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Job Expectations of Employees in the Millennial Generation

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

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MEd, Penn State Capital College, 2007

BS, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Understanding Millennials' job expectations is critical for employee retention because of the number of Generation X workers who are unable to fill the job openings that Baby Boomers leave vacant when retiring from the workforce. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore Millennial employees' job expectations. Interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of 20 Millennials who had at least a bachelor's degree, had at least 1 year of employment experience, and worked in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. The inclusion criteria established work experience as a foundation for determining Millennials' job expectations. The conceptual frameworks of this study included generational and psychological contract theories to support exploration of the central research question regarding job expectations of Millennial Generation employees. Moustakas's 7 steps of data analysis were used to guide logical identification of the job expectation themes most significant to these 20 Millennials. The themes identified were opportunity for growth, compensation, recognition, promotions, supervisor support, flexibility, environment, and job security. These Millennials expressed interest in having work/life flexibility in an engaging work environment that fosters professional skills growth. Participants sought supervisors who readily recognized accomplishments, provided opportunities for achieving promotions, and applied compensation that reflected job performance. Using these findings, business leaders could implement strategies and policies that create a more fair and satisfying work environment for Millennial employees. Social change could occur within companies as leaders integrate expanded information on job expectations into talent management procedures for improving overall multigenerational job satisfaction and employee relationships.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family and friends, who supported me along the way. They kept me motivated, continued to ask me about my progress, encouraged me, assured me it would be worth it, and would not let me quit when things seemed impossible. They understood the time and commitment needed to complete my degree and doctoral study, resulting in time taken away from them.

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To my chair, Dr. Kathleen Barclay, thank you for your guidance and never giving up on me. Without your guidance and support, I would not have had the strength to keep going. I would like to thank each of my committee members, including my second committee members, Dr. Rocky Dwyer and Dr. Kevin Davies, and Dr. Yvonne Doll, my URR.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

When the Millennial Generation entered the workforce, four generations began working together for the first time in American history. These generations included the Traditionalists, born 1922-1945; Baby Boomers, born 1946-1964; Generation X, born 1965-1980; and Millennials, born 1981-2000 (Campione, 2014; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012; Johnson & Lopes, 2008). Although employers are seeking talent from all generations, employees in younger generations are increasingly in demand. The increasing need for employees of younger generations is a result of Generation X not having the capacity to fill the gap left by Baby Boomers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008).

To explore the implications of Baby Boomers leaving the workforce, Toossi (2005) examined employment projections up to 2014. The expectation of Generation X was to have high participation rates in the workforce through 2014. This generation, however, cannot compensate for the decline in Baby Boomer participation in the workforce, having approximately 39 million fewer members than the Baby Boomers (Legas & Sims, 2011; Toossi, 2005). Toossi noted that Millennial participation in the workforce has to increase to fill the gap, given that Generation X cannot meet this need alone. However, high enrollment in school has resulted in lower Millennial employment than other generations. For Millennials in the 18-24 age bracket, college enrollment increased from 35% in 2007 to 39% in 2012 (Fry, 2013; Toossi, 2005). Conversely, employment for the 18-31 age bracket decreased from 70% in 2007 to 63% in 2012 (Fry, 2013).

Due to employee shortages in the United States that continue to grow, company leaders face a crisis as to how to attract employees from the Millennial Generation (Szinovacz, 2011). Each generation has a general set of characteristics. The characteristics of each generation are decisive in determining general assumptions for creating attractive job offerings (Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2012). Millennials' job expectations were the subject of this study. To compensate for Generation X's inability to meet the reduction of the Baby Boomers' population in the workforce, employers may provide jobs that are attractive to Millennials by using the findings from this study.

Background of the Problem

When the Millennials entered the workforce, they joined three generations that already existed in the workforce. Generation X became the prime-age work group, with about 46 million members, fewer than the 85 million members of the Baby Boomer generation (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). As participation in the workforce declined with the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers retiring, employers faced a gap in the workforce population. The approximate 78 million Millennials have helped to reduce this gap (Legas & Sims, 2011).

Researchers at Pew Research Center (2010a) described Millennials entering the workforce as

> confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat, and open to change. They are more
>
> ethnically and racially diverse than older adults. They're less religious, less likely

to have served in the military, and are on track to become the most educated generation in American history. (p. 1)

Millennials continue to enter the workforce; therefore, understanding the characteristics of their generation is essential for business success. There is a gap in the understanding of Millennial job expectations. Well documented are Millennial high school and college students or their instructors' perspectives. However, there is a need for further study on Millennials' views in the workforce (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Johnson & Lopes, 2008).

Leaders of companies may create job offerings and workplace environments that are attractive to Millennials by understanding their job expectations. Importantly, if the workplace environment does not meet an employee's expectations, the employer faces the risk of losing that employee. The money invested in initial recruiting and training is lost when an employee leaves the company (Palanski, Avey, & Jiraporn, 2013). Employers spend more money replacing an employee than they would spend on retention strategies (Palanski et al., 2013). Palanski et al. (2013) said that the cost of employee replacement is about one and a half times that of an employee's annual salary. Hom, Mitchell, Thomas, and Griffeth (2012) asserted that employee replacement could be 90% to 200% of annual pay. In addition, when voluntary turnover occurs, the costs associated with lost productivity need consideration (Hom et al., 2012; Palanski et al., 2013). These costs highlight the importance of meeting Millennials' job expectations.

Problem Statement

Employee shortages in the United States continue to grow, creating a need to attract and retain Millennial employees (Szinovacz, 2011). Baby Boomers have approximately 85 million members, while Generation X has approximately 46 million members (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). Generation X, the succeeding generation, is not sufficient to fill the gap that Baby Boomers and Traditionalists are leaving (Szinovacz, 2011). The approximate 76 million Millennial members may help close this workforce gap (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). At the same time, Millennials often desire to change jobs and careers, characteristics typically not associated with Baby Boomers (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). The general business problem is that when talented employees leave a company, the company's finances and operations decrease (Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2011). The specific business problem is that some Millennials' job expectations may be unclear to employers. Understanding Millennials' job expectations may help to reduce the shortage of employees and enable some company leaders to attract and retain Millennial Generation employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the job expectations of Millennial Generation members. Male and female members of the Millennial Generation who were born between the years 1981 and 1990, held a bachelor's degree, and had at least 1 year of employment experience participated in the study in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. I employed open-ended, semistructured interview questions to gain an in-depth understanding of Millennials'

perspectives on job expectations. Twenty interviewed participants identified themes related to job expectations.

Company leaders might gain useful insights by using research findings from this study. Knowing the job expectations of all employees allows for a fair and diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all employees. When leaders understand Millennials' job expectations, they may better position their company to retain Millennial employees, decreasing recruiting and hiring costs. Furthermore, employees' job satisfaction might benefit their relationships with their coworkers, families, and communities.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative phenomenological design to collect in-depth data on the participants' perceptions and experiences. Qualitative methods are holistic approaches to exploring human experiences and describing the meaning of these experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2015; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). A quantitative approach is limited because participants do not provide responses to open-ended questions, yielding variables that are narrow and isolated (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Using a purely qualitative approach rather than a mixed method allowed me to keep open curiosity regarding the phenomena observed. Thus, it permitted knowledge to emerge from the data, rather than quantitative validation of knowledge (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

I used a phenomenological design to explore the phenomena of interest, allowing the required knowledge and themes to emerge by using the data collected. Collection of in-depth data on the participants' perceptions and experiences related to the phenomenon

was possible using this design (Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). A single case study has one person or one group, so generalizations to the Millennial population are limited (Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2013). An ethnographic study of a group of people in a natural setting occurs over an extended period, using interviews and observations (Kriyantono, 2012). Grounded theory involves collecting, analyzing, and using data collected over a prolonged time (Kolb, 2012). Due to the length of time needed to collect adequate data for ethnography and grounded theory, these designs were not appropriate for this study.

Research Question

The central research question of this study was the following: What are the job expectations of Millennial Generation employees?

Interview Questions

The following interview questions reflect the central research question:

1. What were the key job-related factors that affected your decision to accept your current position?

2. How important to you are new activities or special projects that expand your skills in meeting your job expectations?

3. How do you expect company leaders to demonstrate that they genuinely value your contributions in regard to rewards, benefits, and recognition?

4. How do potential advancement opportunities influence your loyalty to a company?

5. What length of time do you expect to stay in a role before being eligible for advancement opportunities?

6. What support do you expect company leaders to provide you in order to achieve the next level in your career?

7. How likely are you to stay with a company if you enjoy the role and benefits but you are not provided many opportunities for advancement?

8. How likely are you to stay with a company if it is not meeting your job expectations? If you are not likely to stay with the company, how long would you stay before pursuing external career opportunities?

9. What other job-related factors would affect your decision to leave your current company?

Conceptual Framework

Generational theory and psychological contracts theory were the primary theoretical components of the framework that grounded the research for this study. The authors of generational theory, Strauss and Howe (1991), stated that four generational types repeat themselves in cycles every 80-90 years. These generational cycles have manifested in the United States since the 1620s, the four generational types occurring in the same order, with significant events shaping generational characteristics. Many authors portray that significant events of generations' informative years shape personality traits and differ among generations (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011; Smits, Dolan, Vorst, Wicherts, & Timmerman, 2011; Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2012). Thus, one might use generational theory to predict attitudes and behaviors of generations. Company leaders might use generational theory for meeting job expectations of the

Millennial Generation, now and as the members of this generation age (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

The second theory that grounded the research of this study is psychological contracts theory. According to Rousseau's (1995) work on psychological contracts theory, employers should also consider psychological contracts that employees create with the company. These are the perceived promises to employees stated by employers relating to factors such as training and promotions in return for their work. This theory has two dimensions, relational and transactional. The relational dimension includes aspects such as training, professional development, fair treatment, and job security. The transactional dimension includes aspects related to compensation and working conditions. Relational and transactional dimensions are relevant to this study because they relate to employees' job expectations (Zagenczyk, Gibney, Few, & Scott, 2011). Company leaders may use the two dimensions to design programs that might enhance the well-being of employees (van der Vaart, Linde, & Cockeran, 2013).

Researchers may use new knowledge related to generational theory to predict desirable job characteristics and job expectations of the Millennial Generation. Leaders in companies could use the results of this study to aid in both attracting and retaining talent from the Millennial Generation. In addition, psychological contract theory, in relation to the promises employees of the Millennial Generation perceive, may inform employers, thereby enabling them to increase employees' commitment to their companies.

Operational Definitions

Terms in the research include the following:

Baby Boomers: Individuals who were born between 1945 and 1964 are Baby Boomers (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012; Lub et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Generational theory: Involves the characterization of cycles that occur in the same order, identifying significant events that shape generational characteristics. Using the theory helps in predicting attitudes and behaviors of generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Generation X: Individuals who were born between 1965 and 1980 are members of Generation X; also referred to as *Gen X* and *Xers* (Costanza et al., 2012; Lub et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Job expectations: The expectations employees have concerning what they desire to receive from their employers are employees' job expectations. These expectations include training, professional development, fair treatment, compensation, benefits, and job security (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

Millennials: Individuals who were born between 1981 and 2000 are referred to as Millennials, also called *Gen Y*, *Generation Me*, and *Nexters* (Costanza et al., 2012; Lub et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Psychological contracts theory: A theory based on employees' perceived promises from their employers in return for their work (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013).

Traditionalists: A term used when referring to individuals who were born from 1922-1945; also referred to as *Veterans*, *Matures*, and the *Silent Generation* (Costanza et al., 2012; Johnson & Lopes, 2008; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Four assumptions were made regarding this study: (a) Millennials would all have similar characteristics, as identified in the literature review; (b) Millennials would be relatively new to the workforce, due to their age (Lub et al., 2012); (c) the answers from participants would be candid if interviewees felt that I was empathizing or relating to them (Rudestam & Newton, 2015); and (d) the job expectations of Millennials may vary by industry type or field.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Because qualified participants had been working in the field for at least 1 year, those members of the Millennial Generation who were still in school and had not entered the workforce were not represented. Job expectations for currently employed Millennials may not be representative of Millennials who have not yet entered the workforce. The results may reflect the experiences and expectations of Millennials in only the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area and may not be representative of Millennials in other geographical locations. The participants in this study were only Millennial Generation employees. There is no representation of employers' perceptions in this study. The perspectives of employers who had Millennial

Generation employees could have provided additional insights to inform the results of the study.

The networking site LinkedIn© and Walden University's Participant Pool had limitations in their effectiveness for recruiting participants. Due to a low response level, I posted information on a community social media website to use a third resource for recruiting participants. Using these sites did not guarantee a diverse pool of participants demographically or industry wide. One population that was likely excluded was individuals who are not comfortable with online technology.

Delimitations

The boundaries of this phenomenological study had three delimitations. The first delimitation was Millennials outside the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Deal et al. (2010) stated that no researchers had sought to confirm significant generational differences in work attitudes from U.S. students while the other generations were at similar life stages and age (Deal et al., 2010). Therefore, a second delimitation was that Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generation Xers had no representation to confirm or deny differences among generations in job expectations. The third delimitation was the perceptions of managers and leaders within the companies in which the participants worked.

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Significance of the Study

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Contribution to Business Practice

One goal of this study was to provide value to company leaders' practices and insight into Millennials' job expectations. Another goal of this study was to improve

business practices by creating job offerings and workplace environments that are attractive to the Millennial Generation. As a result, company leaders may potentially attract and retain Millennial employees, reducing the shortage of employees in the workforce stemming from retiring Baby Boomers. The current literature is exclusive of work-related preferences and perspectives of Millennials who have entered the workforce. There is a standing body of literature on expectations of Millennials in school and their instructors' perceptions (Deal et al., 2010; Johnson & Lopes, 2008). However, as the primary group in the workforce in 2015 is Millennials (Toossi, 2005), it is essential to reduce the gap in existing knowledge by using the information from the current study on Millennials' job expectations.

