


2015

Factors That Motivate Millennial Public Servants in the Workplace

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Walden University

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Lisa Mallory

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Factors That Motivate Millennial Public Servants in the Workplace

by

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MBA, George Washington University, 1993

BS, University of Maryland University College, 1987

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

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Abstract

There is an abundance of scholarly literature examining the Millennial generation's characteristics and their uniqueness in the workforce, but few studies have examined the lived experiences of Millennials and what motivates them in the public sector workplace. Given the size of the Millennial cohort, the largest and most educated in history, this generation of public servants merits more research. This phenomenological study sought to determine what factors motivate Millennial public sector workers through a criterion sample of 20 District of Columbia government employees. Data obtained from interviews were analyzed through use of NVivo10 allowing for the identification of themes, findings and recommendations for further studies. Findings revealed that these 20 workers were motivated by the same factors that impact other generations, as Herzberg delineated in his 2-factor theory. Despite these similarities, participants felt they were unique and not understood by the generations of workers that precede them. The themes obtained from this study can inform public administrators seeking to increase workforce collaboration and productivity and underscores the need for further scholarly attention. Millennial public servants need to feel engaged through increased responsibility, recognition, and the nature of work, as they will soon comprise 1/3rd of the workforce. These findings have implications for social change by educating public administrators and Millennials' coworkers to capitalize on the younger workers' ability to contribute to the overall productivity and competitiveness of government.

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Dedication

This accomplishment would not have been possible without the love, care, support and nudging of my wonderful circle of family and friends. In particular I want to thank all of my daughters and grandchildren, but particularly Alana Jean and Kayla María for pushing me forward daily as only 12 year-olds can. To Yul, thank you for caring for all of us through the ups and downs. And to my mother, Evangelina Renovales, who told me at an early age that the years will pass anyway, and quickly, so I should not wait until the perfect time. I dedicate this work and my future contributions to all of you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Millennials, known by many other names including *Generation Y*, began entering the workforce over the past decade and their arrival has been met with mixed feelings by their coworkers. A plethora of research, including from the White House's Council of Economic Advisers (2014), described the characteristics of this generation to include being the most highly educated generation in recent history, technologically savvy, open to diversity, civic minded, and effective multitaskers (Nielsen Company, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2014, 2015). Some of the characteristics attributed to this generation are not so positive, including having a sense of entitlement, demanding work-life balance, and requiring constant feedback and praise (Shragay & Tziner, 2011). Winograd and Hais (2014) declared that they are "a cohort whose dominating presence will make its behaviors the major motif of American life in the next decade" having received more attention from think tanks, scholars and research organizations than any other generation in recent history (pp. 2-3).

The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) estimated Millennials to be over 83.1 million individuals worldwide, and one third of the United States' population, making them the largest generational cohort in history. One of 3 adult Americans will be Millennials by 2020, and by 2025 they have been estimated to comprise over 75% of the workforce (Winograd & Hais, 2014, p. 2). The contrasting, yet distinct, descriptors and levels of educational attainment could uniquely position Millennials in the workplace given more virtual, collaborative, technologically driven environments, diminishing resources and

globalized context (Pew Research Center, 2014). This cohort of individuals could be capable of increasing competitiveness and efficiency should their characteristics be the most appropriate for the type of work that must be done now and in the near future. But are these workers any different than their predecessors? “The distinctive and widely shared attitudes and beliefs of this generation will slowly, but surely, reshape corporations in its image and end the confrontational and bottom-line oriented world that Boomers and Gen-Xers have created” (Winograd & Hais, 2014, p. 5).

While there has been no lack of research on Millennials in the private sector workplace, there have been few studies that addressed the Millennial public employee and no studies that examined what factors motivate them both positively and negatively. The present study examined these workers and what motivated them in the public sector workplace by obtaining data from them directly. This large cohort of public sectors workers should demand the attention of scholarly research, particularly because they will disproportionately represent most government employees in the not too distant future.

The salient characteristics ascribed to Millennials in the literature appeared to be compatible with the service orientations or “identities” Perry (1996) first elucidated in his seminal research and process theory of public service. Perry and Wise’s (1990) earlier work found that individuals with higher levels of public service motivation are attracted to public sector employment and will perform at higher levels. While Perry and Wise found that most Millennial public workers seemed to have a service orientation, whether they are the ideal public servant is not clear. The Millennials that participated in the present study had similar positive descriptors to those previous researchers had ascribed

to them in the literature. A 2013 study by the National Society of High School Scholars surveyed Millennials and determined that two of their preferred employers were federal agencies (Winograd & Hais, 2014, p. 7). The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's leadership began to differentiate their recruitment strategies by focusing on this generation and proclaiming that "hiring Millennials is critical to the future of government" (Rein, 2014, p.1). State governments, such as West Virginia, perceived future workforce shortages and have begun to aggressively pursue Millennial workers (Cook, 2015).

Older workers in the federal government had been retained after an exodus of over 239,881 between 2000 and 2004 because administrators believed a brain drain would hamper operations while at the same time strengthening efforts to attract younger workers and create viable, "desirable" opportunities (Bright, 2010, p. 1). Retaining more seasoned employees, while attracting new entrants becomes a "conundrum" for public administrators as the cohorts have differing work "preferences" in the public sector and hence a "multifaceted understanding" of these differences is critical to ensure motivation and the accomplishment of organizational goals (Bright, 2010, p. 11).

The present phenomenological study examined Millennials in the District of Columbia government, a public sector employer that uniquely functions at the state and local level, while in the close proximity of federal workers. The study sought to determine the factors that positively and negatively motivate Millennial public servants by obtaining data from them directly through the motivational theory introduced by Herzberg (1966), the two-factor theory, also known as the motivation hygiene theory.

This theory, while developed over 50 years ago and tested and even re-examined for applicability by Hyun and Oh (2011), continued to provide a useful and relevant tool to investigate job satisfaction (p. 101).

Background

The economic crisis in the United States and worldwide introduced new dynamics into the workplace. Pump (2012) described the state of America's "inability to effectively deal with the myriad of problems" (p. 27) that led to the downgrade of U.S. debt precipitated by the current financial crisis. What Pump called "gridlock and inertia" in the U.S. economy and government had significant impact on the country's ability to recover quickly from the "Great Recession" (p. 27).

Following the impact of the global financial crisis of 2007 and to this date, economists postulated that what had in the past been seen as abnormal, "cyclical," or temporary would now become more common or even a permanent state (Romano, Hanish, Phillips, & Waggoner, 2010, p. 70). As economic conditions change, so does the composition of the workforce, which has slowed its growth, is aging, and has become more diverse (Toossi, 2013). Older workers seek to stay employed longer as global markets have delayed retirement plans resulting in the presence of up to four generations in the workplace: Traditionals, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. According to Toossi (2013), "With aging of the baby-boom generation, the older age cohorts are expected to make up a much larger share of both the population and the labor force than in the past" (p. 18). It would appear that the elongated tenure of workers has added complexity to the workplace as each generation may have to be led somewhat differently

in accordance to the cohorts' characteristics and expectations. The need for mutual intergenerational understanding and collaboration is critical as these cohorts must work together to achieve organizational results. In addition to the need to communicate effectively with all workers, leaders must also determine what motivates these employees to ensure maximum engagement and productivity.

Millennials, the latest arrivals in the workplace, are a large generation of workers with new requirements and a different worldview. "They are coming of age in the most dire economic climate since the Great Depression" (Nielsen Company, 2014, p. 2). While their characteristics have been well documented in scholarly literature, their presence and impact in the public sector workplace and factors that motivate them have not. Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2010) stressed the need to explore the behaviors of the Millennial generation at work and the implications for practitioners, particularly in the context of working with other generations. Ferri-Reed (2014) found that employers have to ensure their workplace is "millennialized" in order to "lift organizations to higher levels of productivity, creativity, and effectiveness" (p. 13).

The inability of employers to offer the type of positive motivation that resonates with Millennials may impact their ability to be engaged and even retained in the workplace. These workers want flexibility in the workplace, leading edge technology, and attention from their superiors and peers (Pew Research Center, 2015). Winograd and Hais (2014) claimed that the companies that dedicate themselves to "changing the world" will receive the loyalty of Millennials (p. 18).

The need for public administrators to address this area of research expediently to ensure the engagement of this large, highly skilled generation compelled this phenomenological research study, realizing the contribution to insight, theory, and subsequent social change. The number of Millennials will continue to grow as older workers begin to depart the workplace over the next decade. Given that the success of the public sector is largely dependent on its employees, effective management of the workforce is critical to ensure that all generations in the workplace, whether entering or on their way out, feel they are valued contributors (Chen, Yang, & Chen, 2010). In addition to providing data, insight, and potential recommendations for further research to public administrators, the results of this study should prove useful for the examination of future generations joining the workforce to ensure that the public sector is focused on differentiating, recruiting, motivating, and retaining generations to come.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars do not yet clearly understand the factors that motivate Millennial public sector workers, yet those workers are 24% of the U.S. population (Nielsen Company, 2014). Public administrators are facing the need to manage this latest cohort of employees, yet it is not clear whether they need a differentiated strategy than other generational cohorts. Complicating matters, “behavior among Millennials may not be homogeneous due to the size of the range in their differences of lifestage” (Nielsen, 2014, p. 4). It would appear that the increasing need for workers to be collaborative, flexible, expert and adaptive to technology, and socially conscious, characteristics frequently used to define Millennials, would uniquely position them in the public sector and be a

compelling argument to ensure their retention. However, whether these are “myths” or the reality is worthy of examination (Johnson Controls, 2010; Nielsen Company, 2014). This study examined factors that motivate Millennial public sector workers to provide insight into whether they require differentiated strategies to ensure job satisfaction.

The gap in the literature on Millennial public workers compelled this study. The results of this qualitative study, particularly of the phenomenological discipline, are intended to provide insight into their individual preferences, decisions, and experiences and inform public administrators charged with ensuring that their multigenerational workforce is collaborative and competitive.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to capture and analyze the personal experiences of Millennial public servants, determine what motivates them, and to provide insights to administrations on how these workers can be most effectively engaged in the public sector workplace. Given the size of the Millennial generational cohort and their increasing numbers in the public sector, workplace consonance and productivity is imperative. No studies have sought to analyze Millennials’ motivation in the public sector using the phenomenological research methodology, which details their own point of view.

Research Questions

Millennials in the public sector now find themselves working alongside up to three other generations. These workers appear to have unique characteristics that have been the subject of many academic studies and media attention. There has been, however,

a gap in the literature surrounding whether they feel engaged and motivated in the public sector. Given the lack of studies that obtained data directly from Millennial public servants, the phenomenological qualitative research paradigm was found to be most appropriate to address the following research questions:

1. Based on Herzberg's two-factor research and theory, what positively and negatively motivates the Millennial public servant?
2. Are there specific strategies Millennial public servants can recommend to positively motivate and retain them?

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study was Herzberg's (1966) two-factor hygiene theory. The scarcity of literature specific to the Millennial generation as workers, and even more so in the public sector, chartered the path of theoretical discovery that began with an examination of the characteristics of Millennials, generational theory, and then was followed by a literature search of appropriate motivational theory to use as the theoretical foundation for this qualitative inquiry.

Peer reviewed research on the other three prior generations was reviewed to determine whether Millennials could be described as unique from the preceding cohorts. What became clear from the literature was that there are some shared characteristics among cohorts, but many that are exclusive of each generation. Given these differences, an examination of personal experiences in the workplace provides a better understanding of whether a customized motivational strategy is necessary in the workplace.

