplace; employers should understand the importance of effectively incorporating retention strategies for organizational success (Nolan, 2015). Ertas (2015) identified millennials as digital experts and recognized them for their lack of long-term tenure to organizations.

Additionally, millennials' work-life values are essential for all aspects of employment, such as autonomy, working conditions, and pay, along with work-related outcomes such as fulfillment and accomplishments (Ertas, 2015). Millennial workers often leave their organization when leaders do not consider a strategic retention plan that addresses their work-life values (Pregnolato et al., 2017). Leaders who identified and retained their top talented millennial workers by incorporating millennial employees' expectations enhanced the stability of the organization while attaining a competitive advantage (Smith & Nichols, 2015)

Researchers presented data on several strategies in addressing millennial retention. Millennials' positive workplace culture was vital to them, their job satisfaction, and retention intentions (Eason et al., 2018). Stewart et al. (2017) concluded from a research sample survey of 1,798 millennials that millennials would often leave their organization within one year without job satisfaction. Several other job retention strategies are critical to millennials, including work-life balance, meaningful positions, organizational fit, competitive pay, career advancement, mentoring, and recognition (Nolan, 2015; Pregnolato et al., 2017). Deery and Jago (2015) conducted a meta-analysis study investigating themes of how talent management and work-life balance applied to retention. The finding from the study showed younger employees' intent to leave organizations without work-life balance (Deery & Jago, 2015). According to Buzza (2017), millennial employees have higher exhaustion and burnout rate when they are in conflicts of balancing career and family, causing them to leave an organization. Creating organizational programs and policies that enable work-life balance that allows career

progression and a flexible work schedule are important ways to keep employees happy, satisfied, and loyal (Buzza, 2017).

Stewart et al. (2017) suggested that leaders provide millennials engaging performance feedback regularly to stimulate further growth. Millennials will not stay in an organization where there is not frequent praise and feedback (Fishman, 2016). Furthermore, millennials expect recognition, appropriate rewards, training and development, and personal career development (Ertas, 2015). Pregnolato et al. (2017) described taking advantage of these strategies for millennials who possess unique strengths and talents that positively impact organizational performance. Millennial workers, who acquire more education and are technically savvy, believe they should earn a higher income (Johnson & Ng, 2016).

Generational stereotyping and focusing on differences in work values can lead to job dissatisfaction, low morale, and increase employee turnover (Rosa & Hastings, 2018). Lack of understanding of the millennial generation created many negative perceptions and stereotypes (Rosa & Hastings, 2018). Stewart et al. (2017) revealed that millennials, while thought to be lazy compared to previous generations, have different motivators. Many millennials are overachievers, often taking work home with them, mostly due to blurred boundaries between work and home lives (Tan et al., 2019). Thompson and Gregory (2012) detailed that other common stereotypes associated with this generation are entitled, needy, casual, and disloyal compared to other generations. Nevertheless, millennials are multi-taskers and technological experts that have different motivators that require development through the right leadership (Smith & Nichols, 2015)

Transition and Summary

The literature review focused on the necessity for leaders to motivate and retain millennial employees. In this study, the emphasis is on how leaders may develop strategies to motivate and reduce the turnover of talented millennial employees. Because the purpose of the study concerned the leadership style leaders may use to motivate these younger employees, there were two theoretical frameworks used to triangulate the data. These theories provided perspectives on two relevant aspects of the problem: leader-follower communications described through the transformational leadership theory and generational theory or the reasoning to stay with a job as described using generational theory (Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Through Bass's transformational theory and Mannheim's generation theory, a leader may understand generational behaviors and motivators to discover retention strategies and methods. These two theories did serve as the conceptual framework for this study and will lead to an understanding of the strategies for retaining millennial employees and the leadership characteristics leaders need to have to increase the retention of millennials (Wiedmer, 2015)

The application of concepts from transformational leadership theory and generational theory helps understand the views of participant leaders in this study. These theories mutually support that leadership can define a vision and create meaning for followers by communicating effectively and individual followers' development in an organization with increased organizational commitment and decreased turnover. While using these two theories together, an analysis of the results explained the millennial workforce's development through leadership by leaders understanding workplace and

generational characteristics and stereotypes. They may promote motivators in the form of satisfaction and retain millennials in their organization.

The review included an overview of multigenerational characteristics and generational differences, as previously defined. Specifically, the descriptive definition of the millennial generation characteristic and stereotypes in the workforce, examining how historical events and social trends influence workplace values and behaviors have shaped this group's identity. While generational stereotyping and concentrating on differences can harm an organization, being aware, and addressing them may allow leaders may overcome these challenges (Ertas, 2015). Transformational leaders recognize the vast knowledge, innovation, and perspectives with generational differences and view it as an asset (Samanta & Lamprakis, 2018).

Section 2 included a comprehensive explanation of my role as the researcher, participants for the study and addressed ethical issues and implications of the research. I outlined the data collection tools and techniques to analyze results. Then I addressed the reliability and validity of the data.

Section 3 includes a presentation and interpretation of the study's findings, the importance and application to professional practice and social change, as well as recommendations for further research.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders use to motivate and retain millennial employees. Responses from the participants provided information on determining management strategies in motivating and retaining the next generation workforce. Section 1 established a framework from scholarly resources through literature review. In Section 2, I provide the approach I used to conduct the study. The section starts with descriptions of the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, and the participants in the study. Section 2 also includes research methods, research questions, population, data collection, and data analysis.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. By identifying leadership practices, management will know how to manage expectations better and identify motivators and factors millennials perceive as supporting job retention and satisfaction. The target population was six managers who work for businesses in the southeast region of the United States with experience motivating and retaining employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential to increase employees' job satisfaction and to improve working conditions, which can benefit their relationships with managers, co-workers, families, and communities.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers are the main instrument in the qualitative research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The role of the researcher is to conduct interviews and transcribe, analyze, and verify data (Sanjari et al., 2014). My role in the study required me to understand the research topic and participants, collect data, and analyze it with a minimal bias that may adversely impact my research. I am a first sergeant in the United States Air Force, which requires me to understand a multigenerational workforce and what leadership characteristics motivate and retain millennials. Therefore, I recognized the potential for bias, took notes, recorded the interviews, and reviewed the transcriptions with the participants to ensure I did not modify how I collected and analyzed data. Yin (2016) noted that researchers must remain alert to critical assumptions by making a comparison, raising questions about data, and developing opposing explanations to avoid bias.

I obtained approval from Walden University and the Internal Review Board to conduct the research. I followed the ethical research requirements of the *Belmont Report*. The *Belmont Report* provides guidelines for ethical research standards involving human subjects that mandate: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Adashi et al., 2018). I had all participants sign a consent form authorizing their participation in this research. Authorization for participation addresses ethical issues, and participants are willing to participate in the study and are aware of the subject (Petrova et al., 2016). My role was to ensure participants' well-being, including collecting data in a trustworthy manner, as described in the *Belmont Report* (Adashi et al., 2018).