Implications for Social Change

Company leaders may use the recommendations derived from this study on how to meet the expectations of Millennial Generation employees to improve work environments and contribute to social change. Meeting the Millennials' job expectations could contribute to a fair and diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all employees. Company leaders may create better job offerings if they understand the job expectations of Millennials, leading to increases in the retention of their Millennial employees while decreasing recruiting and hiring costs. Furthermore, when employees are satisfied with their jobs, their relationships with their coworkers, families, and communities may also improve.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

At the beginning of the review of the literature is the foundational framework for generational and psychological contracts theories. The characteristics of the Millennial Generation in comparison to other generations, including work ethic, are addressed in the literature review (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Within the literature review are the barriers company leaders/managers have faced in addressing Millennials' preferences for work environments, including the use of technology and training. I examine existing research in regard to attracting and retaining Millennials. Finally, I discuss the potential importance of this research to company performance.

The databases containing scholarly articles included in this literature review were ABI/INFORM Global, Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar. Additionally, professional websites and professional books were part of the literature review. Keywords included (a) *generational theory*, (b) *psychological contracts theory*, (c) *adult learning theory*, (d) *comparison of generations*, (e) *Millennial and Generation Y*, (f) *job expectations,* (g) *characteristics*, (h) *motivators*, (i) *work environment*, (j) *work need*s, (k) *work relationships*, (l) *attracting*, (m) *recruiting*, (n) *retaining*, and (o) *training*. Included in Appendix C is a table summary of the references. Of the references, 88% are from peer-reviewed sources, and 86% were published within 5 years of the expected August 2015 completion date of this dissertation.

Conceptual Theories

Generational theory and psychological contracts theory were applied as the theoretical frameworks for this study. I used the two conceptual theories for background and a broader understanding of the population in this research study.

Psychological Contract Theory

Psychological contract theory indicates that employees have perceived unwritten promises from their employers. These perceived promises are related to factors such as training and promotions that may be direct or indirect (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). An employee decides to enter into an employment relationship with a company because both the employee and the company consider the relationship mutually beneficial, based on these perceived promises. Employees might seek a range of benefits for their work such as higher status, money, or use of their skills. In return, employers might need employees to provide loyalty or commitment to the company, as well as productivity or consistency in their work (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011).

Employees' psychological contracts are not formal, so company leaders often do not know the employees' expectations. The psychological contracts employees enter have two dimensions. The relational dimension includes aspects such as training, professional development, fair treatment, and job security for the employee's performance (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). The transactional dimension includes aspects related to compensation and working conditions (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). In exchange for promises perceived, employees have increased willingness to complete their work tasks and maintain organizational commitment (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

In general, Millennials' attitudes are positive toward work and promotion (Josiam et al., 2009). Millennials tend to associate psychological contract expectations with job content, career development, training, financial rewards, and job security (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Millennials have low levels of cynicism, and their cynicism tends to decrease as they age. Their positive attitude toward work and promotion increases as they age (Josiam et al., 2009). Millennial employees are willing to go outside their job descriptions (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Younger employees tend to value work/life balance, which is associated with a positive relationship between the employee and employer. When employees believe that they have this balance, they typically have better enrichment in both work and life roles and positive behavioral performance (Demerouti, Peeters, & van der Heijden, 2014).

In addition to individuals being part of the Millennial Generation, they are part of other subgroups, including those associated with gender. Although individuals may always have varying expectations, certain expectations are associated with Millennials' gender. In general, women put higher emphasis on intrinsic job factors, whereas men put greater emphasis on extrinsic job factors (Akroyd, Bracken, & Chambers, 2011). Intrinsic rewards such as community service and social change are important to women (Akroyd et al., 2011). Historically, women focused more on childbearing needs than men did when making career decisions. Company policies now are usually more family oriented, due to more women with children working (Lyons, Ng, & Schweitzer, 2014). Along with gender, individual variables need to be closely examined to understand intricacies of generational differences fully. Variables that need to be examined include

an individual's ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

The psychological contracts employees make may change over time. Employees might change their contracts from a focus on financial rewards to a focus on expectations that revolve around family responsibilities and work/life balance, or vice versa (Mohamed Azim, Ahmad, & Omar, 2011). Millennials' job expectations are higher when they are optimistic about employment opportunities in the market (Josiam et al., 2009). These perceived promises often develop when organizations are attracting potential employees and continue to develop as employees interact with coworkers and their bosses (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Understanding employees' perceptions of their psychological contracts may lead to higher organizational commitment (Mohamed et al., 2011).

When a breach of the contract occurs, employees are likely to feel that the company does not value their work. This may have a negative impact on employee identification with the company (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Psychological contract breaches may create negative attitudes and low performance. When employees feel that breaches in their contracts exist, their contributions may no longer be as high, due to them feeling that incentives are lower. Adjusting to lower contributions occurs quickly, and over time, motivation continues to decline (McDermott et al., 2013). A psychological contract involves perceived promises, making it difficult for employers to know employee expectations. If an employer is unaware of employee expectations, the employer cannot fulfill employees' psychological contracts (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

D'Amato and Herzfeldt (2008) argued that psychological contract theory is outdated. Employees cannot rely on having job security in return for exceptional performance. As a result, all generations are likely to have less loyalty to the company and increased willingness to leave the company because employees do not feel secure in their jobs. This insecurity has been partially due to trends in downsizing, resizing, or re-engineering in companies. With these trends, current capabilities have higher priority than employee loyalty. These views resonate more in younger generations whose members take advantage of more learning opportunities. Younger generations tend to take responsibility for their careers by transitioning into new positions or companies if opportunities arise. Older generations, when compared to younger generations, are more likely to place emphasis on employee loyalty in exchange for pay increases and job security (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Wray-Lake, Syvertsen, Briddell, Osgood, and Flanagan (2011) found that in the 1990s through the early 2000s, there was a decline in emphasis on job security being important to younger generations.

Generational Theory

According to Strauss and Howe (1991), only four generational cycles have occurred in the United States since the 1620s, and they have been repetitive. These generational cycles occur in the same order, and significant events shape generational characteristics. Researchers use generational theory in predicting attitudes and behaviors of generations. They might use it to predict the job expectations of members of the Millennial Generation throughout their careers (Fenich, Scott-Halsell, & Hashimoto, 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

While not all members of each generation have the same characteristics, the characteristics are decisive in determining general assumptions (Balda & Mora, 2014; Lub et al., 2012). Generational theory accounts only for individuals who belong to the affected group in the same historical events. These groups are part of an age group and in no way are similar to familial generations. According to generational theory, individuals within age groups are similar when they go through stages in their lives (e.g., birth, school, workforce, children, and retirement). Similarities also exist in events occurring in society (e.g., social changes, technology, and wars). These events lead to cohesiveness in values, opinions, and life experiences (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Gentry, Griggs, Deal, Mondore, & Cox, 2011; Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011).

There is one significant difference between older generations and Millennials. The members of the Millennial generation have a different perspective when they enter the workforce. Younger generations often do not consider entering the workforce to be a separate stage that happens after finishing school, but rather a process that is continuous after entering the workforce. Younger generations often consider lifelong learning fundamental and do not regard education just as a prior event before entering their next life stage. Lifelong learning may include additional training or furthering their education (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Generation Y believes education is an important part of their life. Kilber, Barclay, and Ohmer (2014) asserted that 74% of Millennials are already college graduates or are planning to graduate from college. Within the segment of the Millennial Generation aged 18-24 years, 91% are either planning to graduate from college or have already.

Some authors have described older generations as being more educated than Millennials (Best, 2012), with a resulting reduction in workforce quality. Best (2012) asserted that it is not the case that Millennials have less education than members of other generations. Commentators are comparing older generations' current education to younger generations' education when a gap exists in the generations' ages. Best (2012) claimed the only reason that Millennials have less education than other generations is because older generations have had more time to achieve higher levels of education, and Millennials' education levels will continue to rise (Best, 2012).

Guyer (2013) emphasized that Millennial communication patterns have created a decrease in learning. Millennial students believe that they are entitled to connect 24/7. Millennial students' connection to social networking and the Internet all the time has reduced interest in instruction, reduced eye contact between student and instructor, and resulted in shorter attention spans (Guyer, 2013; Srinivasan, 2012).

Traditionalists

General characteristics. Employees born between 1922 and 1945 belong to the Traditionalist generation (Johnson & Lopes, 2008). The Great Depression was a significant event they grew up in, and they watched their parents try to provide for their family during a time of hardship. The Great Depression had an influence on the Traditionalists' values and beliefs. Many members of this generation tend to act selfless due to the economic hardships they faced along with their family and friends (Cekada, 2012). Some of their core values are (a) honesty, (b) loyalty, (c) respect for authority, (d)

dedication, (e) sacrifice, (f) conformity, (g) honor, (h) privacy, (i) stability, and (j) economic conservatism (Cekada, 2012; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012).

Work environment. Traditionalists are older than 65 years of age. Researchers have shown that Traditionalists' attitudes toward technological innovations in the workplace are significantly less positive than those of other age groups. Traditionalists often do not see technological advances as positive. In the Traditionalist Generation, 49% thought that the diversity in the workplace was a change for the better, although acceptance of homosexuality was lower at 21% (Pew Research Center, 2010b). Traditionalists often feel that if they have been working hard and have been at a company for a long time, they will have a predicted career ladder. Traditionalists want an environment where they can feel stable in their job and respect authority (Srinivasan, 2012).

Training preference. Traditionalists are less enthusiastic than other generations about using technology for training (Pew Research Center, 2010b). Using technology may hinder training for Traditionalists because they do not have the skills to use modern technology. Employees in the Traditionalist Generation are sometimes unwilling to learn and use technology (Cekada, 2012). Traditionalists prefer traditional learning styles such as note taking within a structured classroom-type environment. To become more knowledgeable, Traditionalists are comfortable with memorization techniques and studying (Professional Safety, 2012).

Baby Boomers

      General characteristics. Employees born between 1945 and 1964 belong to the Baby Boomer Generation (Lub et al., 2012). Although Baby Boomers enjoy their leisure time, they are often considered hard and ethic-driven workers. Baby Boomers are competitive and expect other employees to have as much commitment and loyalty to their work as themselves. Baby Boomers often have conflict with younger generations when others do not have the same work ethic (Alexander & Sysko, 2013; Benson & Brown, 2011; Cekada, 2012; Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). At the same time, as the members of this generation age, many require jobs that are less physically demanding and have flexible schedules (Szinovacz, 2011).

      Work environment. Baby Boomers in the younger end of the generation have typically found technological innovations to be positive. Those on the older end of the generation have been more indifferent about technological innovations. Baby Boomers do not always see technological advances in the workplace as positive. In the Baby Boomer Generation, 58% believe that the diversity in the workplace is positive. Acceptance of homosexuality was found to be lower at 37% when compared to diversity in the workplace as a whole (Pew Research Center, 2010b). Baby Boomers want high involvement in their work environment. Baby Boomers' commitment to work is often strong, and they are willing to work more than the typical 40-hour workweek (Cekada, 2012).

      Training preferences. Baby Boomers at the younger end of the generation are more accepting of the use of technology in their training (Pew Research Center, 2010b).

Baby Boomers want training that they know they will use and want to learn from experience (Cekada, 2012). Baby Boomers prefer examples such as case studies when learning and are comfortable with books, manuals, and PowerPoint presentations (Professional Safety, 2012).

Generation X

  General characteristics. Employees born between 1965 and 1980 belong to Generation X (Lub et al., 2012). Generation Xers also value work/life balance. For example, Xers value time spent with their family and having leisure time to enjoy (Alexander & Sysko, 2013; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Skepticism often is a trait of Generation X, as the members of this generation watched their parents face job insecurity and layoffs, creating concerns about staying employed and flexible in order to maintain employment (Cekada, 2012; Lyons & Kuron, 2013). Generation X has a lower commitment to companies than previous generations did (Cekada, 2012).

  Work environment. In general, Generation X typically found technological innovations were positive in their work environment. Sixty-five percent believe that diversity in the workplace is positive, and the acceptance of homosexuality was lower, at 45% (Pew Research Center, 2010b). In the work environment, Generation Xers want to feel they can have work/family synergy and balance (Twenge et al., 2010). The environment should have diversity and Generation X is comfortable with using technology in the environment. Generation X wants an environment where they can resist rules while problem-solving and multitasking (Cekada, 2012; Roberts, Newman, & Schwartzstein, 2012).

Training preferences. Generation X is accepting of the use of technology in their training (Pew Research Center, 2010b). Generation X wants interactive learning including answering questions, role-playing, games, or activities that are hands-on (Professional Safety, 2012).

The Millennial Generation

General characteristics. Employees born between 1981 and 2000 belong to the Millennial Generation. Although Millennials are still the youngest generation currently in the workforce, they continue to have greater roles within companies, and more members of this generation are continuing to enter the workforce. Millennials have shown a preference for working in groups and the ability to multitask (Cekada, 2012; Roberts et al., 2012).

Some of the influences that contribute to the characteristics of the Millennial Generation include growing up in a household with either a single parent or parents that both had careers. Millennials grew up surrounded with technology, including being the first generation having access to the Internet at an early age, and they had computers in their classroom. Millennials have grown up with cell phones, smart phones, social networking, reality shows, and Music Television (MTV) (Bark, 2009; Bolton, 2013; Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Johnson & Lopes, 2008; Senior & Cubage, 2010).