Theories of motivation in the workplace were examined through an exhaustive literature review, initially focusing on Perry and Wise's (1990) public service motivation based on the characteristics identified and their seeming compatibility with the framework of rational, norm-based, and affective motives to address the research question on suitability for public sector employment. The research questions and context used already focused on public service, therefore establishing that high public service motivation levels do not provide profundity of experiences or better comprehension of motivational factors. The use of Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory was found to be most suited to identify more specific positive and negative motivators based on its extensive use, even in Hyun and Oh's (2011) contemporary study of workplace motivators, and provides the foundation for this inquiry.

This generational cohort has been both lauded and ridiculed, which compelled the need to seek live data on their experiences and perspectives to inform public administrators on how to better engage and motivate these often misunderstood workers.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this qualitative, phenomenological study, using in-depth structured interviews, was to determine motivational factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Millennial public servants. It was also intended to identify strategies that can be employed to manage Millennials most effectively to ensure that these workers are motivated and retained.

The quantitative methodology was deemed to provide more sterile and generalized data. Among the qualitative methodologies available for inquiry, the case

study and grounded theory were also given significant consideration. The case study was not pursued based on privacy issues disclosed by the human resources representative at the research site which would then preclude access to the individual's past performance level, salary, position, and other determinants that may have impacted identifying the appropriate sample of participants to engage in the case study (Potter, von Hellens, & Nielsen, 2010, p. 5). The grounded theory methodology was explored in greater depth based on the scarcity of theory and because it allowed for an iterative process of reframing the research questions, data coding, and theory development. Grounded theory, however, was not the ideal methodology to explore the experiences of Millennials themselves. The quest to understand the "phenomenon from the point of view of the lived experience in order to be able to discover the meaning of it" (Englander, 2012, p. 16) compelled the use of phenomenological research. The rationale for methodology selection will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

District of Columbia government employees that were Millennials were selected as a criterion sample of convenience and, in addition, because analysis conducted on these individuals provided an opportunity to explore the presence of these workers in two levels of government simultaneously as a state and local public sector body.

According to the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources, in March, 2015 there were 31,732 workers, and 7,736 of the employees were members of the Millennial generation. Fifty District of Columbia government employees born after 1980 were initially randomly selected from this pool as potential participants by the Department of Human Resources using an online tool; they were then asked via

telephone and electronic mail about their interest in participating in the study. Once five participants were identified, a telephone interview was conducted to pilot test the interview questions until saturation was obtained. Mason (2010) stated that a level of saturation is reached when no new information is being obtained (p. 3). This process allowed for refinement of any questions that were not effectively providing useful data from interviewees. The structured interview questions were then administered to 20 study participants. Their responses were transcribed, analyzed, and coded, and themes were subsequently developed.

Herzberg's (1966) foundational two-factor theory's job attitude factors were used to create the questions for the in-depth interviews based on the desire to get detailed descriptions of the phenomenon (Englander, 2012, p. 25). The resulting data from the interviews were coded to develop statements, descriptions, and themes, and these provide insights into the factors that motivate Millennials and recommend strategies for public administrators.

The following chapter introduces the process used in the literature search conducted, the identification of significant gaps and conceptual foundation used, and foundational theories of motivation that were researched.

Definitions

Specific terms used in this study may have several interpretations. In particular, the timeframe for inclusion in a particular generation appears to have many differing groupings. The timeframes ascribed to each generation for purposes of this study have

been delineated below as well as other terms that may warrant further clarification as follows:

Baby Boomers: Those individuals born between the years of 1946 and 1964 (Council of Economic Advisers, 2014; Toossi, 2013).

Characteristics: A feature or quality that appears to be prevalent in a generation.

Generation X. Those individuals born between the years of 1965 to 1975, also known as *Gen X* (Council of Economic Advisers, 2014; Toossi, 2013).

Herzberg's two-factor theory: A motivational theory that addresses the question "what do people want at work?" by examining the attitudes of workers and their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Hygiene: Factors extrinsic to work, such as flexible working arrangements, physical workplace, onsite gym.

Millennials, Gen Y, or Generation Y: Those born between the years of 1980 and 2000 (Council of Economic Advisors, 2014).

Motivation: "A range or psychological process that guides an individual toward a goal and causes that person to keep pursuing that goal" (Sandri & Bowen, 2011, p. 45).

Public service motivation: A theory introduced by Perry and Wise (1990) that gauges an individual's desire to work in careers that serve the public.

Traditionals, Matures, Veterans, or Seniors: Those born between the years of 1922 and 1943 (Salahuddin, 2010).

Assumptions

Assumptions made in this study included that many of the descriptors and characteristics attributed to the Millennials, as well as to Traditionals, Baby Boomers, and Generation Xers, are not stereotypes. With regard to Millennials specifically, the volume of studies gives more validity to this assumption.

The research was also intended to obtain and analyze data provided by members of the Millennial generation using the assumption that they could best describe motivational factors, as opposed to the perceptions of others, and that they would be honest in their responses. While the research can also be augmented by seeking data from other generations and members of the workforce, the focus on motivational factors is assumed to be a fairly personal deliberation of the environment within which one works. Additionally, the assumption is being made that participants engaged in a serious discussion that was thoughtful and truthful to ensure the utility of the data provided.

It is also assumed that my past employment as a public servant in the District of Columbia government did not limit or deter truthful responses. Every effort was made to ensure that none of the participants were subordinates during periods of employment in coordination with the human resources representative. This was also further ensured by informing potential participants at the onset of this element and offering the ability to terminate participation at any point in time. Participants were all engaged in a thorough discussion about non-attribution and the importance of confidentiality as well as how the information would be blinded and safeguarded. The questions asked ensured that their responses did not elicit negative feedback specific to any particular District of Columbia

department or supervisor, and were intended to gain a higher level of understanding of the phenomenon and not information that was of no relevance.

Importantly, the District of Columbia government was selected as a pool of workers of convenience, given the ability to obtain data from and work with the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources. The assumption was made that the public workers in this state and local government were representative of public sector workers in other jurisdictions. Given that the District of Columbia is a unique jurisdiction that functions as a local government and a state, the assumption was made that by using District of Columbia government employees, data could be obtained simultaneously from both levels of government.

Scope and Delimitations

This qualitative, phenomenological study obtained data from Millennial public sector employees to understand what motivates them in the workplace through the use of in-depth structured interviews. While there are other qualitative methods of inquiry, my interest in describing, understanding, and interpreting the Millennials' experiences led to the use of the interpretive *stream* of phenomenology (Tuohy et. al., 2013). The delimitations of the study were that it focused on the experiences of Millennial public servants, further restricted to those employed by the District of Columbia government. Other local and state governments were considered, as were federal employees; however, I sought to eliminate differentiating factors such as differing pay scales, rewards, policies, and so forth, and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to all Millennial public servants. Other delimitations included that the point of view of other workers in the

public sector workplace, such as supervisors, were not explored. These perspectives may have added additional dimensions to this study; however, the goal was to confine the inquiry to obtaining direct information from Millennials, particularly based on the gaps in theory and literature. Additionally, participants were engaged in in-depth interviews and not additional data collection methods such as the focus groups. While potentially useful, the focus group was later reconsidered to ensure that the influence of the group did not overshadow the experiences of each individual and that more probing questions could be introduced when needed.

It is expected that the methodology used, as well as the findings detailed herein, will provide insights into the experiences of the members of this generation and therefore have a degree of transferability to other government organizations and jurisdictions. A goal of the present study was to garner interest in further academic research based on the insights provided, which also informs future research on public sector Millennials, multigenerational workplaces, motivation, and retention strategies.

Limitations

The inclusion of a criterion sample of 20 for the structured interviews, while ideal for this qualitative study, did limit the amount of data to be obtained, and while it was useful to provide insight and recommendations for further study, it did not allow for generalizations that could change public policy. While the sample size used in this study was well suited, there is value in larger sample sizes. The criterion sample method was most appropriate given that the District of Columbia human resources representative was prescreening to those meeting the criteria of being District of Columbia government

employees and having been born after 1980. Perhaps this study can inform a subsequent larger inquiry.

The sample of participants was blinded to race and ethnicity to obtain a random sample, with manipulation only used to try to have equal gender representation. Despite attempts at sample manipulation, the outreach and timeframe designated for the research did not produce equal gender representation. Sixty percent of the participants in the study were female, which is not representative of the federal workforce wherein 43.5% were female in 2012 according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (p. 8). In addition, the studied sample was not representative of the federal workforce—17.9% Black, 6.2% Hispanic, 65.4% White—in comparison to the participant demographics of 45% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 30% White. Despite these variations from both the civilian labor force and the federal workforce, the data obtained from the participants were largely the same from all genders and all races (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2012, p. 8).

Chapter 4 will offer a more detailed explanation of the results.

Most of the actual study interviews, 75%, were conducted in person, and every effort was made to ensure the date, time, and location selected maximized participation. The limited phone interviews conducted, without regard to the pilot study, were done so due to extenuating circumstances and a preference expressed by the study participant. Glogowska et.al. (2011) stated that “there are few examples of studies where telephone interviews have been conducted to collect qualitative data” (p. 17). Irvine (2011) also emphasized the advantages of in-person interviews in terms of quality of data collected, significantly more input received from the interviewee versus the interviewer, and the

value of nonverbal cues. Despite the literature, the phone interviews yielded significantly more data from the study participants.

The participants were selected from one public sector employer—the District of Columbia government. While this allowed for some controls in the conditions that the employees were experiencing, there were shortcomings given that it is a local/state government, which, while inclusive of both levels of government, could be considered unique in terms of governance. As a former employee of the District of Columbia government in a leadership role, I ensured that my past employment history was neutralized by emphasizing confidentiality, nondisclosure, and ensuring that none of the individuals selected were under my supervision or have been colleagues. The importance of this academic study was underscored and was its transferability to other public sector organizations, and how it is meant to inform administrators more broadly.

Significance of the Study

The number of members of the Millennial generation suggests that these individuals are making their way into the workplace in large numbers (Council of Economic Advisers, 2014; National Chamber Foundation, 2012; Winograd & Hais, 2014). Toossi (2013) projected that the size of the workforce will reach 163.5 million by 2022. While in 2000 Baby Boomers had the highest participation rates of 80% in the workplace, by 2022 they will have shifted to rates below 40% which “will exert heavy pressure on the overall participation rate” (Toossi, 2013, p. 12). During the first quarter of 2015, according to Fry (2015), the total Millennials in the workforce was 53.5 million, which surpassed the participation of Baby Boomers (p. 1).

Millennials have had the experience of wars, September 2011, a global financial crisis, sequestrations, furloughs, shutdowns, and a dramatic increase in the use of technology, which have allowed particularly distinctive attributes to be detected. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of this generational cohort in the public sector and factors that motivate them, positively and negatively, in the workplace. This is important data for public administrators to ensure their workforce is collaborative and contributing, given the size of this cohort and the need to employ them, whether they are the most suitable for public sector work or not. Millennial public workers could possess attributes that are needed in the government workplace to ensure competitiveness. Failing to engage this whole generation of workers would be to the nation's disadvantage (National Chamber Foundation, 2012). Should these new entrants become disenchanted and disengaged, the global competitiveness of our governments could suffer.