Throughout my study, I maintained an awareness of my perspective on the leadership strategies used in the military. My experience with motivating workers and employee retention did not affect my methodical data collection and analysis processes. As a first sergeant, I acknowledged that my driving force is to develop effective organizational policies, strategies, and training that affect the workforce. Nevertheless, I did not let this motivation influence the research process. I remained attentive to ensure the integrity of this study by not introducing researcher bias. Also, I prepared for the interviews in advance, remained neutral, and never altered the essence of the data collected. A researcher's preparedness, the rigor of data collection, and awareness of a held perspective can influence research and bias management (Yin, 2016).

I chose a semistructured interview and member checking to ensure the validity of the research and mitigate bias. I elected to conduct semistructured interviews with participants using open-ended questions to understand what strategies organizations leaders use to retain and motivate millennials. This methodology focuses on the participants' conversation with varying numbers of questions and varying degrees of revision to questions (Barnham, 2015). Using open-ended questions allowed for a more comprehensive discussion and gave the participants the ability to express their knowledge and experience concerning the research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Member checking refers to researchers' techniques to enhance the credibility, accuracy, and vigor of the data collected through the interviews (Morse, 2015). I used an interview protocol that enables the same interview process and questions for all participants. An interview protocol is a valuable instrument of inquiry because the protocol is a tool that adds

reliability to qualitative research by using the same scripted interview process and questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Participants

The participants for this study were organizational leaders from six businesses in the southeast region of the United States. The eligibility criteria for the participants in this study were as follows: (a) participants must be in a senior leadership position with direct influence on workforce policy retention and engagement; (b) participants must have experience successfully retaining and motivating millennials within a multigenerational workforce demonstrated through low turnover and engagement, and (c) participants must work for an organization located in the southeast region of the United States. The businesses were not a particular industry. Nevertheless, the selected participants assisted me in understanding the phenomenon and answering the interview questions.

I selected a marketing and research firm in Coral Springs, Florida, to identify potential participants. I used purposeful sampling to identify and recruit organizational leaders as participants from the contacts obtained from the marketing and research firm. Patton (2015) affirmed that purposeful sampling could enable the researcher to obtain comprehensive cases to understand the studied phenomenon. I emailed letters of invitation to prospective participants explaining the intent of the study. The invitational letter also explained that their participation was confidential and voluntary (Ketefian, 2015). Selected participants were those who met the criteria and responded to the invitation. Yin (2018) states that participants must know the research topic and possess the necessary experience to respond.

I established a working relationship by beginning communication via phone, email, and later, qualitative interviewing. I continued to foster a relationship with the participants through open communication and maintained professionalism. Each study participant received a consent form that detailed the guidelines for participation via email. Subsequent correspondence determined the appropriate time and place for interviews. I made use of member checking during the study to enhance the working relationship with the participants. Researchers use member checking to allow the participants to review the data collected through the analyzed interviews for accuracy (Morse, 2015).

Research Method and Design

There are three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method (Yin, 2018). I chose the qualitative method for collecting in-depth data on the participants' experiences. The qualitative method consists of a holistic approach to explore human experiences (Leung, 2015). The research methodology is qualitative with a multiple case study design and was appropriate for this study. Yin (2016) defined a case study as an investigation or inquiry conducted to examine a phenomenon. Using multiple sources of information is suitable for converging themes derivative from a study (Leung, 2015). This research can facilitate business leaders to implement strategies to retain and motivate millennial employees.

Method

For this study, I selected a qualitative method instead of a quantitative or mixed-method. Qualitative research involves an attempt to understand the perceptions of a

phenomenon based on participants' experiences through an in-depth review of the research topic (Leung, 2015). Qualitative researchers aim to understand peoples' feelings, actions, and how people rationalize the world along with their surroundings (Patton, 2015). Qualitative researchers seek motivation and the details of a respondent's mentality, while quantitative researchers focus on data (Astroth, 2018). For these reasons, a qualitative method was the most appropriate for this study, then a quantitative or mixed-method. Using qualitative research, I explored the participants' leadership skills used for motivating and retaining millennial employees.

A quantitative methodology includes variables, and the participants provide researchers with responses regarding relationships among the same variables. These relationships may have statistical importance but fail to understand the phenomenon (Goertzen, 2017). A quantitative method was not an appropriate way to understand leaders' approaches. A qualitative case study design was suitable for determining the leaders' views on millennial retention strategies and methods (Arseven, 2018).

Mixed method research is progressively widespread in leadership studies. A significant factor is researchers applying an integrated assessment to study leadership (Astroth, 2018). A mixed-methodology study includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand the subject or phenomenon. A qualitative study is ideal for a researcher to analyze quantitative surveys more depth than with qualitative techniques (Astroth, 2018). A mixed-method does not align with the purpose of this study; thus, I did not select a mixed-method methodology.

Research Design

Yin (2016) stated that a multiple case study is a set of findings in various locations focused on the same topic. Researchers use case studies to garner a range of perspectives on the issue while understanding the phenomena at a greater depth (Yin, 2016). Through the multiple case study, I sought to obtain the participants' account of strategies used and probed for more in-depth understanding through follow-up questions. Yin (2016) argued that case study researchers should use a multiple case study design containing multiple sites and methods to analyze the data collected. As I collected data through the interviews, I had the opportunity to probe deeper and uncover relevant themes (Yin, 2016). A semistructured interview format with open-ended questions was suitable to collect descriptions to address the research question (Morse, 2015). Using a case study approach, the participants provided rich details when responding to open-ended questions regarding individual experiences.

Other qualitative research designs, including narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and ethnography, were not appropriate for this study. The objective of the narrative inquiry design is to collect stories from individuals or behaviors of a social group, which does not support the purpose of my study (Yin, 2016). I did not use a phenomenological design because I did not seek to use lived experiences as a single source of evidence and conduct a lengthy interview (Yin, 2018). The ethnographic design researcher studies the participants' perception and culture over an extended period, which was not the goal of my study (Ramani & Mann, 2016). A case study design is practical when a researcher seeks to integrate various data sources leading to in-depth qualitative findings (Yin,

2018). A case study design was the most appropriate qualitative design for addressing the specific business problem in this study.