Major events Millennials faced while growing up included political and economic instability. This generation witnessed several large American corporations file for bankruptcy. This generation saw the impeachment of a U.S. president, William Jefferson Clinton. Increases in school shootings, the Oklahoma City Bombing, and terrorist attacks

were part of this generation's upbringing (Allison, 2013; Johnson & Lopes, 2008). As Millennials grew up watching their parents affected by the dot-com bubble, layoffs, and high divorce rates; many Millennials have become skeptics of long-term commitments including their job (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012). In the United States, Millennials witnessed a significant increase in work hours in the last 30 years. Millennials saw families that needed dual-incomes with little vacation time, making leisure time important to Millennials (Twenge et al., 2010).

In 2010, the unemployment rate for Millennials was 37%, the highest of any generation in three decades. In spite of this percentage, 90% of Millennials are confident in their ability to reach their long-term financial goals and their ability to have enough money to earn a living. High unemployment rates resulted in many Millennials enrolling in college and graduate school.

In 2008, 39.6% Millennials who enrolled in college were between 18 and 24 in age (Pew Research Center, 2010a). Millennials are not as motivated by intrinsic rewards at work, such as a sense of achievement, compared to other generations. Millennials consider extrinsic awards, such as money, more important. Millennials do not consider their job the most prominent part of their life. Many Millennials would not work if they did not need the money (Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011; Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012; Twenge et al., 2010). In contrast to the general population, who would still work if they did not have financial needs (Kuchinke et al., 2011)? With such a high number of unemployed Millennials in 2010, there has been a significant gap in existing research portraying the Millennial Generation in the workplace. Thus, a

primary goal of this study is to expand on the existing literature in understanding job expectations of Millennials in the workforce.

The most notable characteristic of Millennials is that they are typically more technologically proficient than previous generations, with the vast majority of Millennials being more comfortable with technology than other generations in the workforce. Other generations are continuing to learn and become comfortable with technology (Alexander & Sysko, 2013). When older generations understand the value the technology provides, they often are more interested and are more eager to learn and use the technology (Cekada, 2012).

Technology is easier for Millennials than for other generations. Various technologies have influenced Millennials throughout their lives, more than any other current generation in the workforce. The result is that many Millennials, quickly and almost seamlessly, are effective at completing various tasks through digital communications (Cekada, 2012). Millennials who are not placing a high importance on social awards, such as work friendships, might be due to Millennials being able to connect outside work with technology (Twenge et al., 2010).

Millennials do not need formal meetings because of their comfort with technology. Communicating and making decisions through laptops, cell phones, or other devices that are similar is usually satisfactory for them. Often e-mails, texting, instant messaging, or blogging are enough for Millennials when communicating. Other generations sometimes think communicating in these ways wastes time (Cekada, 2012). Older generations viewpoints could be from previous generations connecting by using

other communication modes including letters, telephone, or email instead of more modern technologies (Eastman, Iyer, Liao-Troth, Williams, & Griffin, 2014). The typical comfort the Millennial Generation has with multitasking proficiently allows them to work in different environments. Millennials may go from one task to another quickly, anytime, and anywhere (Cekada, 2012).

When communicating, social networking is another popular way for individuals in the Millennial Generation to correspond. Ninety-six percent of the Millennial Generation belongs to a social network (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Millennials are familiar with sharing their work experiences through social networks such as instant messages, blogs, or updates on websites, including MySpace, Facebook, or Twitter (Ennis, 2011; Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). The Millennial Generation has interacted with this communication medium more than other generations, and it is a part of Millennials' daily use (Ennis, 2011).

Social networking is also a tool for recruiting potential employees of the Millennial Generation (Ennis, 2011). A point of interest lies in determining if social media is a medium Millennials want to use when working on projects. Alternatively, employers might utilize social networking technology in creating opportunities for career advancements within the company instead of just a recruiting tool for new employees.

Recruiters within companies have started using similar social networking sites to expose the company to Millennials, but little internal interaction occurs through these sites. Social networking sites can prevent external individuals from gaining access. Therefore, recruiters could use these types of sites to engage Millennials and share

knowledge. Alternatively, some company leaders use these sites to post acknowledgments or achievements of employees within the group (Ennis, 2011).

Work environment. Scholars have suggested ways for Millennials to have a comfortable learning environment and provide companies with a competitive advantage. Company leaders need to examine their work environment to maintain talent within all generations. Millennials tend to embrace environments that are diverse in culture. The Millennial Generation tends to bore easily, so they work well in environments that allow them to multitask and have flexible work environments. Millennials have grown up multitasking between work, school, and activities. Millennials expect to multitask at work too (Kilber et al., 2014). They want to engage in an environment that has creative communications and state-of-the-art technologies (Ferri-Reed, 2010). An environment where Millennials can stay connected while multitasking with technology (Bolton, 2013).

Unlike previous generations, Millennials' preference is to communicate with technology. Millennials live in a world of text messaging slang, acronyms, and symbols. Millennials' communication style can hinder their ability to bring the soft skills needed in verbal and written communication for being successful in the workplace (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014).

The work environment for Millennials needs to allow for workplace flexibility. Millennials want a positive work environment where they feel they have job security and opportunities to better themselves. They want to work with others and have social networking as part of their environment (Ferri-Reed, 2010). Extrinsic rewards such as higher pay are a greater value to Millennials than to Baby Boomers. However,

Millennials do not want to work harder (i.e., overtime) for extrinsic awards. Krahn and Galambos (2014) also found that extrinsic rewards have a higher importance to younger generations. As younger generations age, the authors found that extrinsic rewards became more important to the generations. An increasing importance of extrinsic rewards is not the case for older generations.

Krahn and Galambos (2014) found a positive association with intrinsic rewards and age, instead of generation. Millennials, while still placing a high importance on leisure time, have a sense of entitlement for higher status and salary (Twenge et al., 2010). Job entitlement is higher with younger generations but begins to decrease with age (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). It is worth considering for Millennials whether they need notable projects or career advancements to continue to grow professionally and keep them loyal to the company.

Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, and Kuron (2012) found significant differences in studies on generational motivators. They found that in studies progression motivated Millennials more than Baby Boomers. Power motivates Millennials less than Generation X and Baby Boomers. The authors also found that Generation X and Millennials placed higher importance on status-related work values. Millennials wanted more freedom at work than other generations. Lyons et al. (2012) found in other studies no generational differences in intrinsic, extrinsic, altruism, or social values.

Millennials are task-focused, but they need to receive clear directions in order to understand expectations, and they enjoy collaborating in teams (Campione, 2014). Millennials enjoy the social aspects of working in teams and prefer that to working

individually. Company leaders may determine environments where they can communicate best with Millennial workers. An environment that Millennials are comfortable and where they can receive feedback on their performance to meet their job expectations (Balda & Mora, 2014; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Smith & Galbraith, 2012).

Alternating leadership may have a positive impact on younger generations and lead to innovative and dynamic environments. Andert (2011) suggested focusing on the contributions employees make, rather than large compensations to CEOs. When focused on the CEO, the perception is that one person is contributing to the company's success.

Millennials are the first generation connected all the time, and they often have cell phones that allow them to do activities such as text, email, and watch videos. When surveyed, more than 8 of 10 Millennials said they sleep with their phone (Malikhao, 2011). Company leaders with strict Internet policies might need to rethink policies to attract and retain talent from the Millennial Generation. Lim and Chen (2012) discovered that 97% of men and 85% of women believed accessing the Internet at work is acceptable. Lim and Chan (2012) claimed that many researchers have indicated that allowing employees to access the Internet reduces productivity, but, in contrast, the authors found some positive effects. The authors indicated that 75% of respondents said access to the Internet makes work more appealing than without Internet. Of the respondents, 57% thought they solved practical and personal issues easier with access to the Internet. Of the respondents, 52% thought they improved as a worker with access to the Internet. Finally, of the respondents, 49% agreed accessing the Internet for problems

they faced at work is useful (Lim & Chen, 2012). From the data, it is clear that being connected is what most Millennials want.

Training preferences. Both Generation X and the Millennials need training programs that better fit their needs (Garret, 2010). Since younger generations experienced continuous learning during their childhood, they have expectations for continuous learning when they enter the workforce. Younger generations want to continue to improve their skills and capabilities in order to apply it to their current and future careers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Of interest is whether the view of Millennials wanting continuous learning at work continues to be true when they enter the workforce in larger numbers.

Millennials can use technologies such as instant messaging, texting, and emailing to aid in communicating while performing other tasks without difficulty. Millennials expertise in technology opens opportunities to communicate through technology rather than using traditional communication. However, this could leave a deficient in traditional communication in the workforce including active listening, conflict management, and team building (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011).

Methods such as sharing videos, often used on social networking sites, are worth consideration for training the Millennial Generation in the workplace due to their visual appeal and Millennials' level of comfort. New mediums that include blogs, podcasts, and streaming videos can enrich learning. Leaders might use technology for employees to collaborate with colleagues. In addition, employees might use technology for helping colleagues learn difficult topics they might struggle learning through methods including

webinars (Roberts et al., 2012). Bott, Faulk, Guntupalli, Devaraj, and Holmes (2011) found that of all generations, Millennials had more exposure to media at work and home. Especially, Millennials communication exposure focused on digital streaming media, audio, instant messaging, and co-current media. Although it is important for employers to recognize employees' preferences, employers might consider what policies and procedures they want to implement regarding technology to prevent overexposure that could lessen productivity (Bott et al., 2011).

It is vital for Millennials to feel that learning is horizontal in nature by empowering employees to contribute positively to the company and to have the tools to succeed. The training process should be engaging, rather than just a presentation of information. Millennials prefer their learning to be informal (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011). Using virtual interactions allows for engaging training and mentoring at a reduced cost (Bamford, 2011).

Before anything else, companies should have proper onboarding processes. Millennials want to make a difference in their company. Providing them with six months to a year introduction is ideal that includes the company's culture, mission, and products/services (Ferri-Reed, 2010). Millennials may feel appreciated by having an onboarding process. Millennials are often open to mentoring and want to receive noteworthy projects to show the contributions they are making (Ferri-Reed, 2010). Millennials want opportunities for career advancements and recognition. Millennials want to make a difference in the workplace (Gursoy et al., 2013).

Comparison of Generations

 Technologies. Pew Research Center (2010b) found similarities in attitudes toward certain technologies, typically associated with the technologically literate Millennial Generation. Those within the Millennial Generation tend to be the most comfortable with social networks, although other generations are often open to social networks as well (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). For social networking, 45% of Millennials think the technological advances in social media have been for the better. Adults in the age group of 30-49 agree with the Millennials. The larger the age gap, however, the bigger the difference in percentages of generations that agree with the Millennials. Only 25% of the age group 50-64 believed the technological advances of social networking have been for the better. Twenty-one percentage of the age group 65 and older share that belief (Pew Research Center, 2010b).

 The percentages of acceptance for social networking are similar to the age groups' acceptance of blogs (Pew Research Center, 2010b). Although, there is a larger gap social networking acceptance between Millennials and those within the age range of 30-49 in their acceptance of blogs. Within the Millennial Generation, 44% of the members think the use of blogs is advantageous. Older age groups show fewer acceptances of blogs by members. The acceptance rates of blogs by age group are 34% for ages 30-49, 22% for ages 50-64, and 15% for ages 65 and older (Pew Research Center, 2010b). When company leaders want to utilize new technologies, it is beneficial to introduce the technologies in a way that employees understand the value of technology on organizational bottom-line performance (Cekada, 2012). When company leaders

understand generational differences in training preferences, technology implementation

may be easier, so all employees can use the new technologies efficiently (Cekada, 2012).

Since Millennials have grown up with technologies, they are sometimes associated with

terms like *digital natives*. *A digital immigrant* is sometimes a term used for other

generations that have not had the same exposure to new technologies (Balda & Mora,

2014; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012). Company leaders may meet different generational

needs by being sensitive to differences in exposure to technology. Sometimes older

generations' lack of knowledge portrays themselves as resisting technologies. Or, as

older generations not having an interest in innovation, technology, and training that can

assist in increased productivity (Foot & Venne, 2011).

  Diversity. Millennials often are more accepting of diversity than other

generations. They have embraced multiculturalism in the workplace (Chaudhuri &

Ghosh, 2012). The Pew Research Group (2010b) found that 67% of the Millennial group

thought that increasing racial and ethnic diversity was a change for the better. Within the

age group 30-49, 65% thought an increase in racial and ethnic diversity was a change for

the better. These attitudes are not as common among older groups. Fifty-eight

percentages of adults in the age range of 50-64 and 49% of those 65 or older think an

increase of racial and ethnic diversity in the workplace as positive. There is less

acceptance of homosexuality among all generations (Pew Research Center, 2010b). The

acceptance is 44% for Millennials, 45% within the age range of 30-49, 37% within the

age range of 50-64, and 21% of people 65 years or older (Pew Research Center, 2010b).

Work ethics. Millennials believe older generations have high moral and work ethics. The majority of Millennials believe older generations morals and work ethics are higher than their generation (Pew Research Center, 2010a). Millennials put more trust into company leaders than any other generation. Millennials believe that authority figures will act in their best interests (Gursoy et al., 2013). When Millennials trust their managers and feel supported, it increases their job satisfaction. Higher satisfaction can result in lower turnover and higher company commitment (Campione, 2014).

Other generations often see Millennials as not having a positive work ethic (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). In comparison, Millennials scored lower in work ethics than both Generation X and Baby Boomers (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) claimed that Millennials do have work ethics, but their work ethic is different from Baby Boomers' work ethics. Parry and Urwin (2011) said there are still mixed research findings on generations. The authors found that some of the research was contradicting regarding work values of different generations.