Summary

Public administrators must understand how to motivate and engage their workforce to produce results. Millennials, a large cohort of 83.1 million with “unique” characteristics, high levels of education, technological agility, openness to diversity, and interest in civic society could prove to be well suited for the evolving public sector, particularly in a changing global economy. This study sought to determine what motivates these workers and whether they require differentiated strategies for engagement and retention. The findings of this study will inform public administrators by

providing insights and recommendations intended to build a stronger public sector workforce.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature search on the Millennial generation demonstrated that they have been studied more than precedent cohorts and have received much scholarly attention that sought to differentiate them (De Hauw & Vos, 2010, p. 293; National Chamber Foundation, 2012). No studies were located that examined the presence of Millennials and their impact on the public sector workplace. Additionally, longitudinal data do not exist that would allow for significant comparisons with other generational cohorts, and studies have also left unanswered questions around what motivates these new entrants in the public sector workplace and how they interact with up to three other generations (Levenson, 2010). Given this lack of data, Levenson (2010) used the perspective of an economist to determine whether differences exist by first identifying educational trends over the past 30 years, demographic changes, lifecycle analysis, and recent trends in labor markets. Levenson suggested that behavioral perspectives of the Millennials, when coupled with differing economic needs, suggested that they may “differ significantly from the previous generations’ attitudes” toward work (p. 263). However, given that other generations have not been subjected to similar analysis to compare data sets, Levenson believed that additional research is needed to determine whether this generation is truly unique and whether “stereotypes about the Millennials will prove to be yet another passing fad” (p. 264).

Thompson and Gregory (2012) claimed that as a generation “comes of age” there are particular characteristics that can be attributed to them that may be unique from prior

or future cohorts (p. 238). Millennials do possess skills that appear to be relevant in today's workplace, which include their ability to multitask, high levels of educational attainment, collaborative nature, appreciation of diversity, and command of technology (Gesell, 2010; National Chamber Foundation, 2012; Salahuddin, 2010, p. 3; Wieck, Dols, & Landrum, 2010, p. 69).

Millennials have been described as confident, motivated, and potentially the "next hero generation" (Deloitte, 2009, p. 2; Pew Research Center, 2010; Wieck et al., 2010, p. 69). This generation has gained much scholarly attention, including some descriptors that are not favorable (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Whether the offspring of "helicopter parents" or described as having a sense of entitlement, being impatient and requiring of recognition, Millennials have made themselves known in the workplace for better or for worse.

This chapter provides the search strategy utilized to include the identification of significant gaps in research on Millennial public sector workers and motivational factors in the workplace. The lack of theory on Millennial public workers and the gap in motivational theory relative to this cohort produced the bulk of the literature on this generation, which is related to their characteristics and how they are perceived in the workplace. Theories of employee motivation were also researched, including Maslow's (1948) need hierarchy theory, Perry and Wise's (1990) public service motivation theory, and most specifically Herzberg et al. (1959) and Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory. These theories were reviewed and used as a theoretical foundation for compiling interview questions to guide the collection of data directly from Millennials. The two-

factor theory was also used to ascertain what intrinsic and extrinsic factors Millennials respond to positively.

Literature Search Strategy

A review of the literature on Millennials in the workplace largely detailed the characteristics of Millennials. The literature on the three precedent generations—Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionals—was also examined. The lack of theory on Millennial public workers and motivation then led to the literature search on theories of employee motivation that could be used to address the research. The theories were reviewed and used them as a theoretical foundation for compiling interview questions to guide the collection of data directly from Millennials. The two-factor theory was selected and used to ascertain what intrinsic and extrinsic factors Millennials respond to positively.

The exhaustive literature search resulted in over 255 peer-reviewed studies and other reports published during the past 6 years that detailed salient characteristics of Millennials. A limited number of landmark studies, particularly Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory, were published more than 5 years ago, and these were of relevance and utilized because they were either the most recent source on the topic and/or because of the depth of applicability to the knowledge being mined herein.

The literature review strategy included peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and dissertations. The Walden University Library provided access to Academic Search Complete Premier, Expanded academic ASAP, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete/Premier, and Political Science Complete. Searches conducted used a combination of keywords and phrases to include

over thirty (30) phrases used to describe Millennials, including *Generation Y, Digital Natives, Next Gens, Net Gen, Tech Generation, Digital Generation; public service motivation; motivation theory; generational and intergenerational, cross-generational, and multigenerational relations; Generation X/GenX; Seniors, Traditionals, Matures; Baby Boomers; public sector workplace + motivation/retention, leadership styles.*

Reference lists of peer-reviewed journal literature and relevant dissertations were also examined for further sources of data and information.

The literature gap on Millennials in the public sector provided a compelling rationale for this research given their numbers, their increasing presence in the workplace, and the changes that the public sector workplace has undergone (Deal et al., 2010, p. 191).

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this inquiry was Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory. There are many theories of motivation that have addressed individuals in the workplace and significant controversy with each. Following Taylor's (1911) scientific management theory, which sought to apply science to workflows to determine ways to increase efficiency, Mayo (1933) studied factory workers by analyzing their productivity when subjecting them to changes in lighting. As with Taylor's scientific management, much has been written over the past three decades to either embrace or discredit Mayo's experiment. For example, more recently, Izawa, French, and Hedge (2011) examined the experiments conducted at the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company and found the experiments were "seriously flawed" given the discovery of the impact of the

presence of the increased supervision during the testing (pp. 528, 544). The authors claimed that the mere knowledge that workers were being closely monitored by their superiors impacted their levels of productivity.

Maslow (1948) built upon the work of these early theorists and identified a “hierarchy” that plays an important role in determining factors that motivate an individual positively in the workplace, such as feedback, promotions, rewards and recognition, job security, monetary incentives, and collegial relationships. The more the employer satisfied the needs in the hierarchy, the greater likelihood of increased employee productivity. Sandri and Bowen (2011) contended that Maslow’s five basic human needs continue to be relevant, but the authors discredited much of the theory in relationship to the workplace by contending “the highest priority for virtually every employee who starts a new job is pay” (p. 48). Studies found in the present literature search did not support this priority of needs, which is more closely delineated in Table 1.

Table 1

Three Most Important Factors in Choosing a Company

	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years
Top 1	Opportunities for learning	Opportunities for learning	Quality of life	Meaningful work	Meaningful work
Top 2	Quality of life	Work colleagues	Meaningful work	Compensation	Quality of life
Top 3	Work colleagues	Quality of life	Compensation	Corporate values	Corporate values

Note. Adapted from *Generation Y and the Workplace: Annual Report 2010*, by Johnson Controls, 2010. Retrieved from: http://www.haworth-europe.com/en/content/download/8985/545674/file/Oxygenz-Report_2010_EN.pdf

Herzberg, through several well-documented collaborations with colleagues Mausner and Snyderman (Herzberg et al., 1959), and building upon Maslow's hierarchy and the Hawthorne studies, examined workplace satisfaction and, most notably, dissatisfaction. The distinction Herzberg made was including factors deeper than the impact of a positive environment by introducing a concept defined as *hygienes*, an independent phenomenon that allows for a clearer determination of the factors that can create an unhealthy, psychologically, work environment. Herzberg acknowledged that his motivation-hygiene theory is "perhaps the most heuristic theory" given how it has inspired additional research, and disagreements (p. xvii). The theoretical foundation provided by the dual elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are compelling and an additional contextual lens to study the motivation of Millennials and the strategies public administrators could utilize to engage and retain them.

Public service motivation is an additional theory that provided utility in the present study and was developed through the observation that some individuals have a desire to serve the public based on the strength of their rational, norm-based, and affective needs (Perry & Wise, 1990). The characteristics attributed to Millennials appear to be compatible with careers in public service.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework and the methodology used to develop theory is presented in Figure 1.

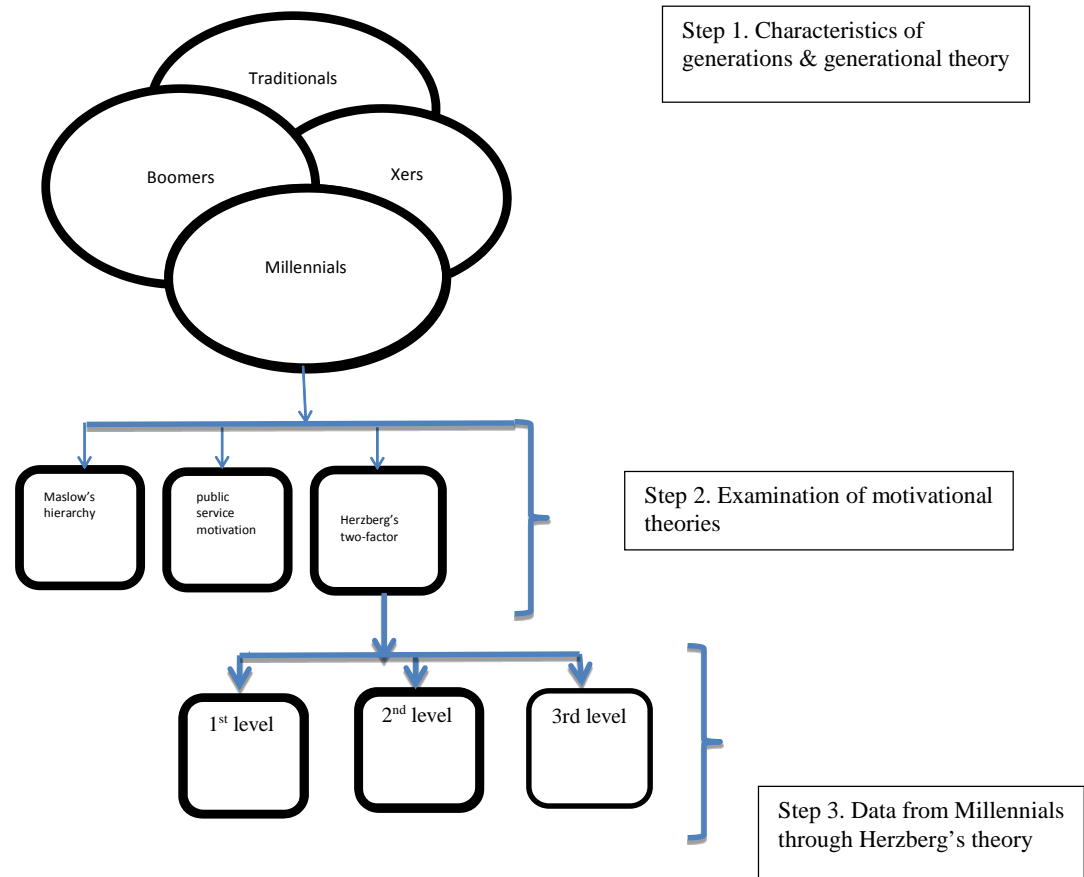


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The impact and presence of Millennials in the public sector workplace has not been thoroughly examined. Deloitte's (2009) study was one of the few that examined the federal government as an employer based on a 2008 study that found that the public sector was the "number one desired career path for graduating college seniors, almost exclusively members of Generation Y" (p. 2). Beginning with the identification of the characteristics of Millennials, then performing a comparison with the characteristics of the three prior generations, there appears to be a pattern of alignment with Perry and Wise's (1990) theory. Other theories of motivation in the public sector were researched followed by an application of Herzberg's (1966) theory to elicit data on the factors that influence positive and negative motivation.

Overview of Millennials

Millennials, the subject of much literary praise and criticism, are also most commonly known as Generation Y, or Gen Y, because they want to know "why" (Gesell, 2010, p. 21). Millennials represent roughly 25% of the workforce in the United States and total about 83.1 million, "making them the largest age cohort in the workforce in the near future" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, p.1). "Generation Y's skills and potential are crucial if economies are to move up the new value chain" (Espinoza, Ukleja, & Rusch, 2011, p. 20).

Beinhoff (2011) examined the most cited literature on the Millennial generation and found that one of the challenges has been a disagreement among researchers with the term *Millennial*, which is not universally adopted by many. The many different terms used to describe them have resulted in a "confusing plethora of synonyms" (p. 20). Other

terms used included *Digital Natives*, *Next Gens*, *Net Generation*, *Tech Generation*, *Digital Generation*, *Screenagers*, *Netgeners*, *Trophy Generation*, *Trophy Kids*, *Peter Pan Generation*, *Generation M*, *Me First Generation*, *Generation Why*, *Helicopter Parents' Kids*, *Baby Boomlet*, *Baby Busters*, *Echo Boomers*, *Boomerang Generation*, *Generation Next*, and *Generation O* (p. 21). Additional terms used in the present study included *Generation We*, *New Boomers*, *Global Generation*, *Greatest Generation*. The National Chamber Foundation (2012) found over 30 terms used to define this generation, claiming that they prefer the use of *Millennial*.