Researchers use different sample sizes to achieve data saturation, and member checking helps achieve data saturation (Varpio et al., 2017). When a researcher is considering a qualitative sample size decision, data saturation is a significant factor. Saturation is the point when the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To achieve data saturation, the researcher conducts additional interviews with more participants until no new data emerges (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher uses member checking to provide each participant with a summary of their interview, asks them to verify, and confirms the information provided is accurate and complete (Varpio et al., 2017; Yin, 2016). Fusch and Ness (2015) emphasized that data saturation relies on many factors, not under the researchers' influence. In qualitative research, the sample size's adequacy depends on the view of saturation (Morse, 2015). The participants in this study included the organizational leaders with the most knowledge to address the research question.

Population and Sampling

The research design is a multiple case study to explore organizational leaders' strategies for motivating and retaining millennial workers. The population for the study consisted of six managers working in the southeast region of the United States who were willing to participate in my study. I used purposeful sampling to identify organizational leaders (Patton, 2015). For this case study, a sample size of six participants was adequate to achieve data saturation. Yin (2016) reveals that through the same size, data saturation

occurs, or no new themes become evident. The participants' responses from the sample led to a comprehension of leader strategies across the population. I conducted member checking with study participants to correctly interpret their responses (Morse, 2015).

Elsawah et al. (2015) affirmed that data collection should conclude when the researcher finds no new information. Data saturation occurs when responses and themes become repetitive. The purpose of data saturation in qualitative research is to ensure that the researcher used a sufficient sample size to answer the research question (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Yin (2018) noted that when using the case study design, the researcher may collect data from several sources, including interviews, direct participant observations, and documents. The individuals selected had relevant experience to address the central research question (Boddy, 2016). I analyzed the experiences and perspectives provided by each leader to understand leadership development strategies.

Patton (2015) affirmed that purposeful sampling could enable the researcher to obtain information-rich cases to understand the phenomenon. Qualitative studies do not have a commonly recognized sample size because the ideal sample is dependent on the purpose of the study, research questions, and abundance of the data (Saracho, 2017). Leaders of millennials with a proven history of implementing retention and motivating strategies participated in this study. I used purposeful sampling when recruiting participants by following up on a list of contacts obtained from a marketing and research firm in Coral Springs. The contact list provided me with the opportunity to gain access to business leaders who manage millennials.

Interviews conducted in a neutral setting were conducive to all participants'

comfort (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) stated that the participant should set the interview time

and place to reduce interruptions. Virtual interviews were preferable to record participant

responses and reduce the cost of the research by eliminating travel. The expansion of

technologies creates a similar quality of data produced as face-to-face interviews while

allowing for a convenient and comfortable setting for the participants (Leung, 2015).

Ethical Research

I adhered to ethical standards that were set forth by the Institutional Review

Board. Walden University IRB granted permission to perform the study. Patton (2015)

contended that it is essential to address all ethical concerns related to data collection from

participants and protecting the data after the collection. To ensure participants' ethical

protection, I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB before conducting any

research. Additionally, I obtained permission from an organization official to conduct

research using its employees. The IRB approved the study with the IRB approval number

07-30-20-0454941.

In qualitative research, conducting ethical research ensures human subjects'

protection (Adashi et al., 2018). Participants must receive clear information regarding

parts of the research (Petrova et al., 2016). I established and followed ethical

considerations and maintained integrity throughout the research (Zhang, 2017). The

participants of this study did not receive any incentives to participate. The individuals

received a consent form for a signature to participate in the interview. The consent form

included the purpose of the study, permission to record the interviews, use of the

information, the right to use the data, and no incentives for participating in the study. The

form emphasized that participation was strictly voluntary; there will be no form of

compensation to participate in the study, and withdrawal from the study has no penalty.

Participants could withdraw from the research project at any time, through in-person

notification, by telephone, or e-mail. Before scheduling interviews, prospective

participants signed and returned the consent form to me.

Ethical standards and guidelines establish the framework for integrity in all

research projects (Zhang, 2017). Adhering to high ethical standards protects participants

and the researcher from improprieties. The Belmont Report writers ascertained an ethical

protocol to protect research participants (Adashi et al., 2018). To ensure a thorough

understanding of the project and the process's integrity, I explained all ethical

considerations and safeguards to participants. Pseudonyms are in the report to support

keeping participants' data confidential. To ensure the participants' identity is not

apparent, the interview transcripts' manner of storage is imperative. The storage of

electronic information is on a password-protected external drive. Furthermore, I collected

all study-related documents to store in a lockbox. Data will remain in these locations for

at least five years, at which point I will destroy them.

Data Collection

Instruments

In qualitative research, researchers are the main instrument in the qualitative

research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I functioned as the primary data collection

instrument for this study. The secondary data collection instrument is a semistructured

one-to-one interview with an interview protocol. I selected an interview protocol to ensure organization and replication for further research (see Appendix A). An interview protocol helps a researcher ask questions for detailed information that correlates to the study's central focus (Patton, 2015). During the interviews, participants responded to six semistructured, open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). Open-ended questions provide the participants with a pre-set questions that allow them to present in-depth information on the research topic (Yin, 2018). I audio recorded the interview questions and responses from each participant. I took detailed notes during the interviews. Later, I transcribed the audio recordings. I used member checking to ensure the data collection process met the requirements for reliability and validity (Varpio et al., 2017). Member checking adds credibility to a study as the participants review the data collected during the interviews for accurateness (Morse, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

The data collection process began upon approval by Walden University's IRB to conduct the study. The data collection technique selected for this study was a semistructured one-to-one interview for each participant with an interview protocol (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I chose semistructured interviews to gain insight into motivating and retaining millennial employees by allowing participants the liberty to provide valuable data. Semistructured one-to-one interviews are helpful when the topic is not widely known and can provide in-depth information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interview protocol served as a guide to the researcher for conducting the interviews

(Yin, 2018). During the interviews, participants responded to six semistructured, open-ended interview questions.

Before the interview, I confirmed the date, time, and location or type of interview with each participant. Furthermore, I reviewed the participants' consent to participate in the study, acknowledgment of the signed consent form, consent to the audio recording of the interviews, the scope of my research, the interviews' process, and the questions. I used my cell phone to record the interview and later transcribed the recording for analysis. Yin (2016) advised that taking notes throughout all the data collection process mitigates lost or overlooked vital information. I took detailed notes during the interviews with the participants. Additional collection techniques also include member checking.

Member checking is a method to enhance the credibility and vigor of the data collected through the interviews (Varpio et al., 2017). After I transcribed the interview verbatim, I provided each participant with a summary of their interview and asked them to verify that the information provided was accurate and complete (Yin, 2016). To enhance the quality of the data collected, each participant reviewed the analyzed interview data (Harvey, 2015).

The advantage of semistructured interviews is that the participants' preparedness to respond to each formulated question yet provides the participant with the freedom to express views while making sure the researcher gets in-depth information on the research topic (Patton, 2015). Nevertheless, the limitation of a semistructured audio-recorded interview is capturing non-verbal cues.