Millennials want flexibility in controlling the work they put in. Millennials are not looking just to adhere to the hours of a typical workday. That might mean working late on one night to meet the project's deadline while leaving early another day in order to meet personal obligations (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Millennials have published press blogs, which confirm that work-life balance is a high priority for them (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Millennials scored higher on the importance of leisure time than Baby Boomers (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). By Millennials placing importance on leisure time, other generational coworkers might see

Millennials as selfish or as the generation showing low dedication or commitment to their company (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). In general, Wray et al. (2011) found that the importance of leisure time has increased with successive generations. Sometimes Millennials have the stereotype of lazy or time wasters (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). De Hauw and De Vos (2010) stated that, although Millennials value work/life balance, they would put extra time and effort to work when needed. They will shorten their social time at work such as breaks, in order to ensure the company succeeds (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). All generations tend to place the highest emphasis on family first and then their job (Kuchinke et al. 2011).

Mutual respect. Mutual respect across generations might occur as a result of cross-generational mentoring (Ferri-Reed, 2012a). An employee's professional development may increase with cross-generational mentoring. Employees may use strengths that each generation offers for mentoring other generations. An employee's skills, knowledge, and professional development may increase by balancing each generation's strengths. Generational differences may affect relationships among team members, but individuals need to create mutual respect and benefit from cross-generational differences (Ferri-Reed, 2012a; Houck, 2011). In order to receive extraordinary results, leaders need to refrain from making rigid stereotypes about generations and examine individuals' skills and achievements (Helyer & Lee, 2012). A company and the employees benefit from having the right training and succession planning. Showing commitment to employees' growth can help prepare for the next generation of leaders (Strom, Sanchez, & Downey-Schilling, 2011).

Millennials may struggle with work if mentors or supervisors leave them under-supervised (Cekada, 2012). This generation often has experienced overscheduling of their time. They had agendas or plans for what they needed to complete, created for them by parents or teachers. Millennials received more attention both at home and in school than previous generations. Therefore, they need some supervision (Cekada, 2012). Many Millennials want feedback right away, since they received it quickly after performing tasks while growing up (Cekada, 2012; Ferri-Reed, 2012b).

Company leaders need to be aware that older generations may not be accepting of new training approaches (Cekada, 2012). Older generations' training needs could conflict with the needs of Millennials. Baby Boomers understand that changes will happen, but often are not accepting of changing work environments. Baby Boomers are comfortable at dominating the workforce in the culture they have created (Cekada, 2012). Traditionalists may believe that the types of trainings that Millennials prefer are unnecessary and might resist new training approaches. Some employees from older generations may not have the capability to make the shift to new approaches in training (Cekada, 2012).

Millennials want a boss they respect and know they can continue to grow. They want mutual respect from their boss and want the security of their jobs. Millennials want their bosses to have mutual trust and recognize their achievements. Millennials do not necessarily think they need to pay their dues if they have excelled in their jobs (Bell & Griffin, 2010; Gursoy et al., 2013).

Similarities. Deal et al. (2010) discussed that generations are more similar than often portrayed and cited various research studies that described similar descriptors of previous generations when generation members were the same age range as the Millennials. Often the negative descriptors ascribed to Millennials include terms such as (a) difficult, (b) entitled, (c) self-absorbed, (d) self-focus, and (e) poor communication skills (Deal et al., 2010; DeWall, Pond, Campbell, & Twenge, 2011; Hartman & McCambridge, 2011). Poor communication skills of the Millennials are a concern especially in the service sector that has continued to grow over the last few decades. The service sector employees need high levels of interaction with people with good communication skills (Michel, Kavanagh, & Tracey, 2012).

Deal et al. (2010) found minor differences in work attitudes among all generations. Lyons and Kuron (2013) said little evidence existed in differences in work attitudes. However, Deal et al., (2010) mentioned that Millennials often have higher levels of narcissism, self-esteem, and assertiveness than other generations (Eastman et al., 2014; Wilson & Sibley, 2011). Deal et al. (2010) focused on the Millennials in college. Evidence from the U.S. population for significant differences in work attitudes in students of previous generations that were at the same stages in their lives still needs investigation (Deal et al., 2010). Benson and Brown (2011) discussed that differences in work attitudes are more influenced by generation rather than age or maturity. Lyons and Kuron (2013) argued that it is not clear if differences in generations' work attitudes have held as they got older. In addition, Costanza et al. (2012) contested there is little evidence of different work attitudes among generations.

Gentry et al. (2011) stated there are more similarities than differences in views regarding leadership practices that influence whether a manager is successful. Managers of all generations agree on three valuable skills needed to achieve success. All generations want managers that have competence in leading employees, change management, and building and mending relationships (Gentry et al., 2011).

Top companies' leaders have adjusted their workplace to accommodate work-life balance. Amenities within some company buildings include gyms, laundry facilitates or rooms for massage and meditation. More paid time off during the employees' first year is likely to attract Millennials. Employees feeling like they have work-life balance is important especially to younger generations (Twenge et al., 2010). Generation X's work and family interfering with one another are the highest of the generations and Millennials slightly less when compared to Baby Boomers. Hence, it has created a need for better work-life balance (Beutell, 2013).

Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) discussed three main themes related to communication preferences of Millennials: frequent feedback, open communication, and group-based work. These preferences are essential for most generations, although Millennials expect communication that is more frequent and positive in nature than other generations. Millennials expect to receive communication that other generations did not expect to receive. They consider communication a constant need-to-know to fulfill their responsibilities (Ferri-Reed, 2012b; Lewis, 2015; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Increasing evidence exists that indicates the general characteristics associated with each generation might not be accurate (Johnson & Lopes, 2008). Surveys produced

within marketing or consulting companies are the research of choice of most company leaders, and company leaders have used the results of the surveys. The authors said that scholarly research in this area had recently begun to attempt to validate these claims (Johnson & Lopes, 2008).

The life phases might have linkage to some characteristics of employees rather than the generational members. When both generations were entering the workforce, high similarities existed amongst both the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations (Wesner & Miller, 2008). Joshi et al. (2011) also noted that generational differences in the workforce have only been description rather than explanatory and need further investigation. Lester, Standifer, Schultz, and Windsor (2012) argued that there has not been enough empirical evidence that supports perceptions of generational differences.

Current trends regarding generations are vital for employers to understand. The five main trends include education, parenting, technology, employee commitment, and meaningful work (Wesner & Miller, 2008). The Millennial Generation is currently the best-educated generation, just as the Baby Boomers were when they entered the workforce. As a result, employers have high expectations of Millennials to utilize their skills and knowledge (Wesner & Miller, 2008).

The parents of Millennials have had a high level of involvement in their careers because Baby Boomers were the first generation to question authority. In the same way, Millennials want open relationships with their employers to help reach their job expectations. Unlike other generations, both Baby Boomer and Millennial generations

entered the workforce with high confidence in their abilities to meet their career goals
(Wesner & Miller, 2008).

In regard to technologies, Millennials are the most connected. However, Baby
Boomers were the first generation with technologies affecting their life. Baby Boomers
saw what life was like around the world through television, and they were the first to
work with computers (Wesner & Miller, 2008). Providing a shared understanding of the
effect technologies have on one's life.

For training, researchers may use adult learning theory as a foundation to
understand characteristics of all generations and the way adults learn (Knowles, 1974).
Adults need to have more of a purpose in their work environment than just completing
work and learn differently than children. If adult employees cannot develop in their work
setting, they withdraw or leave the company (Knowles, 1974). Adult learning theory is
similar to the organismic model, where humans use education to develop themselves
continually (Knowles, 1974).

Knowles (1974) discussed different aspects of adult learning theory, including
adults' experiences as a rich source of learning. He noted that to learn concepts adults
need relevancy and need to see how those concepts link with goals or issues within their
jobs. Adults need to feel comfortable in the environment in which they learn, and need
mutual respect between learners and teachers. Finally, adult learners tend to be self-
directed in their learning (Knowles, 1974).

All generations within the workforce conform to the principles of adult learning
theory. The main characteristics that set Millennials apart are the need to feel

appreciated. Millennials want training that is less formal and want technology incorporated into their workplace (Ferri-Reed, 2010; Hartman & McCambridge, 2011).

Finally, the meaningfulness of work and work commitment go hand-in-hand for the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations. Baby Boomers and Millennials are mobile in jobs in order to reach career goals. Both generations tend to lack commitment to companies and look for other meaningful work if not happy (Lewis, 2015; Wesner & Miller, 2008). In general, Millennials and Generation X have lower affective or emotional commitment to a company than other generations (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2012). In another study, Nelson (2012) found no significant differences in organizational commitment among generations.

Relevance to company leaders. Understanding the job expectations of the Millennial Generation may result in creating a competitive advantage for a company. Most companies have used a formal orientation for all new hires as part of their onboarding process (Ferri-Reed, 2010). To stay competitive, companies' leaders have found ways to use their training so that employees gain and apply knowledge more quickly (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008).

Effective communication is essential for meeting Millennials' job expectations. Hartman and McCambridge (2011) asserted that effective communications could lead to success for both the employee and the employer. Hartman and McCambridge argued that Millennials are deficit in their communication skills and lack the ability to make decisions on their own. Millennials need to adjust their communication, based on the

communication preferences of those they are communicating with, so the communication

fits both parties' preferences (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011).

Millennials need to fill the gap left behind by Baby Boomers who are soon to

enter retirement. Not enough skilled employees are available to make up for the number

of Baby Boomers leaving the workforce. The U.S., Europe, and Japan expect one fifth of

executives, managers, and employees possessing critical skills will leave the workforce in

the next decade (Bell & Griffin, 2010). By 2039, one out of five Americans will be

senior citizens, making it essential for company leaders to attract and retain employees by

meeting their job expectations (Bell & Griffin, 2010). The Millennials have the second

highest population, after the Baby Boomers. Millennials account for approximately 78

million people in their generation compared to Baby Boomers at approximately 85

million people in the United States (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Legas & Sims, 2011).

Attracting talent. Suleman (2011) stated that beginning in 2014, 50% of

Millennials make up the workforce population in the United States. Attracting

Millennials into the workforce is not the same as recruiting older generations (Sujansky

& Ferri-Reed, 2009). Helyer and Lee (2012) expected more difficulty in recruiting,

retaining, motivating, and managing Millennials than other generations. Company

leaders are still interested in overcoming these challenges. Millennials demonstrate

themselves to be more qualified than ever and are becoming the highest performing

workforce in history (Helyer & Lee, 2012). Offering 401(k) accounts or a company

pension plan is not necessarily attractive to this generation. Most of the members of the

Millennials do not plan to stay at one company for their career (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Millennials want environments that will challenge them, provide feedback, and provide ongoing opportunities. They place higher importance on status-related values than older generations and want to contribute as soon as they begin working for a company (Smith & Galbraith, 2012). Millennials want an environment where they have open communication with their managers and high involvement (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). In addition, they want managers who respect their opinions, due to their knowledge and skills, regardless of years of experience (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). Hansen and Leuty (2012) found that younger generations are concerned about compensation, job security, and working conditions. In addition, younger generations want an environment that enables creativity and allows the expansion of job responsibilities. Advancement, recognition, and authority are less important to younger generations compared to other generations, although still important (Hansen & Leuty, 2012).

Millennials might contribute positively to the company by doing reverse mentoring. Reverse mentoring provides other generations with opportunities to learn technology skills and employees may use reverse mentoring to expose others to new ideas (Bamford, 2011; Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Houck, 2011). Millennials have grown up with the latest technologies, work collaboratively, and have attended schools where teachers and the staff accommodated their needs, so they expect the same from their employers (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Leaders that provide benefits that make employees feel comfortable attract Millennials to work at their company (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). These benefits include on-site services, such as gyms and meals to accommodate employees who work late. Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) noted that Millennials value employers who consider their well-being. Contributing to the company's success is important to Millennials (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is important for a company to have when Millennials are choosing a workplace. The dimension of CSR that Millennials place the highest importance on is workplace practices. Although CSR is important to Millennials, many Millennials would lessen the importance if they received better extrinsic benefits (Leveson & Therese, 2014).

Ehrhart, Mayer, and Ziegert (2012) stated that Millennials place equal importance on their personal life and their work life. Millennials value employers who have programs that they can use to balance work and personal life. Having the ability to have work/life balance makes an employer attractive.

Retaining talent. The Millennial Generation wants to reach career goals quickly. Millennials want to receive feedback often, so they can achieve their goals (Lewis, 2015; Smith & Galbraith, 2012; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012). Awards, certificates, bonuses, and promotions motivate Millennials. Millennials want to make a difference in their careers quickly; they want to know that promotions are available and that they have the tools to reach career goals. Having mentors that give them the tools to get there may

help Millennials stay with the company. Mentorship may help them be ready for

leadership positions when the time comes (Ferri-Reed, 2012b; Smith & Galbraith, 2012).

Smith and Galbraith (2012) found that 58% of Millennials believe that 1-2 years

for entry-level positions is sufficient. In addition, 22% of Millennials expect promotion

opportunities every 2-3 years in their continuing careers. Smith and Galbraith stated 72%

of Millennials said that their generation gets bored easily, and 75% are likely to change

careers, scoring higher than other generations. With 55% of Generation X and 31% of

Baby Boomers responding that they were likely to change careers (Smith & Galbraith,

2012). Millennials see earlier careers as stepping-stones for better professional

opportunities in their career. Millennials want continuous praise for their work and want

to know their employers appreciate their contributions. If Millennials do not feel

appreciated, they will no longer feel committed to their company and look elsewhere

(Smith & Galbraith, 2012).