There has also been disagreement around the exact timeframe to include in the span of years these individuals were born in, which can vary from 1977 to 2004 (Beinhoff, 2011, p. 21; Council of Economic Advisers, 2014). This dilemma is not new as there have been different timeframes attributed to generational cohorts in the past. These factors may lead to challenges in comparing data from cohorts as there is blending in timeframes. Figure 2 describes differing timeframes used in literature identified as most germane to the present study.

<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Years</i>
Toossi (2013)	1976	2001	25
Nielsen (2014)	1977	1995	18
Myers & Sadaghiani, (2010)	1979	1994	15
Schoch (2012)	1980	1996	16
DeHauw & DeVos (2010); Hendricks & Cope (2012)	1980	2000	20
Gessell (2010), Wieck, et.al. (2010)	1981	2000	19
Lippincott (2010)	1982	1991	9
Twenge, et.al. (2012)	1982	1999	17
Bell, et.al. (2011)	1982	2000	18
Winograd & Hais (2014)	1982	2003	21

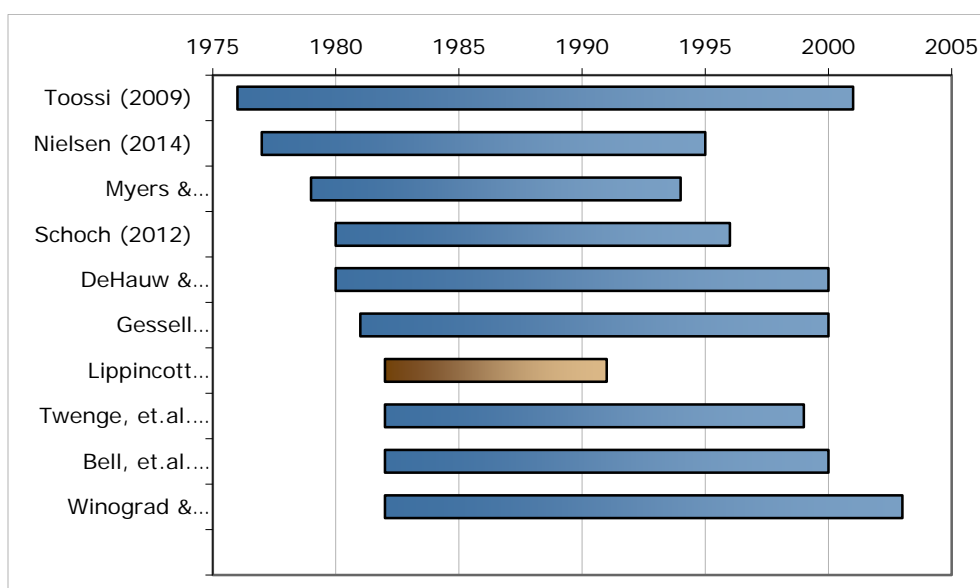


Figure 2. A Sample of Timeframes Used to Define “*Millennials.*”

The Pew Research Center (2010) also embarked upon numerous studies of this generation to determine demographics, political and social views, lifestyles, priorities, use of technology, economic and educational goals through the use of surveys administered to adults, additional Pew surveys and U.S. Census Bureau data (p. 4). Deloitte has issued annual reports on Millennials since 2007. The National Chamber Foundation has also demonstrated keen interest in this generation with the issuance of a comprehensive report.

The demographics state that 19% are Hispanic, 14% are African American and 5% are Asian and therefore they “are more racially and ethnically diverse than any previous generation” (Nielsen Company, 2014, p. 6). Six out of 10 Millennials are non-Hispanic whites, which is 10% more than the Baby Boomer generation (National Chamber Foundation, 2012, p.3). Similar to the Traditionals, 11% are “U.S. born children of at least one immigrant parent,” compared to 7% of Gen Xers and 5% of Baby Boomers (p. 10). They had significant exposure to diverse lifestyles and cultures, including multicultural day care and learning environments (Bell, Connell, & McMinn, 2011, p. 61). When coupled with globalization, Millennials are more appreciative of other cultures and are more inclusive of others that are dissimilar. Bannon, Ford, and Meltzer (2011) likened them to seeing “a world without boundaries” and they have been described a protean in nature (p. 65).

Millennials were found to be more highly educated than the previous three generations with 54% having some college education, compared to 49% of Gen Xers, however, alarmingly, only 63% are employed, versus the previous generation when at the same age 70% were employed (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 10). Factors contributing to the higher levels of unemployment include the economic recession and increased participation in advanced education. Their median income also fell by 29% between 2007 and 2010, largely due to student loans (p. 3).

Characteristics of Millennials

If each generation has a personality, you may say that the baby boomer is the idealist, shaped by Woodstock, JFK, RFK, and MLK. Generation X is the

skeptical independent, shaped by latchkeys, Watergate, and the PC. Generation Y is the connected, diverse collaborator, shaped by 9/11, texting, and the recession. (National Chamber Foundation, 2012, p. 2)

The literature on the Millennial generation largely defined them as possessing unique characteristics, although Bannon et al. (2011) stated “each generation has characteristics that make it unique” (p. 61). Lippincott (2010) found that while there could be an “erroneous” tendency to group characteristics together and stereotype there are “common” ways of identifying a generation that can distinguish them from others (p. 28). Beinhoff (2011) attributed these shared characteristics as attributable to historical perspectives and experiences and a thereby emphasized their “need to be treated, taught, marketed to, communicated with, and studied as distinct cohorts” (p. 20). Twenge, Freeman, and Campbell (2012) claimed that uniqueness is based on cultural differences, “as cultures change, their youngest members are socialized with new and different values” (p. 1045).

Whether Millennials are a product of their times, typical of a young generation or distinctly unique, Deloitte (2010) credited a time full of “high anxiety,” which included increased awareness of terrorism, and numerous wars, as the impetus for Millennials’ characteristics (p. 1). Millennials themselves identified their generation as having a “unique or distinctive identity” (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 5). Many academics agreed that there are characteristics attributed to this generation that can be generalized to other cultures and socioeconomic realities, more so than the prior three generations (Monteferrante, 2010, p. 58).

Monteferrante (2010) attributed their technological prowess to globalization, their being principal users and promoters of the “technological revolution,” and having witnessed the success of their fellow “digital natives” such as Mark Zuckerberg, of Facebook, Andrew Coger of Runescape and others (p. 59). “Technology is hard-wired into this generation, and they live with constant technological stimulation” (Gesell, 2010, p. 22).

Gessell (2010) also described this generation as being optimistic, inclusive, open-minded and self-confident. Even Millennials described themselves as self-confident which can be confused and seen as having a sense of entitlement or lack of respect for others (p. 23). They are described as having high levels of ambition and desire for achievement, leading Bell et al. (2011) to call them the “most adored generation ever” with their parents doting upon them, coddling them and regarding them as “trophies” (p. 46). They are seen as overly scheduled, with carefully planned lives and being accustomed to praise and recognition even if they come in last (Monteferrante, 2010, p. 59).

Pew Research Center (2010) found that 21% of their survey respondents valued “helping people in need” as a top priority and defined Millennials as “confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and open to change” (p. 5). Twenge et al. (2012) summarized that they are “more community oriented, caring, activist, civically involved, and interested than previous generations were” (p. 1046). Making a difference in the lives of others is important and they volunteer in “record numbers” (Bell et al., 2011, p. 47; McGlone, Spain, & McGlone, 2011, p. 196). In fact, Winograd and Hais (2014) believe

that other Americans will take cues from this generation and “demonstrate a greater desire to advance the welfare of the group and be less concerned with individual success” (p.2). McGlone et al. (2011) also believed that volunteerism was used for “padding of resumes,” but also acknowledged altruism and social influences and having a desire to improve the world (pgs. 196, 200). Yerbury (2010) found their involvement in and interest in civic society as a means of self-expression well sought after by Millennials (p. 31).

There are negative characteristics also attributed to Millennials. Born from “helicopter” parents that hovered around to address their every need, Millennials have been labeled as having a sense of entitlement, “wanting it all,” selfish, and requiring instant gratification (Shragay & Tizner, 2011). Gesell (2010) found they were overly dependent on technology and too conscious of their image (p. 34). Other descriptors included they are “supersized, unrealistic and disconnected between reward and performance” (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Gesell (2010) also defined Millennials as having different social norms than even the Gen Xers and are “far less able to read nonverbal cues” and lacking in their ability to express gratitude (p. 23).

Twenge et al.’s (2012) research found them as being extrinsic and materialistic, lacking concern for others in need and eventually concluded that they are “Generation Me,” except in the realm of community service and volunteerism (p. 1046). Building on the negative portrayal of Millennials in the media, Smith and Clark (2010) examined whether this generation is more prone to fabricating their qualifications; while the study was not conclusive, the hypothesis itself is alarming.

Millennials in the Workplace

Millennials and could positively “humanize” the workplace based on their high levels of social responsibility (Bell et al., 2011, p. 45). In a survey administered to Millennials, they had mixed feelings about whether their “characteristics position our generation to help society address its most important issues” (p. 33). They do, however, believe that their employer’s views must be congruent with their own social values (McGlone et. al. 2011, p. 196). Price Waterhouse Coopers (2013) found that 86% of Millennials would leave an employer that did not meet their corporate social responsibility expectations (p. 7). In one of a very few studies of Millennials and their attitudes towards public service, Donaldson (2008) quoted a Council for Excellence in Government survey that asked Millennials about joining the government given their apparent interest in civic engagement and found that 60% had never been asked considered this sector for employment. While it is interesting that they believed they should be “asked” to seek employment in the government, 70% of the respondents did find this work would be appealing (p. 85).

Childs, Ginrich, and Piller (2010) stated that 96% are users of social networks (p. 22). Bannon et al. (2011) examined the results of studies on the ways in which Millennials may impact a workplace and found the areas of technology participation, diversity, social responsibility and work-life balance as the most salient areas where the impact may be felt. With regard to the large number of Millennials that grew up using the internet, personal digital assistant (PDA), and social networking, this generation appeared to have been desensitized to the sharing of personal information which can be of concern

to employers. While Millennials can be accused of providing negative or inappropriate comments on social network sites, they also argued that the use of these mediums is necessary to effectively do their work.

Work-life balance is important to Millennials as they want the flexibility to balance their lives (Bannon et al., 2011). Bell et al. (2011) found the high value this generation placed on “being happy and having a strong family life” (p. 45). According to Gesell’s (2010) examination, there is avoidance by Millennials of long working hours and workplace flexibility. “Flexible hours are as important, if not more so, than retirement benefits” (p. 24).

Millennials, according to the Deloitte (2010) study are more concerned about opportunities for advancement at work than job security, are in search of, and are getting more responsibilities at work, and are generally respectful and trusting of their superiors if they consider them effective. While Millennials are flexible in their definition of a workplace, which could include a coffee shop, they are also good team players (Gesell, 2010, p. 23).