Data Organization Techniques

The preparation for data organization begins with a system for keeping track of data for each participant. Yin (2016) discussed the necessity to correctly format, label, and categorize interview notes. Technology advances have aided researchers in organizing data, enhancing the trustworthiness of research (Leung, 2015). Data analysis software helps the researcher gain quick access and search data during data analysis more effectively (Yin, 2016). I used an electronic filing system to capture data from the semistructured interviews to organize the interview transcripts and notes by themes and codes. I continued participant confidentiality and anonymity by assigning a numeric number for their interview (Saracho, 2017). In qualitative research, organizing and analyzing data into categorized themes and codes from data captured from interviews is vital (Morse, 2015). The information was collected and organized using Microsoft Word, Excel, and NVivo 12 to identify the themes and patterns. All notes and research journals will remain protected in a locked safe when not used (Yin, 2016). I secured all electronic documents on a password-protected flash drive in a locked safe. After five years, I will destroy all notes, electronic files, and recordings from the interviews.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis Technique

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During the qualitative process, the researcher must use a methodical method of analyzing large data sets of multiple evidence sources (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). The use of multiple data sources improves the reliability of the information included in a study (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). In this study, I used semistructured interviews, data from the companys' website and social media, and member checking to demonstrate

methodological triangulation. Triangulation is a strategy used by researchers to add to the depth of the research and illustrate the credibility of a study by merging multiple data sources that may lead to a similar finding (Varpio et al., 2017; Yin, 2016).

I transcribed the data from the interview immediately after each session. Yin (2018) advocates transcribing interviews as soon as possible while the interview data are fresh in mind, comparing the transcribed material to the interview notes for data accuracy, and completing a transcript review with each participant to enhance correctness. I included member checking to ensure the accuracy of interpretations by following up with each participant and allowing the participants the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of interpretation (Varpio et al., 2017).

To gather information on leadership skills, managers need a history of motivating and retaining millennial employees; therefore, I must ensure each interview question's alignment with the research question. For this study, I conducted semistructured interviews with managers from six different southeastern United States businesses. Researchers use coding to categorize data to aid in the organization and develop themes (Morse, 2015). I used the NVivo 11 software to code the data. To help identify central themes during the data analysis process, I created a code logbook to identify participants, develop codes for the interview data, and use them to develop themes. The coding process refers to extracting concepts, compiling and sorting the information from raw qualitative data (Morse, 2015). After analyzing key themes developed using the NVivo 11 software, I maped themes correlating to the literature and determine if any recently published articles show any reoccurring themes (Saracho, 2017).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Two fundamental components of the research study by which the researcher evaluates the adequacy and meaning for data collected are reliability and validity (Yin, 2016). Study results must be valid to be of significance to others and are the research foundation (Yin, 2016). In qualitative case studies, researchers ensure the study is rigorous and meets reliability and validity requirements by using member checking and methodological triangulation (Varpio et al., 2017). Validity also adds to the accurate conclusions associated with the phenomenon under the study to verify the researcher's interpretation of data (Yin, 2016).

Qualitative researchers increase the reliability of their research by detailing procedures, methods and rationalizing research strategies in which results are repeatable and can confirm or reject findings from the data (Yin, 2016). To validate the dependability of my study, I thoroughly detailed the methods I used concerning the central research question, along with an account of the construct of my qualitative case study, and detail the decision I made. Qualitative researchers establish the trustworthiness of their research by offering detailed instruction on their data collection processes and methods so that future researchers can consistently replicate the study even though data results may differ (Leung, 2015).

I used an interview protocol during the interviews and asked the same open-ended questions to each participant. Yin (2016) suggests using an interview protocol to ensure the trustworthiness of research findings, subsequent data and to mitigate personal bias.

Additionally, Harvey (2015) recommended recording the interviews for accuracy and reliability. The same use of open-ended questions from each participant increases dependability in this case study. This technique assists in assuring the availability of data and collection reaches the point of saturation. Triangulation improves the reliability of results, as data saturation occurs when qualitative researchers cannot gain any new information (Hancock et al., 2016). Harvey (2015) recommends member checking and transcript review to ensure the credibility of the results. I transcribed the recorded interviews, reviewed the interviews thoroughly, and subsequently conducted member checking to each participant to confirm or refute my interpretation of the data. Furthermore, the participants had an opportunity to verify the synthesized interpretation of the emerged themes from their interviews.

Validity

The validity of a study is the process of determining whether the researcher's proper interpretation of data represents the intended emphasis on the phenomenon studied (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In qualitative research, validity addressed the credibility or trustworthiness of interpreting the data (Mohajan, 2017). To maintain the study's validity, I asked each participant to review the interpreted data for accuracy and truthfulness through member checking (Varpio et al., 2017). Research results must ensure validity by determining participants' responses' accuracy and credibility (Mohajan, 2017).

Confirmability is the degree of influence from direct participatory and document evidence observed from the participants without impacting a researcher's perspective on the study phenomenon (Yin, 2016). To achieve confirmability, researchers must take

steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not their predispositions. Confirmability is the study's findings based on a researcher's analysis of data collected and examined thoroughly to confirm data impartiality (Yin, 2016). To ensure the confirmability of this study, I used member checking to validate the interview data. Participants reviewed and verified the transcripts to ensure the researcher captures the meaning of their responses. Additionally, I used an audio recording to establish the confirmability of the data.

The study results' transferability is through replication, even though transferability is up to the reader in qualitative research (Amankwaa, 2016). To ensure transferability, I documented and depicted the completed research process using replicable processes. To support the data collection process's dependability and the validity of the information, I established the information with transferability to other contexts (Yin, 2016).

Transition and Summary

Section 2 encompasses the crucial elements of the project first by reiterating the purpose statement, then the role of the researcher. I described my role as the researcher in the data collection process, my relationship to the topic, and detailed the study participants. I described the qualitative method and multi-case study design in the research methodology and design. I introduced the population to this study and the sampling method that would be most representative through purposeful sampling. I addressed ethical issues and the importance of ethical compliance as a required step taken during the research process to ensure participants' confidentiality and protection. I

discussed the collection instrument, collection technique, organizational techniques, and

data analysis in the data collection section. Finally, the section covered the details on how

I addressed the reliability and validity of the data.

Section 3 begins with the purpose of the study and a summary of the key findings.