Turnover. Employee turnover may have a critical impact on the company. When

determining how to reduce turnover and retain talent, considerations for managing

turnover are necessary. When meeting job expectations of employees, voluntary turnover

is often an area that a company can manage. Often related to voluntary turnover is (a)

individual differences, (b) conflicts of personalities, (c) organizational culture or (d) job

satisfaction. When considering the indirect costs related to the replacement of an

employee added in, the cost of the employee's annual salary for replacement is

approximately one and a half times an employee's salary (Palanski et al., 2013). Hom et

al. (2012) claimed the replacement cost could be 90% to 200% of an employee's annual pay.

Yang et al. (2011) specifically looked at hotel employees in Taiwan, where the estimated annual turnover rate is as high as 300%. Yang et al. (2011) emphasized that beyond the financial impact, high turnover affects employee morale, productivity, and efficiency. In addition to compensation policies and training and development programs used to reduce turnover, it is important for an employer to understand an employee's job expectations.

Five factors that contributed to voluntary turnover in Yang et al.'s (2011) study were salary and benefits, individual emotional conditions, hospitality industry, work style and responsibilities, and work content. Yang et al. (2011) recommended using customized retention strategies that align with the job expectations of their employees. By targeting individuals who are less satisfied or and have more employment options, managers could increase retention. By assessing and monitoring employees work attitudes, performance, embeddedness, and market trends; managers can identify risks early and put processes in place such as employee coaching, development, and recognition, and development (Smith, Holtom, & Mitchell, 2011; Swider, Boswell, & Zimmerman, 2011). A greater focus might need spent on younger generations. Maier (2011) found that job satisfaction seemed to decline in successive generations.

The commitment of younger generations to their company is lower than older generations (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Company leaders found it difficult to retain younger generations when their commitment was low, making it important to understand

generational differences. Younger generations tend to not rank company loyalty as a top priority in their professional career (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008).

Competitive advantage. Millennials now have a greater presence in the workplace (Sarringhaus, 2011). Company leaders provide a competitive advantage for companies when ensuring a greater presence of social networks that interest Millennials. Social networks are relatively new in use and company leaders have been slow to adapt this communication medium (Sarringhaus, 2011). Three-quarters of Millennials have a profile on sites for social networking (Pew Research Center, 2010a). Since employees in the Millennial Generation are comfortable with technology, employers might use technology to share ideas or even business plans anywhere (Sarringhaus, 2011).

Many Millennials are already comfortable with creating online videos. One out of five Millennials have created a video and posted the video online. Employers might consider using technology in the workplace that allows employees to upload videos for collaboration (Pew Research Center, 2010a).

Joining Millennials together with other generations may lead to the success of a company. Millennials' work ethic is strong, and they have a desire to make the world a better place. Millennials want to work for companies where they can feel they are doing something that creates betterment. Millennials want to work for companies that they believe are ethical. Millennials want a place for both personal and professional growth (Bell & Griffin, 2010).

Transition and Summary

Section 1 was the foundation of the study. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the central research question: What are the job expectations of Millennial Generation employees within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area? Generational theory and psychological contracts theory were the primary conceptual frameworks for this study. In the review of the literature, I summarized previous research on these theories and the characteristics of the Millennial Generation compared to other generations.

In Section 2, I provide detailed information on the project, including the role of the researcher and the ethical precautions related to the study. The discussion includes the population and participants of the study and identifying and justifying the research method and design. The conclusion of the section has a description of the data instruments, including how the researcher collected, organized, and analyzed the data.

Section 3 includes a presentation of the findings and the applicability of the findings to professional practice in the business field. It includes a discussion on how using the results of this study to suggest action in the business world might contribute to social change. Section 3 concludes with a review of areas of the study that might need further examination, followed by a summary of final reflections on the research process.

Section 2: The Project

The general business problem is that shortage and turnover of employees negatively affect a company's operations. The specific business problem is that Millennials' job expectations are unclear to employers in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Understanding Millennials' job expectations may reduce the shortage of employees and allow company leaders to attract and retain Millennial Generation employees, who, on average, stay at their jobs for 1.5 years (Suleman, 2011). Millennials are the prime-age group and represented 50% of the workforce in 2014 (Suleman, 2011). This section contains a description of the purpose of the study, the methodology, the design I used to investigate the problem, and the rationale for the methodology and design. The section includes an explanation of my role as the researcher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the job expectations of Millennial Generation members within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Male and female members of the Millennial Generation who were born between the years 1981 and 1990, who held a bachelor's degree, and who had at least 1 year of employment experience participated in the study. Given the generation's familiarity with web-based communication, I used networking sites, including LinkedIn© and community social media sites, to recruit voluntary participants. I employed open-ended, semistructured interview questions to gain an in-depth understanding of Millennials' perspectives on job expectations. Twenty participants identified themes on job expectations.

Company leaders might gain useful insights by using research findings from this study. Knowing the job expectations of all employees allows for a fair and diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all employees. When leaders understand Millennials' job expectations, they might better their company in order to retain Millennial employees, thereby decreasing recruiting and hiring costs. Furthermore, employees' job satisfaction might benefit employees' relationships with their coworkers, families, and communities.

Role of the Researcher

Addressing my role as researcher required me to select, justify, and implement the methodology design and to recruit participants, obtain permission, and maintain participants' confidentiality. An additional role was to schedule and conduct interviews to collect data. If any ethical issues had arisen, I would have addressed any concerns of the interviewees; however, none arose. As I am within the Millennial Generation, it was crucial to avoid biases in fulfilling my responsibilities.

Participants

Professional networking and social sites including LinkedIn© and a community social media website were the primary venues to recruit 25 voluntary participants, including five participants for a field test. Participants were both males and females born between 1981 and 1990 who were part of Millennial Generation. Although the Millennial Generation extends to those born through 2000, the participants were at least in their 20s and were likely more experienced in the workforce than Millennial

employees in their teens. All participants had at least a bachelor's degree and at least 1

year of employment.

Researchers may use purposive sampling to choose a target population.

Purposive sampling is not equivalent to random sampling due to choosing participants

based on their lived experiences. For this study, the participants were in the workforce

and had worked for at least 1 year for their employer. In the last decade, online

recruitment for purposive sampling has become popular to find participants who might

otherwise be difficult to access (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2014; Elo et al., 2014).

Potential participant relationships were initiated by using e-mail communication

and community postings targeting Millennial and Generation Y groups on websites.

Once potential participants indicated that they were interested, they received a consent

form, located in Appendix A, indicating that their identity would remain private and that

they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants replied with the words *I*

consent before scheduling interviews at their convenience. Participants received a

contact number to allow them the option of not disclosing their telephone number to

complete the interview at the agreed date and time. Some participants chose to provide

their telephone number instead. As an incentive, each participant received a $5.00 gift

card delivered via email. They had their choice of a Starbucks or Amazon.com gift card

for participating in the interview.

Research Method and Design

I chose to conduct the research using a qualitative method and a

phenomenological design. The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological design was

to get as close as possible to the human experience and to develop meaning from the participants' experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The resultant data contained words to describe the reflections; this approach was selected rather than a quantitative method with numbers or mixed methods with a quantitative method to validate knowledge (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). A discussion of the method and research design follows, with an explanation of the appropriateness of addressing the research questions.

Research Method

The methodology for this study was qualitative in that it involved the use of in-depth data to address the research question of interest. A qualitative method of an inductive design is an explorative approach to finding meaning through individuals' descriptions of their lived experiences. A viewpoint gathered by qualitative methods, rather than mixed methods, is that researchers can keep an open curiosity about the phenomena. Unlike quantitative methods where validations of knowledge are the focus, a researcher using qualitative methods can let knowledge emerge from the data. As the intent of this study was to understand multiple experiences and meanings of job expectations of Millennials, it was not appropriate to use a quantitative method for validation of data (Rudestam & Newton, 2015; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011).

Research Design

Using a phenomenological design aided me in understanding the participants' experiences in order to help leaders recognize job expectations of Millennials. The design allowed for control of the pace and depth of questioning while receiving historical

information from participants (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I conducted in-depth phenomenological design interviews to develop understanding of the phenomena of interest: job expectations of the Millennial Generation in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Within the scope of the research study, scheduling interviews at participants' convenience was possible. When a researcher listens to, empathizes with, and relates to participants when conducting interviews, participants often feel comfortable sharing their experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Unlike a phenomenology research design with interviews, an ethnography design with observations was impractical as a means of understanding participants' perceptions. The data collection effort is extensive in ethnography, and an understanding of cultural anthropology is needed; therefore, ethnography was not appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2013). Within the framework of ethnographic observation, it would have been too difficult to determine the opinions and perspectives of Millennials concerning their job expectations (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I could not have generalized from the Millennial population in the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area if I had focused on a single individual through biography. The use of biographies is a deductive process in which participants create their meanings (O'Neill, Roberts, & Sparkes, 2015). By the same token, a case study is limited because of its focus on a single instance or one group. Generalization is more difficult in case study than in any other form of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

Interpretation of data from narrative inquiry or hermeneutics would have been difficult in relation to the population of Millennials in the Baltimore-Washington

metropolitan area. Millennials have not spent sufficient time in the workforce for there to

be a large amount of existing research on this group. Using an interpretation design with

participants' perceptions might have resulted in reliability and validity issues (O'Neill et

al., 2015).

Population and Sampling

Participants were solicited for this study through e-mail, LinkedIn©, and a

community social media website that involves Millennial and Generation Y groups. The

email included the scope of the study and the consent form. The criteria for inclusion in

the study were as follows: born between 1981 and 1990, hold at least a bachelor's degree,

have at least 1 year of employment, and be working in the Baltimore-Washington

metropolitan area. By replying to the email with the words *I consent*, potential

participants provided consent via email. Participants understood that the audiotaped

phone interview would take approximately 30-45 minutes, that any information they

provided would be confidential and would not be used outside of this research project,

and that the study would not include names or anything that could identify the

participants.

Interviews were conducted over the telephone with 20 participants to identify

themes on job expectations and describe and elaborate on Millennials' perspectives.

Researchers have contended that a small sample size, such as six interviewees, is

acceptable in qualitative phenomenological research (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014).

Other researchers have recommended 15-25 interviewees as an appropriate sample size

(Guest et al., 2006; Suri, 2011). Caution needs to be taken to avoid having a sample that

is too large. A large sample size is often thought to lead to more reliable data; however, a larger group of participants can sometimes lead to errors in (a) sampling, (b) measurement, (c) multiple comparisons, and (d) aggregation (Kaplan, Chambers, & Glasgow, 2014). The DBA program at Walden requires a minimum of 20 interviews for phenomenological studies. I did not find it necessary to complete any more than 20 interviews due to data saturation. *Data saturation* refers to using enough participants until replication and redundancy of data occur (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Without saturation, there would be issues in analyzing data in order to identify themes (Elo et al., 2014).

Ethical Research

All participants received a consent form (see Appendix A) and background information, which allowed them to understand the study before they decided whether to participate. As part of the consent process, the participants knew that participation was voluntary such that they could stop the interview at any time or request to withdraw from the study, even after the completion of the interview. To show appreciation for their participation, all participants received a $5.00 Starbucks or Amazon.com gift card of their choice delivered via email.

I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval #02-06-14-0068147 from Walden University before data collection and the field test. The employees in the IRB department at Walden University ensured compliance with both the ethical standards at Walden University and U.S. federal regulations (Walden University, n.d.b).

Participants' personal information is confidential and will not be used for any purposes other than this research project. The study does not contain names or information that could inadvertently identify a participant in the reports. The secure, encrypted electronic data are only accessible by use of a password. A backup of electronic files is on a secure thumb drive, with both the thumb drive and any nonelectronic documentation being kept in a locked fireproof chest, not accessible to others, for later use if needed. Walden University requires that researchers keep data for a period of at least 5 years.

Data Collection Instruments

Participants answered open-ended questions during the interviews on the phenomenon of job expectations of the Millennial Generation. An opportunity to probe participants' experiences with follow-up questions to gain a more in-depth understanding existed through the use of semistructured interviews. The interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo. Each participant reviewed a copy of his or her transcribed interview for review of the accuracy of the interview transcripts and for better understanding of each participant's meanings (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

There was an opportunity to adjust questions if necessary before interviewing the sample of 20 participants by conducting a field test with five participants. Thus, 25 interviews took place. The final study's findings did not have the field test results included. Evaluation of the clarity of questions and general observations occurred, based on feedback from participants after the field test. According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), when using a field test it is possible to screen for technical difficulties, identify

both typographical and grammar errors, and verify participants' understanding of the interview questions.

Data Collection Technique

Each participant gave permission for an audiotaped telephone interview. I imported the transcribed interviews and audio files into NVivo. I reviewed audiotaped interviews against each transcript and checked for accuracy. The data will remain as a saved PDF file converted from a Microsoft Word document.

I evaluated the procedure and usefulness of the data and provided validation of participants' understanding of the interview questions after the field test (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). A field test was beneficial because opportunities existed to identify and address difficulties, such as unanticipated logistical issues. Without the field test to validate the data and make adjustments, the data might have been unusable (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Based on feedback from the five participants in the field test, I reordered the research questions and addressed a technical glitch related to the recording.

In the same way as for the study, I used websites, including LinkedIn© and a community social media website, to recruit voluntary participants for the field test. The solicitation for volunteers described the scope of the study, including the criteria that participants had to meet. Participants answered open-ended, semistructured interview questions. The overall results of the study did not include data from the field test.