Thompson and Gregory (2012) provided examples of Millennial “stereotypes” around how they are perceived in the workplace. Lacking loyalty to their employers, they appeared to require re-engagement from employers to convince them to remain. They are also found to require constant feedback, which gives the perception that this cohort of employees is unusually “needy” (p. 241). The perception of their sense of entitlement is a misunderstanding, claimed Millennials, as they are instead ambitious in nature and not having “a lack of patience and willingness to drudge through unglamorous components of

work” (p. 241). Smith and Clark (2010) stated that Millennials may be “less able to analyze situations and to come up with workplace solutions independently” (p. 1). There is also a preference for a more “casual” working environment and in some instances wardrobe as some Millennials believed that if the work is getting done, their appearance should not be of concern (Thompson & Gregory, 2012, p. 242).

Ng et al. (2010) sought to investigate career expectations in Millennials through a survey of university students. Millennials described their desire to differ from their Boomer parents by “making a life” and not “making a living” (p. 17). This distinction was noted in several other studies, as well. Seventy-five of those surveyed expected a promotion within the first 18 months of work and opportunity for advancement was their priority. The study did, however, find that these Millennials were realistic with regard to their starting salary, potentially due to their ability to research this data (p. 283). More than half of the respondents indicated that they had no desire for long-term employment with an organization. Coworkers are a key component to selecting employers, emphasizing the “social aspect of work” (p. 289). It would appear that Millennials are interested in knowing who their coworkers will be in the workplace prior to making employment commitments, which would indicate that they are interested in collaborative environments or even engaging with their colleagues.

Suleman and Nelson (2011) examined the potential of Millennials and what would motivate them in the workplace and “tap into their unlimited potential” and concluded that this generation do not need motivators that cost money (p. 44). In fact, providing more work direction to get Millennials excited about work and encouraging the

use of their ideas will harness their talents. Encouraging their development and need for coaching will meet their need to continuously learn. Their need for socialization leads to the conclusion that placing them in team environments as opposed to working independently on projects will motivate them more. Feedback is expected as is the need for rewards that are “creative, varied and personalized” (p. 43).

Further examining the relationship that Millennials have with their colleagues, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) found that they appear to lack loyalty and work ethic, which could inhibit their ability to easily assimilate into the workplace, work well with others, commit to the organization and its mission, and respect and value those they work with (p. 225). These findings appear to be somewhat contrary to some of the characteristics of Millennials, particularly the studies that repeatedly described them as collaborative. By concentrating on the more positive potential contributions of this generation, the findings suggested that this generation may have a more global, broader perspective of the marketplace and useful communication and information technology skills that could “enhance organizational performance and... maximize productivity” (p. 235).

Leading Millennials in the Workplace

In determining what leadership styles would be most effective for managing Millennials and up to three other generations in the public sector workplace, there is a need to first understand the differences in expectations of this new cohort. Literature exclusively focused on the public sector was minimal, therefore, the broader setting of the workplace was used as a proxy.

Espinoza et al. (2011) studied the competencies of managers that are effective in leading the Millennial generation and concluded “the single most important differentiator was... the ability to suspend the bias of their own experience” (p. 19). Biased interpretations of the characteristics of Millennials can cloud interactions and create tension. The ability to be adaptive, without “acquiescing” enables effective leaders to interact with impact (p. 21).

The following table demonstrates managerial competencies that would be effective given Millennials’ orientation.

Table 2

Required Competencies to Effectively Lead Millennials

Perceived Millennial Orientation	Millennial Intrinsic Value	Required Managerial Competency
Autonomous	Work-Life Balance	Flexing
Entitled	Reward	Incenting
Imaginative	Self-Expression	Cultivating
Self-Absorbed	Attention	Engaging
Defensive	Achievement	Disarming
Abrasive	Informality	Self-Differentiating
Myopic	Simplicity	Broadening
Unfocused	Multitasking	Directing
Indifferent	Meaning	Motivating

Note. From Espinoza, C., Ukleja, M., & Rusch, C. (2011). Core competencies for leading today’s workforce. *Leader to Leader*, 59; p. 21.

Thompson and Gregory (2012) believed that the transformational leadership style, with current adaptations, is more appropriate for Millennials, “one that promotes relationships and meeting individual needs” (p. 243). The addition of a “coaching approach” is also suggested where managers “transform” what is perceived as negative

characteristics into strengths, somewhat of a tailored approach to leadership. They argued that the perception of disloyalty can be seen as “entrepreneurial and externally focused” (p. 243). Entitlement is a sign of ambition, confidence and the need for feedback is the opportunity to build strong relationships with these workers (p. 244). The study suggested that they need the investment of time, trust building, coaching and an individualistic approach to leadership in order to retain Millennials in the workplace and was found to be one of the few studies on leading a multigenerational workforce inclusive of Millennials. Transformational and distributed styles were effectively used in the field of nursing to more appropriately motivate multiple generations because employees felt more engaged through increased communication and workers experienced increased empowerment through delegation and the distribution of leadership functions. Salahuddin (2010) adds that the participative leadership style also is more effective given their need for understanding and belief in the mission, interest in working in teams, and admiration and confidence in what they believe are “competent” leaders (p. 5).

Four Generations in the Workplace

Monteferrante (2010) recognized the difficulty and opportunity of having these generations in the workplace, with differing values and experiences. The preceding generations experienced hierarchies and authoritarian and paternalistic environments, which don't sit well with the new entrants as they prefer participative leadership with fairness, transparency, feedback and coaching (p. 60). The challenge for employers is to determine how to be more flexible and respect and value the diversity of these generations (National Chamber Foundation, 2012).

Deyoe and Fox (2012) conducted a literature review and subsequent interviews of 500 employees in various Texas businesses to determine whether generational conflict exists and found that some of the more tenured employees had experienced the most discord they have had in their careers (p. 10). Some of the divergent perspectives of the generations are as follows:

Table 3

Perspectives of Four Generations in the Workplace

	Traditionals	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
Work Ethic	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Ambitious
View of Authority	Respectful	Love/Hate	Unimpressed	Relaxed, polite
Leadership By...	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Achievement
Relationships	Self-sacrifice	Personal gratification	Reluctance to commit	Loyal, inclusive
Perspective	Civic-minded	Team-oriented	Self-reliant	Civic-minded
Turn-Offs	Vulgarity	Political incorrectness	Clichés, hype	Cynicism, condescension

Note. Raines, C, Ewing, L. (2006). *The art of connecting: How to overcome differences, build rapport, and communicate effectively with anyone.* New York: AMACON.

Lavoie, et.al. (2010) studied retention strategies as applied to four generations of health care and hospital employees and did not find the need to stress individualized generational strategies. “General retention strategies that focus on improving the work climate will apply to all generations” (p. 420). The importance of retention must be underscored, given the challenges employers face when they invest heavily in talent to achieve their stated goals and these individuals depart. In addition to high costs to recruit

and train, direct costs, there are indirect costs, such as knowledge lost by their departure. “Losing tacit knowledge is detrimental to achieving long-term competitive advantage, organisational objectives and high performance” (Masibirigi & Nienaber, 2011, p. 45).

Salahuddin (2010) concluded that generational differences do exist in the workplace, particularly in examining the leadership styles of Traditionals, Boomers and Xers. The main differences were around core values and characteristics admired in leaders where Traditionals admired those that are forward thinking, Boomers and Generation Xers admired ambitious leaders and Millennials admired caring leaders (p. 5). The top leadership characteristics of Traditionals were directive, command and control, with building consensus and interest in equality corresponding to Boomers and Gen Xers (AMWA Journal, 2012, p. 143).

Shoch (2012) provided the following worldview of each of the four generations which highlights their differing views:

Table 4

Worldview of Four Generations

Traditionals	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials
Want to keep the peace	Witnessed to TV tragedies (MLK, Kennedy assassination)	Latchkey kids – developed early independence	Grew up in time of wars, mass shootings (Columbine, Denver)
Savers and prepared for rainy days	Witnessed first man on moon, wars, “pioneers in technology, medicine and science” (p. 26)	Blended and single family households	Tech savvy
Believe they have good advice to share	Advocacy and protests; “crave recognition” (p. 26)	Not impressed with authority (Nixon, Clinton)	Social networks
Many are working part time	Taking care of their children and their parents	Value family life; “work hard and play hard” (p. 26)	Value people more than money

Note. Schoch, T. (2012). Turning the ship around with a four-generation crew. *Information Management*, 46(4), p. 25-29, 47.

Wieck et al. (2010) sought to determine whether generational differences would present themselves in the areas of work and environment satisfaction in a nursing setting. The study found that all generations believed managers must be “dependable and supportive” but there were differences noted in communication styles and expectations (p. 73). Older generations want to get the respect of the younger workers that they must coach and mentor, but respect must also be provided to the younger generations as they “want to know they are recognized and valued” (p. 70).

Meriac, Woehr, and Banister (2010) cited the lack of research relative to differences in work ethic among generations and sought to obtain more empirical

evidence. Through the use of multidimensional work ethic profile (MWEP), they studied Millennials and the two precedent generations and their attitudes toward work using a dataset of 1,860 participants over a 12-year period and concluded that differences exist. Importantly, these differences presented more significantly between Millennials and Xers (p. 320).

What is clear about the workplace is that generations tend to have somewhat of unique personalities based on their experiences, “values, gender issues, tensions, problems and approaches” (Stanley, 2010, p. 848). The existence of several generations in a workplace is not a novel occurrence, however, Stanley (2010) conducted an extensive literature review and found that given the need to flatten organizational structures, employees are now working in more team centered environments which argues the need for understanding “values, work ethics, communication styles and approaches to problem-solving” (p. 849). Gessell (2010) stated that not only are there generations that have their own values and mindsets, the Millennials are the most challenging to lead (p. 21).

Simons (2010) urged all four generations to “iron out the ripples caused by their generational differences” because management styles and attitudes on how work gets done is “in a state of flux” (p. 29). Developing collaborative strategies that would enable all to “coexist” would “mute” differences (p. 29). Shragay and Tziner (2011) aptly concluded “perhaps the best course for an organization to adopt is to recruit as diverse a workforce as possible in order to create a balance between the different influences of each generation, and indeed, between different individuals as human beings” (p. 155).

Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley (2010) determined there are generational differences at work, through a survey administered to 115,044 employees. The cost associated with a differentiated strategy to engage each generation is prohibitive and therefore organizations could consider “investigating the intersection of organizational culture, structure, practices, and individual differences in the organization” (p. 277).

Gen X in the Workplace

Lavoie-Tremblay et.al. (2010) described these workers of independent, skeptical, energetic and less loyal (p. 415). This cohort grew up in an era of business and government scandals, AIDS, and decaying economic conditions led to the development of individualistic tendencies and the need to develop creativity (Shragay & Tziner, 2011, p. 144). “This generation was influenced by the reality of being a latch-key kid, the proliferation of single-parent homes, soaring divorce rates, and the increasing involvement of women in the workforce, cultural difference, fallen heroes, the Challenger disaster, struggling economy, the energy crisis, and personal computers” (Andert, 2011, p. 73). They are a cohort that practices time management well and require little supervision, Generation X are focused on outcomes more than process, are fact based and have adjusted to having to be flexible and resourceful (Hendricks & Cope, 2012, p. 719).

Masibirigi and Nienaber (2011) found that members of this generation are particularly more challenging to retain, given their observation of the lack of loyalty paid to their parents by employers, their need to be engaged in work that they find is meaningful under leadership that they perceive to be competent and at a wage that they find is appropriate. Similar to Millennials, Xers are looking for new ways of engaging

the workplace through virtual means and with added flexibility. They are also constantly in search of opportunities for development and growth, feedback from all levels of the organization and are particularly interested in knowing the potential career progression opportunities (p. 47). This particular study overwhelmingly concluded that Xers are dissatisfied in the workplace and thus accounts for them being “nomadic” and placed the blame for their lack of satisfaction on their superiors’ inability to meet their needs.