Next, there is a detailed description of the analysis of the interview responses, including

the importance of the results to professional practice. Section 3 concludes with

implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, and

reflections.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. The study aimed to identify leadership practices to better manage expectations and identify motivators and factors millennials perceive as supporting job retention and satisfaction. Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with six leaders who have successfully retained and motivated millennial employees. The findings included three themes for job retention and motivation: (a) competitive benefits, (b) workplace values, and (c) open communication and feedback. In Section 3, I present the findings of this research, detailing potential applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was as follows: "What strategies do organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees?" Using a qualitative research method, I interviewed six business leaders in the United States' southeastern region. The participants identified are P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6. I used semi-structured interviews to gather data, which involved asking participants open-ended questions to provide information on the strategies they had used to attract and retain millennial employees. To improve the triangulation for this study's multiple data collection methods, I reviewed and collected data from company websites and social

media sites and performed member checking. I recorded and transcribed the interviews

from the audio recording and had each participant conducted member checking. After the

participants conducted member checking and confirmed the transcription, I used NVivo

12 to code the data.

NVivo 12 allowed me to identify the recurring themes in the information

participants shared during the interviews and the information about the organizations that

I had obtained from the websites. I compared interview transcriptions, interview notes,

and website information on employee retention and motivation to support validity and

reliability. I analyzed the data using Yin's (2018) five steps for data analysis: compiling,

disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The data compilation involved

rereading the transcribed notes and organizing the data from the interviews in relevant

order. This practice allowed me to connect the data with research questions and establish

familiarity with the interviews' textual data.

Additionally, I inputted the data into an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

The dissemble of data involved breaking down the data into smaller, labeled sections. I

coded line-by-line responses provided by participants and avoided repetitive statements

and unrelated participant statements that occurred during the interview. During the

reassembly phase, I attempted to identify patterns by checking different events or

experiences by different participants that were related to each other. I arranged similar

responses to the same question, followed by repetitive mixing and matching coded

sections until credible and relevant patterns emerged. After identifying credible patterns,

I proceeded to interpret the data. I examined the data from a broader viewpoint and

narrowing down to bring out prominent points. I completed Yin's (2018) five-step data analysis with a concise conclusion that identified three themes: (a) competitive benefits, (b) workplace values, and (c) open communication and feedback.

Theme 1: Competitive Benefits

The first theme, which emerged from the data analysis, was competitive benefits. Based on the interview responses, all participants (6/6; 100%) discussed the importance of offering competitive benefits packages to attract qualified applicants and remain competitive; they noted that this was particularly important to attract and retain millennials. Each company offered benefits to full-time employees. P1's company has a 30-day waiting period for insurance but will pay a premium depending on an applicant's education and experience. P3, P4, and P6's firms offer benefits on the first day of the month after employment. P2 and P5's organizations provide benefits to new employees on the first day of employment. P1–P6 explained that benefits packages help reduce employee turnover. P2 stated that their firm's benefits extend to both full-time and part-time employees. P5 touted additional benefits offered by their company, such as an employee campus that includes a fully staffed medical facility, credit union, cafeteria, gym, and salon. P5 agreed that their company offers its employees some of the most competitive benefits packages.

Despite the importance of the expected salary, all the interviewed participants recommended a well-balanced and structured compensation package. The total compensation package, not salary alone, largely determines millennial employees' willingness to stay with an employer (Murdock, 2019). All participants discussed adding

additional benefits such as flexible working hours, work-life balance, an employee recognition program, performance pay/incentives, and individualized growth plans. P1, P3, P4, P5, and P6 employed many of these strategies when they began to lose their top talented millennials workers to competitors. P1 revealed that after noting millennials' trends were leaving their organizations for companies that offered comprehensive benefits, they updated their benefits to included work-life-balance incentives. P1 revealed that their organization has a budgeted salary cap. However, they had to become creative to attract and retain talented workers by adding a 4-day work week and working from home depending on the position. P1 noticed that after implementing a 4-day work week, there was less sick leave used. P1's company now allows employees with 200 plus hours of sick leave to convert 40 hours of sick hours to annual leave once a year.

All participants' companies' websites confirmed the following benefits: medical, dental, and vision coverage, health savings account, paid life insurance, matching 401(k) savings plan, paid time off, short- and long-term disability insurance, and tuition reimbursement. All participants' companies provided additional non-traditional benefits. P1's organization offers pet and supplement insurance. P2's company provides paid paternal leave, reimbursement expenses for adoption, surrogacy or intrauterine insemination, discounted company stock, bonuses, on-site gym, and daycare specifically designed to enhance work-life balance. P3's organization offers adoption assistance, on-site health and fitness center, discounts on childcare and entertainment, and pet insurance. P4's company provides backup childcare, incentive-based bonus, personal development opportunities to help employees grow in their careers, and ample paid time to encourage

work-life balance. P5's organization offers a vehicle purchase program, adoption

assistance, telecommuting, and flextime policies to reduce the carbon footprint, improve

work-life balance, and paid volunteer time off. P6's company offers a quarterly bonus,

flexibility for employees to choose how they work, the projects they work on, growth

opportunities that matter to the employee, and a casual dress atmosphere. Additionally,

all participants' websites detailed their impacts on their communities and explained their

talent acquisition processes.

The competitive benefits theme corresponds to this study's conceptual

framework. Morrell and Abston (2018) argued that an excellent compensation system

could encourage employees' job satisfaction and reduce their desire to leave an

organization. Furthermore, the authors note that compensation can be a powerful tool to

encourage employees to adopt various desired behaviors (Morrell & Abston, 2018). The

participants in this study demonstrated that employees are likely to be more engaged,

more actively involved within the company, and more loyal by paying employees a fair

wage and offering competitive benefits. The participants remarked that such efforts had

reduced turnover within their organizations.

Additionally, this theme correlates with those raised in the literature, including

generational theory, a conceptual framework. Mannheim (1952) defines a generation as a

cohort who collectively experienced the same historical events during their formative

years. From this viewpoint, the period in which these individuals grow up affects the

outlook, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of cohort members. Millennials were born into

an emerging digital world, resulting in unique shared characteristics. Compared to other

generations, millennials hold significantly different attitudes towards work, which

requires organizations to offer unconventional compensation and benefits packages to

retain and engage millennials (Morrell & Abston, 2018). The millennial generation is

motivated by fair compensation, a flexible work schedule, a reward system, growth

opportunity, and an organizations' ability to adapt to work preferences (Michael et al.,

2016). Lub et al. (2016) determined that the millennial generation will leave an

organization that lacks motivating strategies more than Generation X or baby boomers.

    All the participants agreed that all generations benefit from fair wages and

competitive benefits. P3-P6 stated that the idea to offer additional benefits came as a

retention strategy for their talented millennial employees, but the companies realized the

retainment benefits to all employees. Nevertheless, studies show that millennials

associate job satisfaction with compensation, which translates to feeling valued.