Data Organization Techniques

Each audio file had a letter and number to organize the participants' interviews. The electronic transcription had the same letter and number to mark the interviews. I

analyzed the data using the modified Van Kaam method and NVivo for structuring the

data. When labeling data based on themes, I used NVivo software for consistency. I

used the software to organize the data before I looked to understand the meaning of the

data (Kolb, 2012). I listened to the audio files several times to add any missed

information from the transcribed interviews. Encrypted electronic data, including the

audio files and transcripts from the interviews, were only accessible by using a password.

I used a secure thumb drive to back up the electronic files. Only I have access to a locked

fireproof chest in which I will store the thumb drive and any nonelectronic

documentation for 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred any paper documentation and

securely erase the data on the flash drive.

Data Analysis Technique

The principal research question was the following: What are the job expectations

of Millennial Generation employees within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area?

I used the following interview questions to answer the research question:

1. What were the key job-related factors that affected your decision to accept

   your current position?

2. How important to you are new activities or special projects that expand your

   skills in meeting your job expectations?

3. How do you expect company leaders to demonstrate that they genuinely value

   your contributions in regard to rewards, benefits, and recognition?

4. How do potential advancement opportunities influence your loyalty to a

   company?

5. What length of time do you expect to stay in a role before being eligible for advancement opportunities?

6. What support do you expect company leaders to provide you in order to achieve the next level in your career?

7. How likely are you to stay with a company if you enjoy the role and benefits but you are not provided many opportunities for advancement?

8. How likely are you to stay with a company if it is not meeting your job expectations? If you are not likely to stay with the company, how long would you stay before pursuing external career opportunities?

9. What other job-related factors would affect your decision to leave your current company?

For a study to be valid, steps taken during data analysis should be consistent with all areas throughout the study. By taking steps previously described that were coherent and logical, I achieved the goal of understanding the phenomenon (Pereira, 2012). For this study, I followed Moustakas's (1994) seven steps of data analysis to guide a logical approach. Using Moustakas's approach, modified from van Kaam's method of analysis, which is less interpretation, resulting in more in-depth data, I synthesized the data. I understand the themes better, that emerged from the participants' interviews, when I used the data. I eliminated irrelevant words and statements using Moustakas's model (Moustakas, 1994).

For Step 1, I used horizontalization. Step 1 was used to highlight areas in interviews related to participants' experiences regarding job expectations. This process

included putting equal emphasis on all statements related to job expectations of Millennials (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Unrelated elements for understanding the principal research question decreased in frequency with Step 2. After multiple reviews, I eliminated statements that did not relate to the phenomenon (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994). In NVivo, frequently used words were identified, and I highlighted statements that related to the interview questions, placed them in nodes, and removed irrelevant statements.

During Step 3, clustering and thematizing involved reviewing the transcripts. I reviewed the different statements on participants' experiences that related to the interview questions. I identified the main themes of the interviews with labeling (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Step 4 was the final identification of the invariant constituents or the significant statements, also called horizons that related to job expectations. To do this, I crosschecked the invariant constituents and main themes identified in previous steps with the transcripts for accuracy. In addition, checking the invariant constituents and main themes ensured invariant constituents were relevant to the research question or stated explicitly. I updated labels that were not accurate and removed statements that were not compatible or relevant (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

In Step 5, I developed individual textual descriptions. These descriptions included invariant constituents and main themes related to the phenomenon. The descriptions have supporting verbatim examples (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Developed during Step 6 were individual structural descriptions that utilized textual descriptions. I used the imaginative variation process for understanding how Millennial employees create job expectations. I imagined participants' experiences happening in various structures developing these descriptions along with thinking, reflecting, recollecting, and analyzing. I could identify underlying and precipitating factors for the experience related to the research question by developing descriptions (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Step 7, the final step, required creating a textural and structural description or narrative for each participant. These narratives were part of understanding what occurred and how or the texture and structure of the participant's experience. I combined the individual descriptions for each participant and created one textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the participants as a whole (Machtmes et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Using NVivo for reviewing transcripts, creating labels, discovering themes, creating descriptions, and reviewing data was appropriate since the data was nonnumerical. The NVivo software is useful in exploratory studies, and I used a systemic approach (Kolb, 2012). I used the query function and search engine in the software as necessary and identified statements with reoccurring words with the frequently used words function. I used the software to highlight statements and place them into nodes. The nodes were for statements that aligned with the research question. I used these features when organizing the data to create a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of participants.

Using generational theory and psychological contracts theory as a conceptual framework for this study was necessary to identify the main themes related to job expectations. I used these two theories to connect generational characteristics and employees' psychological contracts with their employers. The data tied back to the conceptual framework that included the two theories.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Assuring reliability for this study happened through several steps. I assessed the strength of the research question and reliability of the data-gathering protocols for this study with an initial field test. For consistency, I used the same data collection techniques for open-ended semistructured and audiotaped telephone interviews from the field test (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I kept and safeguarded all documentation for reference. Ensuring the consistency of interview questions and procedures prevented the questions from being misleading and biased. By regularly checking the data as whole for accuracy, reliability and creditability were established (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Describing the purpose of the study established dependability, by making it evident to other researchers the decision trail made during the study so that data was stable throughout the process (Elo et al., 2014; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Descriptions included decisions made for (a) the chosen participants, (b) the data collection process, (c) transfer of data for analysis, (d) interpretation of the research findings, and (e) determination of credibility (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Validity

I used a field test to ensure participants' understanding of the interview questions and to ensure that the response data accurately reflected the participants' intended meanings (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). To achieve credibility, I reviewed transcripts for similarities in which those participants who share similar experiences would instantly identify with others (Elo et al., 2014; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I checked the transcripts several times before providing each participant with the transcript of his or her interview and asked the participant to review the transcript for any errors. In addition to this transcript review, there was a constant comparison of labels using NVivo, to ensure no labels were marked incorrectly (Md. Ali & Yusof, 2011). The transferability of this data applies to Millennials within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area with at least a bachelor's degree and at least 1 year employment experience (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I placed a self-reflection in Section 3 that discussed personal biases since I am within the Millennial Generation. I used an openness, reflection, and self-awareness to achieve validity, credibility, transferability, and dependability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Transition and Summary

Included in Section 2 was a description of my role as the researcher, a discussion on ethical assurances, a description of the participants, and a description of the study population. Included in the discussion of the research method was a justification for the chosen qualitative method and phenomenological design. There was a description of data instruments and the collection organization and analysis of data. Finally, there was a

discussion on the processes and tools for ensuring the reliability and validity of the study. The processes and procedures included using a field test, consistency in the interviews, transcript review, and comparison of labels.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 1, I described the general and specific business problems. I noted that the purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the central research question: What are the job expectations of Millennial Generation employees within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area? I discussed the primary conceptual frameworks for this study and the review of the literature. Section 2 was an overview of my role as the researcher, ethical precautions, population, and participants of the study followed by a discussion of the research approach, data instruments, and data collection and analysis.

Section 3 contains an overview of the findings and the applicability of the findings to professional practice in a business setting. This section includes a discussion of how employers or researchers might use the findings and recommendations from this study to effect social change. Section 3 includes a review of areas of the study that might necessitate further research. The conclusion area of this study contains a section of final reflections from completing the research process.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the job expectations of Millennial Generation members within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. There were nine interview questions used to support the central research question: What are the job expectations of Millennial Generation employees within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area? Information from the research on Millennials' job expectations might provide insight to company leaders for improving

employee retention. Such insights may contribute to social change by improving work

environments and employees' relationships with coworkers, families, and their

communities as a result of employees experiencing fulfillment through their jobs.

Some, but not all, of the findings of this study are consistent with the existing

literature. In this study, I found that Millennials' attitudes are typically positive toward

work and promotions, which Josiam et al. (2009) indicated in their research. Millennials

tend to associate psychological contract expectations with (a) job responsibilities, (b)

career development, (c) training, (d) financial rewards, and (e) job security. There was a

clear link between psychological contract (mutual beliefs, perceptions, and informal

obligations between an employer and an employee) expectations and both career

development and training, in extant literature and this research study. Eighty percent of

the participants noted that career development and training were important to them,

evidencing a link (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Millennial employees are willing to go

outside their job descriptions to increase their skills and responsibilities (Zagenczyk et al.,

2011). Some participants mentioned that they do not want to get bored with their job,

providing evidence that career development is important to Millennials.

Younger employees tend to value work/life balance, which is associated with a

positive relationship between the employee and employer. When employees believe that

they have work/life balance, they typically complete tasks better and have positive

behavioral performance (Demerouti et al., 2014). Participants mentioned flex schedules

and work/life balance as being important job expectations.

As members of younger generations experienced continuous learning during their childhood, they have created the expectation of continuous learning when they enter the workforce. Younger generations' members want to continue to improve their skills and capabilities in order to apply them to their current and future careers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). In reference to equipment, technology, or training, 35% of participants said that one or more of these resources are essential for success and producing the best work. Similarly, 45% of participants thought that education or training outside of their company were necessary parts of their career expectations. It was important to participants to have opportunities to pursue some level of education at their companies, such as a degree or certificate.

Presentation of the Findings

I used open-ended semistructured interview questions to gain an in-depth understanding of Millennials' perspectives on job expectations. I interviewed 20 participants to identify themes about job expectations. Participants were male and female members of the Millennial Generation born between the years 1981 and 1990 who worked in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Participants had at least a bachelor's degree and at least 1 year of employment experience.

Prior to the interviews, each participant responded to an email that contained the consent form in Appendix A with the words *I consent*. During the audiotaped telephone interviews with each participant, I asked nine interview questions (see Appendix B). I had approval #02-06-14-0068147 from Walden University's IRB for the consent form and interview questions.

For this study, I followed Moustakas's (1994) seven steps of data analysis to guide a logical approach to identifying themes from the interviews. Moustakas's seven steps of data analysis are a modified version of van Kaam's method of analysis, focusing less on interpretations and instead on data that are more in-depth. Using Moustakas's approach, I was able to synthesize the data and labels for a better understanding of the themes that emerged from the participant interviews. I eliminated irrelevant words and statements and recorded, transcribed, and analyzed all interviews to identify themes (Moustakas, 1994). Eight themes emerged that addressed the research question on job expectations of Millennial Generation employees within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. The themes and percentage of participants who noted the themes are in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes and Percentages Noted by Participants Related to Millennial Job Expectations

Themes	Percentage of participants who noted the themes
Opportunity for professional growth	80%
Compensation	75%
Recognition	70%
Promotions	65%
Supervisor support	60%
Flexibility	50%
Environment	45%
Job security	45%

The themes identified were significant factors that influenced Millennials' job expectations. Exploring Millennials' job expectations may be important in reducing the shortage of employees as the members of the Baby Boomer generation begin to retire and may allow company leaders to attract Millennial Generation employees. This knowledge could increase the retention of Millennial employees, decreasing recruiting and hiring costs.

Theme 1: Opportunity for Professional Growth

The first theme to emerge related to having opportunities for professional growth. Interviewees discussed the importance of having opportunities for professional growth as part of meeting their job expectations. This theme was identified through Interview Questions 2, 3, and 4. The most frequently cited determinant in meeting Millennials' job expectations was opportunity for professional growth. In regard to professional growth, outside of promotions, 80% of Millennials are looking for an environment that expands their skills and provides them with additional experience in a variety of areas. Participant D4 commented on professional growth, saying,

> It is absolutely essential. I am in a phase in my career now where if I do not develop experience significantly, it really handicaps me later on. I am not at the point where I am willing to specialize in one single field or one single type of job. The ability to be flexible and let me move where I believe I can do the most good at any given time is very important. Being willing to put me in positions that I am not perfectly suited and putting me in a position that I do not have experience doing that I should have the capability to learn how. Willing to take that risk on me, I feel is very important.

Similarly, Participant E2 said,

> I also want to develop my career. I also want to grow as much as possible and to get the opportunities. Being able to try new things, and do new things is only going to help me out, in the long run, so very important to me.

New activities outside a typical role or special projects that can be part of the company's strategic projects or initiatives are the type of professional development activities that Millennials are seeking. Participant R1 indicated, "I thought it was really cool to get involved really early in the decision-making process and able to guide the course of not just a team or division but actually the entire organization."

Millennials want flexibility in their jobs, opportunities for creativity in their positions, and expansion of job responsibilities (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). Stagnant work is a big deterrent to Millennials, who frequently mentioned not wanting to get bored in their work. Participant D1 noted,

> I think it is really important to me to not be stagnant in what I do. I do not want to work in a sort of an assembly line environment, and I do not want to come do the same things every day and have the same day over and over again. I do not want to have Groundhog's Day kind of environment. For me, the development is important to have not only for meeting expectations but a sort of a long-term goal that you are trying to achieve as well.

Millennials seek opportunities for critical thinking. Projects that are challenging and interesting that may expand their skills are big motivational factors. It is discouraging to Millennials if there is no ability to grow in their skill set. Millennials want to know that what they do is value added to the company and getting them to the next level. Out of the 20 participants in the interview, 80% of Millennials expected opportunities for professional growth from their employer if they planned to stay at their job.

The other 20% of participants did not believe that they needed additional projects outside of their typical roles. Participate D5 shared, "I would not say it is that important to me. I would say probably on a scale of 1 to 10; it is maybe a 3." Much of the disinterest of additional projects was due to the scope of their work that does not allow for additional projects. Their inability to take on projects was due to participants' current workload being too high. Participants had little interest in expanding their skills at that time, although participants remarked that this might change in the future. Participant S4 said, "I have been offered the opportunity to take professional development courses or go to a conference I have not used yet, but I hope to use it in the next year."