Andert (2011) studied the four generations in the workplace and identified Generation Xers, or “Nexus,” as sharing characteristics with the late cohort of Baby Boomers (p. 72). Perhaps this observation can be made due to the disparity in generational cohort timeframes identified in the literature, but the attribution of a “lack of people skills” and being self-involved are similar characteristics attributed to Millennials (p. 73). The independent nature of this cohort seems to be consistently addressed in studies. There appears to be a lack of desire for “face time,” but rather a need for clear direction so that work can get done largely independently (p. 73).

Baby Boomers in the Workplace

Defined as “driven to work” and seeking external validation, Boomers seek attention and were coined as “workaholics” (Hendricks & Cope, 2012, p. 719). Roberts (2012) claimed they were not “threatened by subsistence poverty” (p. 484). Boomers survived prior recessions and increased their living conditions and standards and are prone to “continuous improvement” (p. 484). Going the extra mile and being defined by their work, Boomers are “driven by competition and material rewards” (Lavoie-Tremblay et. al., 2010, p. 415). They have experienced difficulty balancing work and family, which

has impacted their offspring (Shragay & Tziner, 2011, p. 144). Baby Boomers appeared to have “misgivings” about the latest technologies, unlike Millennials, and this “divide has led to problems in coordination, trust, communication, and overall organizational efficiency” (Sarringhaus, 2011, p. 237).

Labor statistics show that the number of Baby Boomers staying in organizations has increased (Nielsen Company, 2014). Generation Xers were poised to raise into leadership and still have not had their turn. Enter the latest generation, Millennials, and the work environment becomes even more complex and even possibly crowded.

Schultz and Schwepker (2012) studied Boomers and Millennials to examine differences in the sales culture around components such as visibility and involvement of managers, face time, and collaboration through a mail survey administered to sales professionals. Generational differences in preferences exist although their findings are “far from conclusive” because Millennials have determined Boomers’ practices as the status quo and do not completely discount them (p. 38). What Millennials appeared to desire is the ability to contribute to the way business is done and for their ideas not to be discounted.

Branscum and Sciaraffa (2012) studied the attitudes Millennials have towards Boomers and other “older adults” in the workplace. The perceptions were found to be very negative, with a disregard to their contributions. The study suggested increasing the use of mentoring and coaching strategies as an opportunity to increase the understanding of each generation’s perspectives in order to increase collaboration. Kowske, Rasch and

Wiley (2010) described the workplace as a “psychological battlefield” given the lack of appreciation for each other.

Traditionals in the Workplace

There are very current studies that examine this generation. Also referred to as the “Silent” generation, Veterans or Seniors, the members of this cohort have experienced defining moments such as the Great Depression, and are frugal, hard workers, disciplined and accustomed to hardship (Hendricks & Cope, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2010).

Hendricks and Cope (2012) stated that economic hardship had an indelible impact on these workers and they are loyal, disciplined, team oriented as a result (p. 719). They are utilitarian and adhere to rules, have great respect for authority, preferring leaders that are directive, and having great respect for authority (Hendricks & Cope, 2012; Wieck et al., 2010). Traditionals believed in leaders such as Eisenhower which bred loyalty in them” (Wieck et al., 2010).

Wieck et al. (2010) described Traditionals as being more formal in tone, preferring, for example, the use of the formal “Mr.” and “Mrs.” (p. 68). This level of formality also transcends to their method of communication in the workplace, preferring to have conversations in person vs. e-mails, formal memoranda and letters and personal invitations and outreach. These 12.5 million workers have been taught the latest technologies but often prefer to retreat to old methods or ignore the new ones completely (Nicholas, 2009, p. 47). They may believe that the computer is less trustworthy and prefer to maintain paper copies of critical files and documents.

Theories of Motivation

When examining motivational theories that could lead to a deeper understanding of Millennials in the public sector, there are numerous theorists that have examined behaviors and attitudes in the workplace. Even though many of these motivational theories have been in place for decades, most continue to be debated and controversial to the present day.

Maslow's (1948) introduction of a hierarchy provides a foundational understanding of how needs lead to self-actualization. With the foundational psychiatric needs at the bottom of the hierarchy pyramid, followed by needs of safety, love and belongingness, self and group esteem, and culminating with self-actualization at its peak, Maslow's research examined an individual's basic human motivational journey through a lifetime. This hierarchy can also be applied in the context of why individuals work and how they work and can illuminate on what actions are needed to reach highest levels of satisfaction in the workplace. The theory serves to provide an understanding of Millennials and the factors that motivate, but does not allow for a distinction of how they would differ from other generations particularly in the public sector workplace.

While the level of employee engagement is one dimension to determine a workers level of satisfaction with the workplace, the theory of public service motivation examines the characteristics of an individual to determine if they are more oriented towards this field. The concept "as a special case of intrinsic motivation was introduced originally in the public administration literature by linking intrinsic rewards to workers' motivation to accept employment in the public sector" (Georgellis & Tabvuma, 2010, p. 176).

Developed by Perry and Wise (1990), the theory introduced analytical categories to describe the psychological needs or “motives” an individual can fulfill in the workplace that are largely exclusive to public institutions. The use of rational, norm-based and affective motives is introduced and then further augmented by Perry (1996) by including a four-dimensional model: commitment to the public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice, and attraction to policy making. The identification of characteristics in an individual that can be described as “public service or pro-socially motivated” would lead to decrease the need for traditional “high powered” incentives (Georgellis & Tabvuma, 2010, p. 176).

Georgellis and Tabvuma (2010) claimed that public service motivation does not have enough empirical evidence, as there have been findings that showed job satisfaction decreases as the individual’s tenure increases a similar argument made in opposition to Herzberg’s theory. They introduced an important element of duration of satisfaction, by finding that once an individual transitions into the public sector job satisfaction remains high for “up to five years” (p. 189). “This is welcomed evidence for those who advocate the benefit of having intrinsically motivated people working in the public sector,” at least for a period of time (p. 189).

Wright and Grant (2010) argued that the predisposition to public service and expectation of higher levels of performance by these individuals cannot be clearly relied upon with confidence due to “reliance on cross-sectional research designs” as opposed to “contextual realism” (p. 692). The present study sought to invalidate this argument as individuals are examined once in the environment being studied.

The lack of longitudinal data makes it difficult to determine whether public servants with high levels of public service motivation are more easily dissatisfied with the public sector if they are unable to significantly contribute to solving important societal challenges (Wright & Grant, 2010, p. 692). While the issue of satisfaction over time is not well studied, it is important to measure public service motivation as an employee immediately enters the public sector and thereafter within different stages of their career to determine if the values decrease and possibly provide interventions “to the extent that public service motivation can be influenced by environmental conditions” (p. 694). There is a need for additional research to determine if those with high levels of public service motivation are higher performers in the public sector, as current studies did not demonstrate this.

Kernaghan (2011) found that high levels of public service motivation lead to higher levels of performance and underscore the positive relationship between organizational commitment and performance and determined that this tool should be used “as a selection consideration for public-service appointments, helping new employees to learn and respect public service values, adopting employee appraisal systems that foster public service motivation, and developing leaders who model values-based types of behavior” (p. 9). Employees with high public service motivation, Kernaghan argued, are more motivated by intrinsic than extrinsic incentives (p. 15).

Herzberg (1966) advanced Maslow’s hierarchy as it relates to the workplace by identifying additional factors that influenced workers beyond items such as pay, safety and the workplace. Adding the component of more advanced psychological needs,

Herzberg determined that achievement, assignments, awards, advancement and other higher-level needs are additional important determinants of satisfaction. Further, Herzberg added the importance of employers realizing that worker satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent of each other and must both be considered and addressed to ensure motivated and productive employees – only addressing the positive motivators, for example, would only placate employees and not necessarily energize and motivate them. Herzberg (1966) stressed that even if environmental factors (“hygienes”) are “managed brilliantly, they don’t motivate anybody to work much harder or smarter. People are motivated, instead, by interesting work, challenge and increasing responsibility” (p. 87). Herzberg introduced the notion of KITA, also known as kick in the pants, which despite its appeal, is instead not motivational. Whether an employer chooses to reduce work hours, increase wages and fringe benefits and even engage in extensive human relations programs and techniques, communication, job participation and counseling the most effective way to appeal to humans is through the opportunity for growth. “The stimuli for growth needs are tasks that induce growth... such as achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement” (Herzberg, 1966, p. 92). Herzberg suggests ideas for job enrichment which include that managers, without including the affected employees, select a subset of jobs that require high levels of motivation for performance; brainstorm, but eliminating suggestions that involve hygiene; screen the list for generalities – should be precise ways of increasing responsibility not just lip service; and give the changes time to work, realizing that this is a “continuous management function” (p. 96).

One of the many detractors to Herzberg's theory, Gardner (1977), argued somewhat convincingly that the basic tenant of satisfaction and dissatisfaction being on two differing planes – wherein one does not contribute to the other, “a contradiction to traditional psychology,” – does elicit some doubt on the foundational construct by Herzberg. Gardner (1977) also analyzed the many experiments and interpretations that were conducted and calls convenient the rejection of data when some responses did not neatly fit in a category. He believed there were differing hypotheses being studied in an aggregate fashion which is more apt to support the theory and concluded “that there is no single test of validity for M-H theory but a multiplicity of hypotheses which should be tested in a multiplicity of ways” (p. 203). One third of the experiments conducted supported the initial theory and “the fecundity of the theory is not in doubt but its purity certainly highly suspect” (p. 197). Sachau (2007) examined the “popular but controversial theory” and sounded a call for the theory to be “resurrected” given what he terms have been “misinterpretations” by scholars. Sachau explained that Herzberg's theory was intended “as a general framework for understanding the dual nature of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, happiness/unhappiness, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, mastery/status and psychological growth/pain avoidance” (p. 389).

Baah-Dartey and Amoako (2011) understood and further analyzed the importance of job enrichment and the need for managers to increase challenges and appeal of the work and called for the redesign of jobs and responsibilities regularly (p. 2).

A more recent examination of Herzberg's theory was conducted by Hyun and Oh (2011) whereby soldiers and officers were tested to determine the effect of motivators.

This examination revealed that the level of seniority of an individual skews their perspective, in particular “achievement” and “working conditions” and resulted in higher levels of satisfaction (p. 100, 114).

For purposes of the present study Herzberg’s two-factor theory was used to determine what motivators and hygiene factors are most prevalent in the minds of Millennials and to what extent can public administrators strategize to increase satisfaction.

Summary and Conclusions

The lack of literature on Millennial public sector workers led to an extensive literature search on the characteristics of Millennials to determine whether they exhibit a degree of uniqueness and would require a differentiated strategy to ensure they are motivated and retained in the public sector. Thereafter, literature on the workplace interactions between Millennials and the three precedent generations is also examined. The significant gap of literature that emanated from the lived experiences of Millennials, compelled interest in the phenomenological qualitative design method. An extensive literature review of motivational theories in the workplace was also conducted, with focus on Herzberg’s (1966) two-factor theory as fundamental to developing interview questions for the study participants.

The following chapter will present the rationale for the selection of a qualitative research methodology in order to effectively address the research questions. In addition, the proposed study design, role of the researcher, plan for the collection of data and

warehousing, instruments and tools to be used, and issues of trustworthiness are discussed therein.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Millennials have been the subject of much attention, by their parents, their coworkers, and even the field of academia (Pew Research Center, 2010). They appear to have a different perspective and approach to life and also to work. They are a large generation entering the workplace in significant numbers and making a mark. They have also been exposed to a plethora of world events that have shaped their thinking and approach. Political scandals, wars, economic recessions, and terrorism are a few of the major events that have impacted them in their lifetimes. These events have had an impact on the characteristics that appear to be prevalent in these individuals and may also have helped shape their attitudes and worldview.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to seek data from Millennial public servants directly to determine what factors provide job satisfaction. As their presence in the public sector increases and Millennials rise in the ranks, it will be critical that public administrators understand what motivates them to ensure that they are contributors to the mission of the government. This understanding comes from gaining knowledge about what factors contribute to their satisfaction and elements that hinder productivity.