Moreover, millennials are the largest current workforce and can impact an organization's

bottom-line due to additional recruiting and training costs. Adkins (2016) noted that

millennial turnover results in over $30 billion in costs to the U.S. economy annually. The

participants acknowledged that their organizations added flexible work schedules,

performance incentives, and perks to attract and retain millennial employees. This

competitive strategy and understanding of employee needs encompass the other

conceptual framework of transformational leadership. The competitive benefits theme

correlates with one of the transformational leadership components, individual

consideration. A transformational leader is concerned with subordinates' needs and has

individual consideration into their management strategies, which inspires the achievement of employees and the organization (Hesar et al., 2019).

Theme 2: Workplace Values

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis was workplace values. Millennials' workplace values affect their behaviors, attitude, ideas, and job satisfaction (Weber, 2017). Marstand et al. (2018) note that conducting business in a way that accords with millennials' values affects their commitment to the organization and contributes to its success. P3, P4, P5, and P6 noted that they had established employee focus groups and administered surveys to assess retention and engagement strategies' effectiveness. Based on survey results and the focus group, these leaders reported that they had incorporated millennial employees' workplace values to encourage their commitment and creativity. All participants recognized that millennials value technology and their ability to integrate technology into their work. P1, P3, and P4 revealed that their organizations had incorporated advanced technologies as a millennial engagement strategy. All participants noted that, unlike previous generations, millennials prefer to use cutting-edge technology in their work.

All participants responded to the question of "what barriers they encountered to implementing strategies to motivate and retain millennials" in the same manner. The participants stated that supervisors who were unwilling to adapt their leadership style was the most significant barrier. Millennials value supportive leadership and leave an organization if they do not feel valued (Calk & Patrick, 2017). Additionally, millennials prefer a dynamic, engaging leader who can capitalize on transformational changes in an

organization (Maiers, 2017). P1 and P6 reported that they had developed leadership training for supervisors to manage millennial employees effectively. Both participants shared experiences about the importance of leadership style to decrease the turnover of millennial employees. Hoffman (2018) described the importance of having engaging leaders as a tool to retain millennial employees. P1 and P6 stated that millennials are averse to leaders who do not engage with employees or fail to ensure that they feel part of the team. P2 detailed that millennials want to work for leaders that included them in the decision-making process. All participants conveyed that leaders must understand the importance of generational differences to create a team and goal-focused environment.

Conversely, all participants noted differences between millennials' and older generations' workplace values. P1, P4, and P6 suggested that previous generations of employees were more likely to hold longevity expectations about their tenure at an employer. P1 and P6 discussed the differences in the ways that each generation relates to work. They expressed that other generations have loyalty to their organizations, in contrast to millennials who pursue their personal goals ahead of their organizations. In contrast, P2 and P5 found that when leaders align millennial goals with organization goals, they create loyal employees. These findings fit well with what Abuelhassan et al. (2017) found when conducting semi-structured interviews with 38 department managers and assistant managers. They asked these managers about generational differences in their employees' expectations, attitudes, and behavior. The results showed that the managers believed that millennials value rapid career advancement to achieve their goals but are loyal to their managers and supervisors. Further, the authors note that millennials

value personal development in line with their advanced technology capabilities and high education levels.

Generational differences in work values and attitudes exist, so it is incumbent on leaders to know how to structure working relationships (Parry & Urwin, 2017). P5 reported that members of the younger generation are more concerned with being viewed as valued contributors than ensuring organizational longevity. Employee longevity for an organization should stimulate value and a sense of security and stability, as an organization retains knowledge, skills, time, and money invested with each employee. P2 described millennials as being driven by self-satisfaction and their own needs rather than being motivated to contribute to their organizations. Nevertheless, Bush (2017) details that millennials want to make a difference in their organization and the world. Weber (2017) studied the orientation of millennials' values throughout the United States. The study results showed that despite only slight variations in where they live or study, millennials' values remain heavily influenced by events that have occurred during their lives. Moreover, although millennials display high personal competence levels, leaders may use business strategies to develop multiple approaches to use millennials' talents as employees and retain them in their organizations (Weber, 2017).

All participants communicated the importance of engaging and motivating talented millennial workers toward accomplishing the organization's goals, thereby creating organizational stability. This leadership strategy is a dimension of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders encourage and motivate employees to elevate their performance level to achieve the company's

objectives and grow with the organization, resulting in reduced turnover (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Firms can achieve their conceptual frameworks if they support millennials' workplace values. Inspirational motivation refers to a leader's ability to convey optimism about employees' goals, affecting employee performance (Hesar et al., 2019). Transformational leaders have the skill to align employee values with those of the organization. The workplace values theme correlates with the conceptual framework. In my comparative literature review, I found that the material surveyed aligned with my findings of transformational leaders' ability to understand millennial employees' values, attitudes towards their work, and job satisfaction.

Theme 3: Millennials' Need for Communication

Based on the findings obtained from the organizations' website, social media, and interview data, the final theme that emerged from the results was millennials' need for communication. All participants described that millennials require feedback from managers more often than other generations. The need for feedback may come from millennials' dependency on frequent guidance and motivation during their school-age years as teaching changed to performance outcomes versus learning (Koltz et al., 2017). As stated previously, P3, P4, P5, and P6 established employee surveys and focus groups on accessing employees' needs. Through the surveys and focus group, the results stated that millennials wanted to know that they are doing an excellent job regularly, along with an ongoing discussion with their manager. P2 believed that daily communication and accolades with millennial staff motivate them to work hard and accomplish organizational goals. Naim and Lenka (2017) showed that millennials respond to more

structured work environments, frequent contact from supervisors, and feedback. P3, P4, and P6 stated that to increase millennial engagement, they had adopted corporate strategies to ensure supervisors were providing feedback about their progress and validating their employees' performance. P3 and P4 have a formal initial feedback session, monthly feedback session, and ultimately a semi-annual and annual performance review. P6 suggested that the ideal feedback was less formal and engaged employees and motivated them to help achieve the organization's overall goal. In P6's organization, subordinate employees developed their personal goals and goals that align with the organization. All participants recognized that the need for communications is not limited to millennials. However, communication is an essential part of millennial employee engagement. According to Mehra and Nickerson (2019), millennials correlate organizational communication with job satisfaction and demand a higher level of employer-employee communication with more frequent interaction and positive feedback than any other generation.

All participants believe that when employees understand the company's outlook, they feel involved in its growth. The participants stated that their organizations provide CEO (chief executive officer) or president communication updates to all staff. The updates included organizational performance, earnings, survey results, and policy updates. P2 and P6 use email and internal newsletters for communications updates; all others use in-person updates. Although millennials are known for greater use of digital platforms, a face-to-face connection may lead to engagement and commitment to the organization. Retrospectively, P1 stated that the CEO meets with all employees during

the onboarding process and communication updates. During these meetings, the CEO

discusses the importance of their positions and their contributions to the firm's success to

make them feel like a valuable team member. Such communication efforts by the CEO

serve as a dynamic method to promote employee engagement

To open communication lines with supervisors, P3, P4, P5, and P6 said they

hosted various types of open forum meetings with the employees to ask questions and

engage in their departments' administrative processes. Additionally, all participants

reported that they had regular "check-in" communications with their employees. These

"check-in" communications provided individual attention, built relationships with

leaders, and engaged in the organizational processes. Anderson et al. (2017) stipulate that

this practice is consistent with millennials' desire for effective leadership since

millennials prefer to receive personal attention from leaders. All participants except P2

stated that since the COVID-19 pandemic began, staff communication has become a

routine part of their day-to-day operations. Many in-person meetings have converted to a

virtual format, which has allowed for more daily communications and check-ins.