Although the majority of participants desired special projects or professional growth opportunities, there is another consideration for employees' morale when assigning additional tasks. Being a high performer compared to other employees may result in larger workloads. Participant E3 remarked,

> On the negative side, it is also sometimes frustrating if you are an A-player, and you are surrounded by other C-players. You are the one absorbing a lot of responsibilities just because you know you will get it done, and your supervisor knows you will get it done.

Theme 2: Compensation

The second theme related to employee compensation. Interviewees discussed compensation as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 2 was identified through Interview Questions 1, 3, and 7. During the interviews, 75% of Millennials mentioned compensation as being an important factor in meeting their job expectations. Many

participants mentioned compensation as one of the main reasons they accepted their

current jobs. Participant D4 noted,

> My main job is not a charity if that makes sense. So I expect to be paid
>
> appropriately given the level of—I want to use the word *input* but given the value
>
> of what I am doing at the company. I expect to be compensated appropriately.

Other participants discussed it as an expectation of recognition of their work. Participant

D3 stated,

> If employers want to say that they respect their employees, something needs to be
>
> done monetarily and not just through a pat on the back. I get told weekly,
>
> "You're doing a great job. I do not know where I would be without you." That
>
> does not really put bread on the table.

Participants mentioned that they expected recognition through either salary

increases or bonuses for high performance and skills. Twenge et al. (2010) discussed that

this is due to Millennials' having a sense of entitlement for higher status and salary.

Participants felt that if they were high performers, their compensation should be

appropriate for the tasks they are doing. Participant D5 noted, "I am not a big fan of

having people add responsibility and not compensate you, which is kind of,

unfortunately, what my current job has done. So it kind of decreases job satisfaction." A

smaller percentage (15%) of the participants stated that appropriate compensation was

their most important of all job factors. They would consider staying at the company

longer, without other met job expectations, if compensated appropriately.

Theme 3: Recognition

The third theme related to recognition. Interviewees discussed recognition as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 3 was identified through Interview Questions 2 and 3. In regard to recognition for performing well, participants indicated that they would like to take on extra responsibility or projects outside of their typical role. Of those interviewed, 70% of Millennials just wanted acknowledgment for their hard work. Even if other forms of recognition are not possible, just the acknowledgment to some degree met many participants' job expectations. However, 10% of participants noted that it was just as important to address an employee right away if the employee's work was not good. Participant F3 commented,

I would not say that I expect additional benefits or any kind of monetary reward, but I definitely—I understand that companies are going to expect a little more at my level. Just hearing simple verbal recognition of my extra effort is satisfactory.

Of those interviewed, 65% wanted acknowledgment monetarily. Participants referenced a pay increase, bonus, company shares, or receiving additional time off with pay. Participant D3 stated,

I feel like I do a very good job, and I know I do a good job compared to who else could be doing my job. The verbal or written recognition, I do not really strive. It is more if you want to show you appreciate me; I would rather have that in my paycheck.

Similarly, Participant R5 indicated,

What I would like to see is a salary increase sometime in the near future, of course. I have only just been at this job for 6 months, so I am still, I think sufficiently pleased with the recognition by my bosses. I do not feel really compelled to say, "Hey, it is time for a pay increase," or "Hey, it is time for these additional benefits." They have done a good job at keeping me happy so far.

Many of the participants stated that verbal or written acknowledgment was important if it is genuine. Interviewees wanted leaders to say *thank you* for the job they have done. Participant D2 shared, "I would probably like to have verbal recognition from time to time from my superiors. Perhaps also in writing like during performances evaluation, it might include that. I do not necessarily need rewarded monetarily."

There was not a significant difference between whether it was one-on-one, team meeting, email or performance evaluation. The biggest factor was an acknowledgment, not the forum. As Participant F4 shared,

The director who was leading the project sent an email around to the entire marketing department that recognized the works that I did or the work of other colleagues. He also shared the results and the successes that we had. That is an example of the recognition that I really appreciated because it showed me that my work was not going unnoticed. It shows others in the organizations how hard I am working, as well.

Other participants wanted more than an acknowledgment for their work. Believing their work should be acknowledged differently. Receiving a job promotion or title change was how 25% of participants wanted recognition for high performance.

Theme 4: Promotions

The fourth theme related to promotions. Interviewees discussed potential promotions as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 4 was identified through Interview Questions 4, 5, and 7. When asked about growth in the company, 65% of participants said that the potential advancement or promotional opportunities influenced their loyalty to the company. Participant D1 noted,

I think that if you have room to grow and you know that your accomplishments are going to be appreciated and considered for potential promotions then yes. I think it encourages you to work harder and stay longer at that particular place.

While Participant F3 said, "I really feel that knowing that there is a direct correlation between your work and the company advancement and then getting rewarded based on the company advancing, certainly drives loyalty." Participant S5 commented,

Growing with a company is really important. I like when you can stay with the company and grow with them. I feel like you know more, especially because you start at a lower level and then as you grow; you have that lower level information of what everyone below you is doing. It allows you to be more knowledgeable and be a better person within the company.

Some participants acknowledged some of the small job factors were not as important in meeting their job expectations if they saw promotion opportunities. However, some participants indicated they might consider opportunities at other places if they did not see any upward mobility opportunities.

Meanwhile, 30% indicated knowing that potential advancement or promotional opportunities are available for them at their company influenced their loyalty only to some extent. The length of time before promotional opportunities and career path for that position partially influenced their company loyalty. One participant indicated that potential advancement or promotional opportunities would not affect their commitment to the company. However, the opportunity would inspire more enthusiasm and motivation for their current position. Another participant would still consider staying with the company, but not very likely in the current role.

Five percent of the participants believed that a promotion might not provide fulfillment or happiness. When asked if opportunities for promotion or advancement would foster increased loyalty to a company, Participant E4 said,

Not right now, but I think long-term if I was to stay there, yeah. I would want to know that I would be able to move up. In the short-term, I do not think it is as important as knowing there are opportunities in the long-run.

Participant R2 said that job promotions were not an influence, stating,

It does not, because I know it should not. I know that if I do not get compensated, I understand that there is a reason, and I am not going to change my morals or my loyalty towards the company because of that. I just think that would be too devious.

There was a range of timeframes within which participants believed they should be eligible for promotional opportunities. Many participants, although they were able to put a timeframe on what they expected, they acknowledged that varying factors might

change their answer. Several of the following factors might change their answers (a)

level of experience needed, (b) level of promotion, (c) field, (d) position, (e) their current

interest in promotion opportunities, and (f) career path participants are seeking. Many

expressed the opinion that entry-level positions would be shorter than other positions. As

Participant R2 said, "Everybody's job is different. For some people, it may take a couple

of months. Some people take a decade."

Of the Millennials interviewed, 40% said between 1-2 years, 30% said 2 years or

more, and finally 25% thought they should receive a promotion between 3 months and 1

year on the job. Participant E4 could not answer the question at that time, stating,

I think that it hard for me to answer from where I work. If I were to move up to

get leadership opportunities, I would not be able to do what I do now. I am an

economist; I would take on roles that would be less within what I want to do. So

right now, I am enjoying my job, but maybe ten years down the road -- it is not

important to me right now.

Theme 5: Supervisor Support

The fifth theme related to recognition. Interviewees discussed supervisor support

as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 5 was identified through Interview

Question 6. Participants identified the type of supervisor support they would like to help

them be eligible for a promotion. The highest percentage, 60% of participants, wanted

timely, honest, and constructive feedback from their supervisor to help them grow.

Although Millennials like recognition, they are seeking ways to improve, so that they can

meet their goals (Balda & Mora, 2014; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Smith &

Galbraith, 2012). Millennials in this study wanted clear expectations from their supervisor on what each Millennial needed to do so that they could get to the next level. They wanted trust from their supervisor so that they can perform the tasks given and show that they are ready for the next level. Participant S2 claimed to want,

> Constant professional development, constant mentoring and coaching, being open to hearing my interests. When I do say, I would be interested in moving up or interested in leading a team, just for them to be, at least, open and to hear that. For them to help identify the skill sets that I need or that I am lacking. They can help me build, that I will be ready to step into a new role.

Forty-five percent of the participants thought education or training outside of their company was important, including attending conferences, seminars, or trainings that contribute to their work. Pursuing some level education, such as a degree or certificate was important. Whether it is equipment, technology, or training, 35% said it was important to get one or all of these to be successful and to be able to produce the best work. Participants noted that supervisors' overlooking training as a priority sometimes happens.

Thirty percent of the participants wanted supervisors to help identify strengths and provide opportunities to use their strengths to continue to grow professionally. Participants did not necessarily want a change in position, but covering for a position, helping someone in a different position, mentoring by another employee or being part of a special project. Participant R3 shared, "It would be giving me the assignments that are needed to go forward and achieve that next level." Participants wanted to participate in

strategic projects or initiatives that benefit the company. Ten percent of those participants went further to say, they would like to be part of the strategic decisions made.

Theme 6: Flexibility

The sixth theme related to employee flexibility. Interviewees discussed flexibility as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 6 was identified through Interview Question 1. Flex schedules and work/life balance are important job factors for 50% of the Millennials interviewed, who enjoy the benefit of being able to adjust their schedule if needed. Millennials like having the ability to go in earlier or later, having the ability to choose when they work, as long as they are working their hours. Participant D5 said,

I like to be able to come and go as I please as long as I am getting my expected job duties done. I do not like to waste my time sitting in an office if I do not have any work to do. So that is one thing I like about it. I mean it can be bittersweet. A lot of times, I have to work in the evenings or adjust my schedule, unwillingly, but it is nice. Like next week, my kids have doctor's appointments, and I do not have to take off work to take them to the doctor. I know I will just work into the evening, and I will still get my work done.

Similarly, Participant E3 commented,

There is no set schedule necessarily it is just kind of, I guess, on the honor system. I am basically—as they phrased it, 'We are adults, and we know what we need to do to get the job done.' Even though I can go to the gym in the middle of the day, if I want to I do not, if I am busy working with clients and oftentimes I am. That

might mean that I am working until 10 o'clock at night. It is just getting the job

done, and it does not really matter what time of day you are doing it.

Millennials want jobs where they can work from home and to reduce the time

they would spend to commute. Often there is heavy traffic in the Baltimore-Washington

metropolitan area resulting in longer commutes. The location is important to 25% of

participants. Participant E4 stated,

I talk to a lot of people, and everyone I know, they like to be able to telework.

Those who do and if they cannot, they would really like to have the option where

they work. It is just a really nice benefit to be able - for them not to have to go to

the office every day to kind of save gasoline on driving.

Theme 7: Environment

The seventh theme related to the workplace environment. Interviewees discussed

the work environment that would meet job expectations. Theme 7 was identified through

Interview Questions 8 and 9. Millennials wanted an environment where their work has

value, where there is a career path, where they have fulfillment from engaging work, and

where they want to go to work. None of the participants stated that they would abruptly

leave the company if the environment were not meeting their job expectations, unless

another opportunity is ready. They would instead start searching for opportunities, both

internally and externally.

Participants answered how long it would take before considering leaving the

company when not having key job factors met. If their main job factors are missing, 45%

said they would start searching for another opportunity either externally or internally

within 3 months to 1 year. Five percent said 1-2 years. Finally, 20% of participants said

2 or more years. Participant S4 commented,

> I feel like I would look for opportunities curiously as soon as I was feeling
>
> unhappy. I might be more seriously looking or trying to dedicate a lot of time to
>
> interviewing after a few months of no change. Or maybe even six months if I was
>
> dissatisfied and was not feeling valued in my company.
>
> Participant S5 concluded,
>
> I would not stay. I am one person who I do not feel like—I do not settle… I
>
> think I would probably stay about 1-2 years just because I do not want to look like
>
> I am bouncing around on the resume, which, right now does.

Thirty percent of the participants said that they probably would not leave or are

just unsure of the length of time it would be before looking because they are happy at

their job right now. However, they might eventually burn out and need to find a new job

outside or begin to look internally. As Participant D1 said,

> I think I would be likely to stay for a period of time. I do not know what that
>
> period of time may be, but I think that after a while that I would probably be just a
>
> little bit burnt out. Just sort of being a cog in the machine. Not really being
>
> allowed to grow as an individual while contributing to the purpose of the team.

A few participants mentioned that they were not actively looking but if an

opportunity emerged, he or she might consider it. Participant R5 shared,

> I always have feelers all the time, even though I am 100% happy with where I am
>
> currently. I still—if the opportunity comes along like to stick a feeler out. If I

knew that in a couple of years, I have gotten what I needed from this current job.

That was all the more that I could get from it; I would most likely be looking

around for other things too.

Theme 8: Job Security

The eighth most frequently cited theme related to the job security. Interviewees

discussed job security as part of meeting their job expectations. Theme 8 was identified

through Interview Questions 1, 7, and 9. Job security is an area that 45% referenced as

important at some point, but participants did not put a lot of emphasis on job security

during the interviews. Most participants did not mention job security as one of their key

job factors. A small number of participants referenced other benefits, tied to job security.

Traditional benefits included health benefits, referenced by 25%, and retirement plans,

401(k) accounts or company shares, referenced by 10%. Although still important to

Millennials, they are not as important as previous generations indicating that traditional

benefits might not have as much emphasis at this time. As Participant E2 said,

> I did not really talk a lot about benefits as far as medical benefits and a 401(k) and
>
> things like that. Things like that are very important to me as well, but they are not
>
> as important as some of the other things. I feel like—once I get a little older; then
>
> I will definitely be a little more concerned about those things.