The study design is discussed herein, to include the selection of study participants; role of the researcher; methodology, design, and instruments used; and issues to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

Research Design Rationale

While there are alternative qualitative disciplines than the one selected for this study, the desire to capture the experiences of the members of the Millennial generation directly compelled the use of the phenomenological approach. While potentially the narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study approaches to inquiry could illuminate motivational factors that impact this cohort this study sought to capture “the special qualities of human experience as subject matter” (Churchill & Wertz, 2014, p. 4). Seeking to “recognize the intentionality of all lived experiences including perception, imagination, volition, expectation, remembering, thinking, feeling and social behavior” provided more depth and meaning (Churchill & Wertz, 2014, p. 9). Through the determination that participants have experienced the phenomenon—Millennials employed in the public sector—the form of hermeneutic phenomenology is used to narrow in on “the subjective experience of individuals and groups” (Kafle, 2011, p. 186). The following research questions were addressed:

1. Based on Herzberg’s two-factor research and theory, what positively and negatively motivates the Millennial public servant?
2. Are there specific strategies Millennial public servants can recommend to positively motivate and retain them?

Twentieth century theorist Husserl (as cited in Tuohy et. al., 2013) introduced the concept of phenomenology as “returning to and exploring the reality of life and living” (p. 18). Phenomenology in its design allows for others to be there and allow scientists to experience, with accuracy and detailed descriptions to “penetrate the mere phenomenal

appearances we find in reality, since our real concerns are—after all—to be found in that which lies behind these appearances” (Allsobrook, 2014, p. 1). “Phenomenology is the study of phenomena: their nature and meanings. The focus is on the way things appear to us through experience” (Kafle, 2011, p. 181). To address the research questions, this study obtained and analyzed the experiences of the group studied, Millennials, by using a specific philosophical movement, interpretive phenomenology, also described to as *hermeneutics* (Tuohy et.al., 2013, p. 18). An understanding and acknowledgment of influences and potential biases are included as a part of this study in an effort to better understand the phenomenon and also set aside bias and possible influencers through “reflection and self-scrutiny” to ensure that the results of this study were not influenced by the “myths” that are predominant in the literature, my own world view and life experiences (Tuohy et. al., 2013).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the sole investigator for this study. I realized that my professional experience as a former employee of the District of Columbia government and the United States of America’s federal government may have an impact on the interpretation of data obtained. However, it was this very same experience that fostered interest in this area of study. In order to ensure the present research study was devoid of bias, the data collected from the generational cohort were first transcribed and thereafter well documented, included verbatim responses, and were restricted to the phenomenon being studied and not open to any biases in interpretation in the development of clusters and subsequent descriptions. Creswell’s (2013) thorough guidance on the importance of

focus on the phenomenon supported these efforts by ensuring that any prejudgments were suspended and the research purely captured and disseminated the viewpoint of the Millennials, which has been far too scarce in the scholarly archives. Patton (2002) described the epoché, or process necessary for me to eliminate, or at a minimum highlight views, prejudices, or other assumptions about the phenomenon that could hinder the validity of the study (p. 485).

While I have extensive familiarity with the public sector, having served for over 20 years as an administrator at the state, local, and federal levels of government, I did not engage individuals that directly reported to me to ensure that the data were not compromised or biased. This was accomplished by advising the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources to delete any Millennial candidates that directly reported to me from the overall pool of candidates for the study.

When the original sample was compiled, I divulged former position in the aforementioned government to the potential study participants (See Appendix A). The individuals were asked if they were familiar with me and if this would have an impact on their participation. As stated in the introductory e-mail, all notices and sessions conducted with participants were prefaced with the need to safeguard the integrity of the study and emphasizing the need for unbiased opinions, the importance of confidentiality, and the overall goal of the study, which was to encourage social change through the appreciation and increased engagement of Millennial public servants by their leadership.

Methodology

While quantitative and mixed methods of inquiry could have potentially been employed in addressing some aspects of the research questions, the qualitative research methodology was selected based on the conclusion that the majority of the literature on Millennials did not obtain all of the data from them directly. Qualitative methodology provided the ability to conduct interviews with Millennial participants in an iterative fashion.

Other methodologies considered under the umbrella of the qualitative tradition were case studies and grounded theory. The case study is an appealing process that could identify the journey of a Millennial employee and probe deeply into the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of one or two individuals. The need to secure information that was deemed confidential by the District of Columbia Human Resources Department representative prior to selecting the sample deterred the use of this methodology. If a participant selected, for example, were an outlier and had biases, this would limit the ability to generalize from data obtained.

The grounded theory form of inquiry provided the guidance to create nonexistent theory, but lacked the critical and missing voice of the participants through their lived experiences. While the “systemic rigor” of this method was appealing the iterative nature of this method of inquiry was of concern. “Unfortunately, theory bits have the ability to stunt further analysis because they can sound so correct” (Patton, 2002, p. 491).

Research Design

The following steps were followed in the present phenomenological research study.

1. Determination that the shared experience of the Millennial subjects would assist in developing a more thorough and accurate understanding of the factors that motivate them;
2. Clear articulation of the specific phenomenon—Millennials working in the public sector;
3. Identification and isolation of the researcher’s experiences, biases, and potential judgment;
4. Engaged Millennials predominantly in interviews ensuring that the participants voice was captured forming “individual phenomenal descriptions” (Churchill & Wertz, 2014, p. 15).
5. Careful analysis of individual experiences that obtained “textural and structural” descriptions to further develop common statements and in depth descriptions.
6. Segregation of significant data and capturing “clusters” which were bracketed and examined by identifying similarities, key phrases, meanings, interpretations to enable the creation of detailed and content rich descriptions.
7. A presentation of the “essence of the phenomenon” to include the true and descriptive “essence” of the participants’ experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 62).

“What emerges is a depiction of the experience and a portrayal of the individuals who participated in the study” (Patton, 2002, p. 487).

In collaboration with the District of Columbia’s Department of Human Resources’ representative 50 potential participants were selected by using the criteria of being District of Columbia government employees and with a date of birth of 1980 or above. Using software developed to select random samples, the human resources representative sought to engage equal numbers of men and women. The first five participants selected were engaged in a pilot test of the interview questions through the use of a telephone interview (See Appendices B and D). Participants were not told that they were engaging in a pilot test of the questions. The purpose of this pilot test was to determine suitability of the questions. In addition, I determined saturation was obtained after the first five interviews.

Upon receipt of the contact information of the larger sample all potential participants were e-mailed and called inviting them to participate and interviews were scheduled with the first 20 individuals that offered a balance in gender; however, some of the participants later did not respond to calls and e-mails requesting confirmation of interview times. The customary “steps” for facilitating and conducting interviews were followed, to include the determination of a goal, process for selecting participants, site selection, method for recording data, and, most importantly, the instructions provided to study participants and role of the researcher, which can be found in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

While the duration of the interviews was estimated to be 45 minutes to allow for transportation and so forth, most interviews only lasted 15 minutes. The individual interviews were all audio-recorded to allow me to not have to focus on taking notes, but engage fully in asking the initial questions, prodding, and ensuring that rich data were being collected and time was used efficiently. A gift card of with the value of \$20 for the CVS pharmacy was offered as an incentive for participation.

At the commencement of all interviews, I reiterated the purpose of this academic study, stressed the importance of confidentiality and non-attribution, and asked if participants were comfortable with proceeding. Individuals were told they could leave the study at any time and that the data obtained would be kept on the hard drive of a computer that remains under lock and key. This information was reiterated and documented through the informed consent form. The interviewees were provided a number from 1 to 20 and hereafter will be known only by this number for purposes of confidentiality. All notes solely reflect this number and not the name of the individual. All data herein will also not reflect the names of District of Columbia agencies whose employees participated, in order to further ensure confidentiality.

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain information pertaining to factors that satisfy and dissatisfy the individual in the workplace, in accordance with Herzberg's (1966) theory. I also contemplated the use of the focus group as a data collection method. However, Herzberg's theory is based on an individual and factors that motivate him or her. There was uncertainty as to whether the other participants would limit or impact an individual's responses through the process known as *group think* and issues of

confidentiality among fellow coworkers deterred the use of the focus group as a data collection method.

The following questions are based directly on Herzberg's work and subsequent studies and analysis and have only been slightly modified in order to obtain richer responses. Additional probing prompts such as "please elaborate" were added to solicit more information when required.

- Q1. Do you feel that other generational cohorts in your workplace have a good understanding of what factors motivate you and your Millennial colleagues?
- Q2. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself as a Millennial public servant?
- Q3. Can you describe your accomplishments in your present position?
- Q4. Are you routinely recognized for your work? If so, how are you recognized? If not, how does this impact your motivation?
- Q5. What is your opinion about the work itself?
- Q6. What is your opinion about your level of responsibility?
- Q7. Have you had opportunities for advancement since you were hired? If not, does that have any impact on your motivation?
- Q8. Do you feel that you are fairly compensated?
- Q9. Do you feel that there is a possibility for further growth?
- Q10. How would you rate your relationships with your subordinates? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.

Q11. How would you rate your relationship with your superior? Good? Fair?

Poor? Please elaborate.

Q12. How would you rate your relationships with your peers? Good? Fair?

Poor? Please elaborate.

Q13. Do you feel you have the appropriate technical supervision to do your job?

Q14. Do you have the adequate resources to do your job?

Q15. Are you fairly satisfied with how existing policies are administered?

Q16. How are your working conditions? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.

Q17. Do you have work/life balance?

Q18. Do you feel that you have job security?

Q19. Is there anything further you would like to share?

The responses to these questions were typed from the audio recording and loaded into NVivo 10 for coding purposes using the following “open” codes with the interviewee number (1-20) assigned:

1. Achievement
2. Advancement
3. Policy and Administration
4. Recognition
5. Responsibility
6. Work Itself
7. Salary
8. Supervision-technical

9. Interpersonal relationships peers
10. Interpersonal relationships subordinates
11. Interpersonal relationship superior
12. Working conditions
13. Other

Issues of Trustworthiness

There were multiple strategies to ensure internal validity during the data collection stages and beyond. The first stage of research was the literature review to collect data on the characteristics of Millennials. Despite the plethora of media articles, magazines and other popular sources most of the sources of this data were restricted to recent peer-reviewed, scholarly literature to ensure validity and subsequent credibility. In addition, there were many articles excluded if their target Millennials were exclusively from other countries. Thereafter, literature on the other three generations was confined to recent articles, when possible mentioning their interaction with members of the Millennial generation in the context of the workplace.

In preparation for the interviews, there were several steps taken to ensure validity and the integrity of the research project. Once the initial set of participants was obtained from the District of Columbia Human Resources representative, those selected for the study were assigned a participant number. Only I will know their identity. This information is safeguarded in the NVivo 10 software on my personal under lock and key. The audio tapes of interviews were downloaded in the NVivo software and thereafter deleted from the recording device. The need for confidentiality was underscored at every

stage of data collection, from the language inserted in the original contact e-mail, and preceded any telephonic or in-person discussions, with further articulation prior to the commencement of the interviews. All notes were typed and loaded in NVivo which will remain the virtual custodian of all records. During every contact point potential participants, whether virtual, telephonic or in person, were told that their participation was voluntary. They were afforded the opportunity to stop participation at any juncture of these interactions without the need to offer any explanation.