However, P2 indicated that the pandemic has only affected how their firm communicates

with its consumers, noting an increase in electronic communication. P2 detailed that daily

feedback and communication with staff has always been an essential part of the business

and has shown effectiveness. P2 further explained that they had "learned to get to know

each employee as an individual; letting them express their individuality but

communicating and keeping them in line with the company goals has proven to be an

incredible motivator." Leaders who achieve motivation by recognizing employees as

essential contributors to organizational goals help build employee commitment (Yue et al., 2019).

This theme correlates with Burns' (1978) conceptual framework, transforming leadership, making it crucial for leaders to communicate frequently with their followers. The literature aligns with these interviews; transformational leaders adapt their style to conform with the followers' needs, and thus the organization's needs (Burns, 1978). Furthermore, the literature supports the proposition that transforming leaders promote communication, fulfill individual needs, and strengthen relationships, intuitively satisfying their followers' needs; they thereby attract and retain millennials in the workplace (Naim & Lenka, 2017). Bodenhausen and Curtis (2016) recognize that millennials prefer transformational leadership styles as such styles involve mentoring and coaching through repeated feedback to followers. Transformational leaders use engaging behaviors to build trusting relationships by coaching, providing feedback, and offering individual attention (Bass, 2008). Transformational leadership increases the quality of leader-follower relationships, which is key to attracting, motivating, and retaining millennial workers (Yamin, 2020).

I conducted methodological triangulation to achieve data saturation and enhance the study's validity, reliability, and findings. To enhance data saturation confirmability, I used semi-structured interviews, a website review of each organization, and an analysis of social media sites as techniques. I reached data saturation after validating that no new information was appearing through the methodological triangulation method.

Applications to Professional Practice

The applications of this research to professional practice include providing leaders with strategies to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce and will work for two to five employers during their lifetime (Fry, 2018). An organization's expense to replace workers is significant to employers due to the cost of training, talent management, and knowledge transfer (Frankel, 2016). The research findings indicated three primary themes (a) offering competitive benefits, (b) understanding millennials' values, and (c) incorporating millennials' communication preference. The literature review helped confirm this study's results regarding millennials' expectations of benefits, values, and communication preference. The results demonstrate that organizational leaders who understand the millennial cohort's uniqueness and adapt their style to display transformational leaders' characteristics can foster millennial employees' commitment to their organizations and willingness to engage in their organizations' success (Boamah et al., 2018).

The study participants recognized that although the salary was an essential part of attracting and retaining talented employees, it is essential to offer a diverse compensation package apart from typical benefits packages. The total compensation package could include work-life balance packages, recognition programs, and performance incentives, along with an individual growth strategy. Organizations that want to increase employee loyalty and higher retention must create desirable benefit and salary packages and maintain an adequate organizational culture (Iqbal et al., 2017). Hence, Michael et al. (2016) determined that the compensation package, not just salary, largely determines an

employees' willingness to stay with an organization. Zaharee et al. (2018) found more similarities than differences amongst generations. The authors used a convenience sample study to determine why 398 participants either departed from or remained with an organization. Zaharee et al. found that competitive compensation, benefits packages, meaningful work, and employer policies that support work-life balance (e.g., flexible hours) will attract and retain employees from any generation and at different stages in their careers. Murdock (2019) reaffirmed that human resources investments for employees' benefit could positively affect employee retention. Based on the interviews' responses and the literature review, offering competitive benefits packages is key to attracting and retaining talented millennial workers. Each organization redesigned its benefits package based on employee feedback, either through the exit interview, new employee negotiations, or current employee needs. Therefore, investing in compensation and benefits is a viable option to obtain greater investment returns (Murdock, 2019).

Additional results of this study demonstrate that leaders must foster a culture promoting shared values, starting with understanding generational differences and what they value. Participants revealed that technology was an essential element of what millennials value. Some participants organizations created a technology strategy to ensure their programs and software were the last technology. Millennials want to work efficiently and effectively and believe that this occurs with the latest technology (Venter, 2017). Furthermore, millennials value supportive leaders who show individualized attention and can stimulate them intellectually (Rajput et al., 2019). These leaders viewed themselves as mentors who could influence individuals' performance by understanding

what motivates them while nurturing their talents and aligning their personal goals with their organizations.

The final finding in this research was millennials' need for constant communication. The participants reveal that millennials want feedback and validation on their performance, organizational goals and understand how their job performance fits into the organizational strategy. Millennials want daily communication with their supervisor. They expect transparency, mentoring, and coaching from leaders. Furthermore, millennials want to communicate their ideas, exchange information, and feel valued. Participants discussed that millennials are thriving from open forums where employees can share ideas and exchange information, creating a culture of inclusiveness and ownership. The leaders in this study provided communication strategies to ensure millennials' retention and motivation that involved meaningful "check-ins" and getting to know the employee as an individual by providing personal attention, having open communication lines, and engagement in organization processes.

This study's findings may be of assistance to leaders to develop and implement employee satisfaction strategies. Employee satisfaction results in higher employee retention, increasing productivity, and ultimately enhancing an organization's overall performance. The study is consistent with participants' interviews and the literature because millennials wanted to feel valued, provided fair and competitive benefits, and wanted to have an open communication line with the supervisor. Given employees' world view from the millennial generation, leaders must mentor and coach employees while

facilitating their professional and personal development while meeting organization goals (Naim & Lenka, 2017).

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study contribute to positive social change by helping organizations identify strategies to motivate and retain millennial employees. Organization strategies to motivate and retain millennial employees could improve work environments and reduce turnover. Reducing turnover may foster positive social change in organizations by increasing profitability, bolstering customer satisfaction, and helping organizations stay competitive and succeed. By remaining competitive, companies can continue operating, significantly affecting job creation and job retention (Rathi & Lee, 2015). Consequently, such organizations could continue to provide leadership roles within their communities and help catalyze their local economies (Peloza et al., 2015). The participants of this study emphasized millennial employees' need for communication as a critical aspect of organizational productivity, employee motivation, and retention. The results of the study show the strategic steps some leaders take to engage and motivate millennial employees. The results of this study demonstrate that having a generational understanding of millennial behaviors and preferences and ensuring personal interaction between managers and millennial employees is critical; these factors may increase millennials' motivation and improve job satisfaction and retention, particularly in organizations and agencies experiencing generational shifts or gaps (Khalid & Nawab, 2018).