Contribution to the Conceptual Framework

There was support of the conceptual framework that included generation theory

and psychological contracts theory through the findings of this study. A researcher might

use generational theory when predicting attitudes and behaviors. A researcher might use

generational theory when predicting attitudes and behaviors. While not all members of each generation have the same characteristics, the characteristics are valid in determining general assumptions (Lub et al., 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

While growing up, Millennials saw families that needed dual-incomes with little vacation time, making leisure time important for those Millennials (Twenge et al., 2010). Millennials tend to bore easily, so Millennials work well in environments where they can multitask and have flexible work environments (Kilber et al., 2014). Fifty percent of participants mentioned flex schedules and work/life balance as being an important part of their job expectations. Wanting to go beyond their essential job responsibilities was important for 80% of the participants.

Kilber et al. (2014) indicated that Millennials tend to embrace work environments that are diverse in culture and prefer laid-back environments that are fun and have a relaxed dress code. Participant S1 said that the part of a good work environment is,

Liking the people you work with, the social environment and laid back dress casually, or you do not have to dress up day-to-day. Obviously, you have to do work but then having opportunities to do something fun here and there. I think that it definitely helps to keep morale up.

Through this study, I confirmed Rousseau's (1995) theory that employees have perceived promises from their employers such as trainings and promotions in return for their work. The two dimensions of the theory, relational and transactional, emerged during the interviews. The relational dimension includes aspects such as (a) training, (b) professional development, (c) fair treatment, and (d) job security (Zagenczyk et al.,

2011). The transactional dimension includes aspects related to compensation and working conditions (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). During their interviews, participants discussed both dimensions. In exchange for promises perceived, the employee has an increased willingness to complete his or her work tasks and to maintain organizational commitment (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

Millennials' attitudes usually are positive towards work and promotion (Josiam et al., 2009). Millennials tend to associate psychological contract expectations with (a) job responsibilities, (b) career development, (c) training, (d) financial rewards, and (e) job security (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Career development was an important aspect for 80% of participants. As such, the Millennial employee is willing to go outside his or her job description (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Potential promotions or opportunities for growth created more loyalty to the company for 65% of participants. From those interviewed, 75% believed they should be compensated appropriately to meet their job expectations for their position, and if they are exceeding employer expectations. Finally, 45% referenced job security as being important.

When there are breaches of employees' psychological contracts, employees are likely to feel that their work is not valued. Employees feeling their work is not valued may have a negative impact on employee identification with the company (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Psychological contract breaches may create negative attitudes and low performance. Employees' work contributions are not as high when they believe breaches in their psychological contract occurred. When there is a breach of a contract, lower incentives exist to perform higher. Decreased motivation occurs quickly after the breach

and employee's intention to quit increases (Joshi et al., 2011; McDermott et al., 2013).

Forty five percent of participants said they would start looking for other opportunities

within 3 months to 1 year if their job expectations were not met. The themes that

emerged from my analysis of the interviews, related to the conceptual framework, are

located in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Percentages Noted by Participants Related to the Conceptual Framework

Themes	Percentage of participants who referenced theme
Going above essential job responsibilities	80%
Career development	80%
Appropriate compensation	75%
Promotional influence on company loyalty	65%
Flex schedules and work/life balance	50%
Job security	45%
Timeframe for leaving a job—3 months to 1 year	45%

Contribution to Existing Literature on Effective Business Practice

The literature review for this study included current and past scholarly articles, professional websites, and professional books. The areas of research were (a) generational theory, (b) psychological contracts theory, (c) adult learning theory, and (d) a comparison of generations. There has been a lack of focus from researchers in the most recent literature on the perspectives and expectations of Millennials that have entered the workforce. In the past, researchers have focused on expectations of Millennials still in college or high school and their instructors' perceptions (Deal et al., 2010; Johnson & Lopes, 2008).

I concluded that my research would add to the field of study within the conceptual frameworks, generational theory, and psychological contracts theory, which I used to ground this study. Through my research I found similarities and differences that exist in the current research that I used for my review of the literature.

As in the literature, I found that Millennials' attitudes are positive towards work and promotion (Josiam et al., 2009). Millennials tend to associate psychological contract expectations with job responsibilities, career development, training, financial rewards, and job security. Eighty percent of the participants noted that career development was important to them (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). The Millennial employee is willing to go outside his or her job description (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). In many instances, participants mentioned they do not want to get bored and they want to take on more roles and responsibilities.

According to Bellou (2009), younger workers tend to put greater emphasis on (a) work/life balance, (b) equality, (c) level of support received, and (d) recognition of their accomplishments. Flex schedules and work/life balance were important to 50% of the Millennials interviewed. Employees tend to have enriched roles when they feel they can meet the demands of both work and personal roles (Demerouti et al., 2014).

Within the interviews, Millennials did not mention a preference for working in a group; instead, they mentioned they want their work noticed; 70% stated that they wanted notice taken of their work. Twenge et al. (2010) depicted the opposite, stating that Millennials are not as motivated by intrinsic rewards, such as a sense of achievement. There was no confirmation of this in this current study.

Younger generations experiencing continuous learning during their childhood have created the expectation of continuous learning when they enter the workforce. According to D'Amato and Herzfeldt (2008), younger generations want to continue to improve their skills and capabilities in order to apply it to their current and future careers. Of those interviewed, 45% thought education or training outside of their company was important, including attending conferences or seminars and trainings that contribute to their work. Pursuing some level of education, such as a degree or certificate was important. Similarly, whether it is equipment, technology, or training, 35% of participants said it was important to get one or all of these for success in the workplace and to produce the best work. The themes that emerged during the interviews during the data analysis that related to effective business practice are located in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes and Percentages Noted by Participants Related to Effective Business Practice

Theme	Percentage of participants who referenced theme
Career development	80%
Appropriate compensation	75%
Recognition	70%
Flex schedules and work/life balance	50%
Training outside of their company	45%

Applications to Professional Practice

Company leaders may create job offerings by using the information gained through the study. Meeting employees' job expectations is important for company leaders, because if the work environment does not meet Millennials' expectations, the employer faces the risk of losing employees. The invested money from the initial recruiting and training is an additional business loss from an employee leaving the company. I identified relational and transactional dimensions of meeting job expectations that an employer might provide.

Some turnover is unavoidable if a person leaves due to health issues, relocating, or returning to school. However, if an employee has better employment opportunities, a high performer is likely to leave the company voluntarily (Hom et al., 2012). For the

turnover that is avoidable, company leaders might use the results of this study to create

workplace environments and policies for attracting and retaining Millennial employees.

When Millennials are better attracted and retained, the shortage of employees in the

workforce may reduce from Baby Boomers retiring, and reduce recruitment and turnover

costs (Yang et al., 2011). As noted in the literature, company leaders need to fulfill

employees' psychological contracts to retain employees (van der Vaart et al., 2013). Bal,

De Cooman, and Mol (2013) found that the fulfillment of psychological contracts

resulted in higher engagement in an employees' role and lower turnover intents.

However, the correlation between higher performance/lower turnover intentions and

fulfillment of the psychological contract only pertains to lower tenure employees in their

research. Likely, many Millennials fit this category of low tenure, due to their age (Bal et

al., 2013).

   With approximately 85 million Baby Boomers reaching retirement and

approximately 46 million members from Generation X, company leaders will need

Millennials to help fill the gap (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Szinovacz, 2011). The

intended contribution of this study to existing research is to provide knowledge to

company leaders on the job expectations of Millennials. With this knowledge, company

leaders might provide Millennials opportunities to grow professionally and keep them

loyal to the company.

Implications for Social Change

   The implications for positive social change include the potential to have (a) fair

and diverse workplace environments, (b) work-life balance, (c) high employee morale,

(d) low retention, and (e) positive relationships with coworkers, families, and communities. Company leaders might use the information from the findings of this study to gain insight on Millennials' job expectations and contribute to social change through improved work environments. Understanding job expectations of all employees allows for a fair and diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all employees.

Turnover can have negative effects on employee morale resulting in low retention. Nonwork factors could affect employee turnover, due to work-life conflict, when an employee cannot meet the demands of both environments. Employee job satisfaction with his or her company, where morale is high, might include increased retention and positive relationships with coworkers, families, and their communities (Huffman, Casper, & Payne, 2013).

Recommendations for Action

I recommend leaders implement policies and environments to decrease turnover due to Millennial employees leaving companies. Addressing the identified themes might positively influence employees' satisfaction, and make them less likely to leave, which will have a positive impact on the time and cost spent to recruit and replace employees. Increasing communication within each company and soliciting employees' input could enhance job satisfaction especially when employees know that company leaders value their concerns. Job satisfaction could lead to better work/life balance of employees.

Distribution of these findings at academic and professional conferences is appropriate. Human Resource professionals could use this information when developing company handbooks and policies. Company leaders could work in collaboration with

Human Resource professionals, based on the knowledge gained from the gathered research.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further investigation on whether themes would vary with a different sample is appropriate. Millennials from the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area, born between the years 1981-1990, with at least a bachelor's degree, and at least 1 year of employment were the population in this study. Further considerations of differences that might affect that outcome such as demographic information including industries, levels of education, and younger Millennials are necessary.

Further studies conducted in a similar fashion can include an equal sampling from each generation to determine similarities and significant difference in job expectations among different generations. In addition to generation, studies conducted in a similar fashion might include an equal sampling of males and females and an equal sampling of different industries to determine similarities and significant difference in job expectations. Company leaders may implement strategies and policies that will create a fair and satisfying environment for all employees by having information on job expectations across generations.

Reflections

It was a positive experience interviewing participants, and the interviews were easy to schedule. All of the participants showed comfort in being audio-recorded, and gave consent for recording the interviews. Interviews were consistent with their

structure, and I used the same set of interview questions and transcript review to assure reliability and validity respectively.

During the interviews, the participants were passionate about sharing their expectations from their employers. Participants put great emphasis on what they valued, and they were comfortable sharing their perspectives. The most noteworthy theme was Millennials' desires to grow and to continue learning.

Since I am within the Millennial Generation, it was crucial to avoid biases, and I took care not to create interview questions that would be partial to any personal biases. Participants were unique that the potential for omissions was low, due to having a sample size of 20 participants that included males and females that were from different industries than my own. I waited until I gathered all my data, before starting the analysis to avoid early assumptions and swaying participants based on early interviews.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Retention of Millennial employees is critical, as Generation X workers are unable to fill the gaps that Baby Boomers leave when retiring in the workforce. Eight themes emerged from this study to include: (a) compensation, (b) flexibility, (c) opportunity for growth, (d) recognition, (e) promotions, (f) supervisor support, (g) environment, and (h) job security. Company leaders may use the findings to create attractive job offerings to increase job satisfaction, and reduce recruiting, hiring, and turnover costs.

Social change implications of company leaders understanding all employees' job expectations include development of opportunities for fair, equal, and diverse

environments for all employees. Employee job satisfaction may increase morale and might benefit employees' relationships with coworkers, families, and their communities.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of job expectations of the Millennial

generation. The researcher is inviting males and females in the Millennial Generation

born between 1981-1990 that have at least a bachelor's degree and at least 1 year of

employment and within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area to be in the study.

This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this

study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Samantha Linden, who is a doctoral
student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to will explore the job expectations of the Millennial
Generation within the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in a 30-45 minutes telephone interview
- Have the telephone interview recorded
- Review your transcript of the interview to ensure the accuracy
- Review parts of the study such as themes to determine if they are accurate

Here are some sample questions:

1. How do you expect company leaders to demonstrate that they genuinely value
   your contributions in regard to rewards, benefits, and recognition?
2. What length of time do you expect to stay in a role before being eligible for career
   advancement opportunities?
3. What support do you expect company leaders to provide you in order to achieve
   the next level in your career?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your
mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time or request to withdraw after the
study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress, or becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

This study may contribute to social change by providing insight on Millennials' expectations to companies' leaders and improve work environments that meet these expectations. Knowing job expectations of all employees allows for a fair and diverse environment that provides equal opportunities for all of their employees.

Payment:
As a thank you, each participant will receive a $5.00 gift card, delivered via email, of their choice to Starbucks or Amazon.com for participating in the interview.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Electronic data will be kept secure through encryption and only accessible by use of a password. A backup of electronic files will be kept on a secure thumb drive. Both the thumb drive and any nonelectronic documentation that might be needed will be kept in a fireproof chest that is locked and will only be accessible by the researcher. All data will be kept for 5 years. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at Samantha.Linden@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-06-14-0068147 and it expires on February 5, 2015.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent," I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What were the key job-related factors that affected your decision to accept your current position?

2. How important to you are new activities or special projects that expand your skills in meeting your job expectations?

3. How do you expect company leaders to demonstrate that they genuinely value your contributions in regard to rewards, benefits, and recognition?

4. How do potential advancement opportunities influence your loyalty to a company?

5. What length of time do you expect to stay in a role before being eligible for advancement opportunities?

6. What support do you expect company leaders to provide you in order to achieve the next level in your career?

7. How likely are you to stay with a company if you enjoy the role and benefits but you are not provided many opportunities for advancement?

8. How likely are you to stay with a company if it is not meeting your job expectations? If you are not likely to stay with the company, how long would you stay before pursuing external career opportunities?

9. What other job-related factors would affect your decision to leave your current company?

Appendix C: Summary of References Used in the Current Study

	References within 5 years of expected graduation of May 2015	Older References	Total
Books	4	2	6
Dissertations			
Peer-Reviewed Articles	92	12	104
Other References	5	3	8
Total	101	17	118
Percentage of peer-reviewed		88%	
Total references	118		
Percentage of peer reviewed and recent to total number of references	86%		