Recommendations for Action

The study involved two key data sources: semi-structured interviews with six

business leaders and a review of secondary data. These participants provided a

perspective on the focus of the study by sharing their experiences. Three themes emerged

from the data. The following recommendations align with the literature review, the

conceptual framework, and the emergent themes from participants' responses. This

study's findings provide business leaders with tangible millennial retention strategies to

improve millennials' engagement and job satisfaction as an alternative to employee

turnover's costly expense. The first recommendation for action is to offer competitive

benefits. All participants recognize that millennials want to work for an organization that

offers excellent health benefits, flexible work schedules, and appropriate compensation.

Offering competitive benefits such as work-life-balance schedules, health insurance,

education reimbursement, and career development strategy are valuable tools for

retaining talent. The second recommendation is for leaders to familiarize themselves with

and understand the principles and values of millennials. Leaders who take time to engage

with followers as individuals and increase their awareness of each generational cohort's

distinguishing values and attributes can create a more productive multigenerational

workforce (Lawson, 2017). Leaders who incorporate emerging and current technologies

may enhance employees' creativity and commitment and bolster organizational

profitability among members of the technologically savvy millennial generation. The

final recommendation for action is to incorporate open communication and constant

feedback with employees. Leaders should continue to share innovation, ideas, and

information about their organizations. Helpful and consistent feedback will increase

millennials' creativity and commitment to organizational goals and profitability

(Yogamalar & Samuel, 2016). This study may benefit organizational leaders in all

disciplines by conveying the importance of understanding various generational needs,

attitudinal perspectives, and workplace expectations of a multigeneration workforce.

Leadership strategies should focus on managing millennial workers to support their

creative needs and commitment to improving organizational profitability; these strategies

should involve engaging individual followers based on their distinctive characteristics.

The findings from this study will be published and disseminated to study participants,

local leaders, and business organizations. Furthermore, I will offer to conduct

presentations to business leaders through the local Chamber of Commerce.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore strategies leaders

use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees. The research study includes

valuable information about successful millennial retention and engagement strategies

employed by six participants in the southeastern United States. Recommendations for

future research include expanding the study outside of the southeastern United States.

The study results may not be transferable due to geographic limitations and may only

apply to similar organizations. I recommend that future researchers consider aspects such

as gender and race in their work. Such characteristics may produce different themes

regarding leadership strategies for the retention and motivation of millennial workers.

Future researchers may also include other research methodologies, such as quantitative or

mixed-method, to examine management strategies that impact organizational profitability through millennial retention and motivation.

Reflections

Completing a Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences that I have had. The DBA program required persistence, dedication, resilience, patience, and all tested at various points of my study. As a seasoned first sergeant in the United States Air Force, I have observed many of America's most talented millennials enter the workforce and leave shortly after. As a result of these experiences, I became interested in the subject. The years I have dedicated to the DBA process have proven invaluable, as I have been able to apply the knowledge I gained from coursework to my career. I have gained better insight into generational differences in the workforce. As a mother of three millennial children, I came into this study with an open mind. All my children are very different, so I never attributed any behavior, attitude, or value to the millennial generation. However, I did stereotype members of the millennials based on my observations of younger workers. Nevertheless, I got to know my millennial workforce as individuals to understand what motivates them.

As a researcher, I understand that addressing researcher bias was essential to analyzing the data and conducting the interviews objectively. To eliminate personal bias, I used an interview protocol that involved asking each participant approved questions. Additionally, I used member checking to ensure that I transcribed each interview with no bias. The findings in my study revealed millennials' positive characteristics and what types of work environments and leadership styles they desire. I hope to influence other

leaders to understand and embrace generational differences in the workplace to make workplaces operate cohesively for everyone's benefit.

Conclusion

Millennials became the largest generation in the workforce in 2016, surpassing baby boomers; these trends have inspired research into this generation's impact on organizations (Fry, 2018). The advantage of understanding millennials' attributes, listening to their needs, and implementing retention and motivation strategies discussed in this study is that such efforts constitute investments in an organization's profitability (Kadakia, 2017). Consequently, leadership strategies and transformational leadership protocols are essential to developing innovative and committed millennial employees.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies for retaining and motivating talented millennial employees within a multigenerational workforce. Six senior leaders from various industries located in the southeast region of the United States directly influence workforce policy and participated in semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. I collected information from the participants' companies' websites and social media accounts for supporting information and methodological triangulation. I used NVivo 12 to efficiently and effectively code the data. NVivo 12 enabled me to identify recurring themes during the interviews and information about the organizations obtained from their websites. The overarching research question for this study was as follows: "What strategies do organizational leaders use to motivate and retain talented millennial employees?" The conceptual framework included generational theory and transformation leadership theory, which

guided the study's scope and data analysis. The data analysis revealed three themes: (a) competitive benefits, (b) workplace values, and (c) open communication and feedback. The study findings agreed with findings in the literature regarding strategies to engage employees and reduce employee turnover.

Millennials need a work environment where they feel valued, are offered competitive benefits, and receive feedback and communication. Therefore, leaders can provide employees with flexible work schedules, access to relevant and emerging technology, and establish open communication lines with management and leaders. Additionally, transformational leaders can provide the necessary conceptual framework to combine employee engagement and retention. Doing so will affect the retention of skilled workers and reduce the turnover rate in any organization, leading to increased organizational profitability.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date: _____   Time:_____   Participant Code:_____

Introduction:

- o   Thank participants for their time

- o   Introduce myself and provide an overview of the topic

- o   Reiterate information on the consent form

- o   Review the interview process

- o   Gain verbal content to begin the interview

Interview Process:

- o   Record session

- o   Prepare to take notes

- o   Ask the six predeveloped questions

- o   Watch for non-verbal cues and ask follow up questions

- o   Ask if there is any other information they would like to add

Interview Conclusion

- o   Once there is no other information to add, conclude the interview by thanking the participants again for the time.

- o   Stop the recording

- o   Remind the participants that they will receive a copy of the transcribed interview within five days.

- o   Schedule member checking interview

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Which of your strategies are most effective in motivating and retaining millennial employees?

2. How have you implemented these strategies for motivating and retaining millennial employees?

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for motivating and retaining millennial employees?

4. What barriers have you encountered in implementing your strategies to motivate and retain millennial workers?

5. How did you address the barriers to implementing your motivation and retention strategies for millennial workers?

6. What additional aspects would you like to discuss regarding motivation and retention strategies affecting millennial workers?