The research design established an original pool of 50 individuals as randomly selected members to participate in the study and a timeframe of one month within which to conclude the actual research study. While it was anticipated that this pool would not render the desired 20 interviews, it did. There has been considerable theoretical debate about the appropriate sample size for a qualitative study. While qualitative studies generally involve smaller sample sizes than quantitative studies, Mason (2010) found the mean sample size in phenomenological studies was of 25 (p. 6).

The former employment with the government being studied, could impact the credibility and validity of this study. However, in addition to close collaboration with the supervising academic committee, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process that Walden University employs, I provided full disclosure of this relationship and made every effort to ensure that data obtained was not subject to biases or prior experiences.

Ethical considerations were of utmost importance as well as the validity and reliability of data collected. In designing this study it was ensured that there were no potential risks or benefits associated with participation. The consent form, and all

documentation used to communicate with participants were submitted to and approved by Walden University's IRB (Approval Number 06-26-15-0041994, expiring June/25, 2016). Realizing the need to emphasize confidentiality in order for study participants to be fully engaged and responsive to the interview questions, I developed a numerical coding system for participants interviews and responses; coded the names of the organizations that the participants worked in; and stored all interview recordings and signed consent forms on a secure computer. No further information was provided to the HR representative on who eventually participated in the study and any feedback on data provided. This information must remain private and confidential as required by the IRB.

Issues of reflexivity did not occur as my former employment with the District of Columbia government was shared with participants and fully disclosed. The researcher was cognizant of any potential biases or misconceptions and made every effort to fully and accurately put forward the data as explicitly received from study participants.

Summary

A new generation of workers, almost a quarter of the U.S. workforce, is now in place yet there is little understanding of how they are faring in the public sector workplace. The importance of this study cannot be overlooked. Millennials are a generation of over 83.1 million individuals that whether liked or disliked will have a presence in the public sector for decades to come. The characteristics of Millennials could prove not just unique but relevant for the economy of the future and mission of government. By obtaining data from these workers directly, we are provided a lens into their experiences which contributes to ensuring they are properly engaged and motivated.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This phenomenological examination of factors that motivate the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, Millennials, in the public sector workplace sought to address the following research questions:

1. Based on Herzberg's two-factor research and theory, what positively and negatively motivates the Millennial public servant?
2. Are there specific strategies Millennial public servants can recommend to positively motivate and retain them?

The previous chapter provided the research tools used, the rationale for research design, and documented the process of the study to include trustworthiness and validity of the study and results. This chapter provides results of the one-on-one, structured interviews conducted first to include the information obtained from the pilot study and any adjustments made to the interview questions and data collection process. The organizational conditions experienced by participants are shared below as well as demographics and characteristics of the study participants. An analysis of the data and how they were coded is presented followed by evidence of trustworthiness. The results will be presented as they address the research questions, as coded and with subsequent themes, concluding with a summary statement.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted once the permission was received from the Walden University IRB. The pilot study presented an opportunity to test the interview questions, which were based largely on Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory.

The human resources representative provided the contact information for potential participants, instructing them to use phone numbers as e-mails could be subject to the government's firewalls, and was followed up with an introduction and established appointment times for these pilot participants. These individuals were e-mailed the informed consent form and also received the \$20 CVS gift card. The pilot test was conducted via telephonic interviews and included three men and two women in two District of Columbia government agencies. In addition to being able to gain more insight into the positive and negative motivational factors, I was also able to determine similarities and themes very quickly. After the first five respondents, saturation was achieved in most questions with some additional observations on ways to elicit more information from respondents by asking them to expand more on their answers and areas requiring clarification as follows:

Q13. Do you feel you have the appropriate technical supervision to do your job?

This question confused pilot participants as they were unsure as to whether it was intended to gauge access to new technologies or access to support from the internal information technology help desks. I elaborated that technical supervision could refer to any training, manuals or direction required to perform their duties.

Q15. Are you fairly satisfied with how existing policies are administered?

Pilot study participants asked whether this question was about all district-wide policies, such as human resources policies, or more on a micro level related to their agency or operating division. In this instance, I responded that either interpretation would yield useful data. No changes were made in the language of the questions as submitted to the IRB.

Of note, upon review of the information obtained from the participants of the pilot test in comparison with the first six interviews in the actual study, it seemed that participants interviewed telephonically were more expansive in their responses despite the adjustments made by asking study participants to expand on their answers and asking questions of clarification. Pilot interviews averaged 20.5 minutes. The participants were offered the option of a telephone or face-to-face interview for the remainder of the interviews with a preference on in-person. As a result of this finding, seven study participants were allowed to participate via telephone as scheduling an in-person interview proved challenging or would not occur timely. The telephone interviews were not of lesser quality. In fact, in one particular case (Participant 19) the telephone interview lasted 30 minutes and was one of the most expansive and informative.

Setting

The 20 participants in this research study included eight men and 12 women (See Table 6). Their educational attainment levels ranged from only high school diploma (one participant) to six having master's degrees, seven Juris Doctors, with the remaining having bachelor's degrees or some college. Thirteen interviews were conducted in person and seven were conducted by telephone. Interview duration times ranged from 15.07

minutes (in person) to 30.5 minutes (via telephone). From the observation obtained from the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources representative, there was great variation in seniority and actual job descriptions. This was not intentionally manipulated. One participant self-identified as Persian, six were White, nine Black, and four Hispanic. The study participants were from six different District of Columbia agencies, each having different missions, sizes, leadership structures, and even physical spaces. The six agencies are not identified in this study to further maintain the confidentiality of study participants.

Demographics

The demographic composition of the 20 individuals that participated in the study appears in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographics of Study Participants

	Race	Gender	Education	Department Code
1	Hispanic	M	Masters	A
2	Hispanic	M	Masters	A
3	Hispanic	F	Some college	B
4	Hispanic	M	High school	C
5	Black	F	Masters	D
6	White	M	Masters	C
7	Black	F	Masters	A
8	Black	F	Some college	A
9	White	F	Juris Doctor	A
10	White	F	Masters	A
11	Persian	F	Juris Doctor	A
12	Black	F	Juris Doctor	E
13	Black	M	Juris Doctor	E
14	Black	F	Juris Doctor	E
15	Black	F	Bachelors	E
16	Black	M	Bachelors	E
17	Black	F	Bachelors	E
18	Black	M	Juris Doctor	E
19	White	F	Juris Doctor	E
20	White	M	Masters	D

Data Collection

Upon receipt of the names and contact information of Millennial District of Columbia government employees from the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources representative, contact was made with the potential participants via phone and e-mail using the protocols established at Appendices A, B, C, and D. As previously mentioned, the representative asked that contact be made by phone given the large number of e-mails that the government employees receive and their stringent firewalls

that could classify the e-mails as spam. Given this new information individuals were contacted telephonically in most instances using the scripts as initially intended.

At the onset, every effort was made to try to balance the sample size by having equal gender participation. However, some participants had last-minute cancelations, business travel, and illness, making it difficult to achieve. I had allotted a period of 3 weeks to conduct the interviews. When the decision was made to go ahead with the current sample of 20, with 60% being women, it was done having observed that the responses received from the six men were very similar to the responses received from women. It appears that the experiences based on the phenomenon being studied were shared by both genders. Two participants (12 and 14) also did not consider themselves to be Millennials, despite explaining the timeframes associated with this generational cohort and the fact they were squarely included. Despite the reluctance to self-identify as a Millennials, these two respondents' responses were consistent with the other participants.

As is consistent with the descriptive hermeneutic approach to the phenomenological methodology of study, I believed that by providing rich descriptions the study would offer interpretations of the phenomenon. Once all interviews had been transcribed and re-read, then the coding began in NVivo 10 according to the motivator and hygiene themes and underscored what were deemed to be "significant statements," some of which are underlined in the archetype responses provided herein. These statements allowed for textural descriptions and subsequently composite descriptions, findings, and recommendations.

Data Analysis

Similar to the positive characteristics attributed to Millennials in the literature reviewed and as detailed in Chapter 2, participants provided the following adjectives in Figure 3 to describe themselves as Millennial public servants in response to Question 2 (which was used as an ice breaker):



Figure 3. Self-Ascribed Characteristics of Millennials.

Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory distinguishes between those (a) motivators that positively provide satisfaction that are typical of the actual job and the (b) hygiene factors, which do not provide positive satisfaction but can prove to dissatisfy employees if they are not properly addressed (see Figure 3).

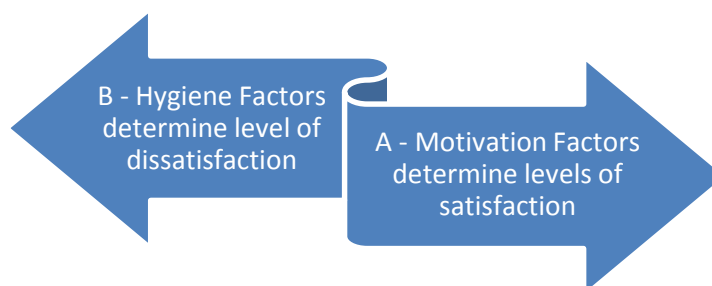


Figure 4. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

The responses from the questions used to interview the 20 participants were coded to the Herzberg's (1966) factors as follows in Table 7:

Table 6

Motivators

Motivator Code	Motivator	Question No.	Question
1	Achievement	3	Can you describe your accomplishments in your present position?
2	Advancement	7	Have you had opportunities for advancement since you were hired? If not, does that have any impact on your motivation?
3	Recognition	4	Are you routinely recognized for your work? If so, how are you recognized? If not, how does this impact your motivation?
4	Responsibility	6	What is your opinion about your level of responsibility?
12	Work Itself	5	What is your opinion about the work itself?

Table 7

Hygiene Factors

Hygiene Code	Hygiene Factor	Question No.	Question
5	Salary	8	Do you feel like you are fairly compensated?
6	Policy & Administration	15	Are you fairly satisfied with how existing policies are administered?
6		17	Do you have work/life balance?
6		18	Do you feel that you have job security?
7	Supervision Technical	13	Do you feel you have the appropriate technical supervision to do your job?
8	Interpersonal Relationships Peers	12	How would you rate your relationships with your peers? Good? Fair? Poor? Please elaborate.
9	Interpersonal Relationships Subordinates	10	How would you rate your relationships with your subordinates? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.
10	Interpersonal Relationships Superior	11	How would you rate your relationship with your superior? Good? Fair? Poor? Please elaborate.
11	Working Conditions	16	How are your working conditions? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.
	Resources	14	Do you have the adequate resources to do your job?
13	Other	1	Do you feel that other generational cohorts in your workplace have a good understanding of what factors motivate you and your Millennial colleagues?

At the onset of this study, the following questions were added and subsequently categorized them as follows:

Q1. Do you feel that other generational cohorts in your workplace have a good understanding of what factors motivate you and your Millennial colleagues?

This question can be considered a hygiene factor as it reflects the nature of the interpersonal relationships.

Q17. Do you feel that you have work/life balance?

Q18. Do you feel like you have job security?

Both of these questions were interpreted as descriptive of the organization's policy and administration components, and thus hygiene factors.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To satisfy quality assurance and level of trustworthiness in this research study, no adjustments were made to the credibility, transferability, dependability, or the confirmability strategies discussed previously in Chapter 3. When it appeared that there may be a need to manipulate participant names received from the human resources representative to capture an equal number of men and women, I opted not to do so. As stated, all of the tape recordings were transcribed verbatim and loaded the transcripts into the NVivo10 software program. Only direct quotes were used to gather themes and subsequent recommendations. NVivo 10 was used to capture all data and use for coding purposes and reports that provided a useful aid in conceptual and axial coding. All interviewees were blind-coded from 1 to 20 and agencies were also blinded in the responses to ensure that confidentiality was not breached.

Results

Research Question 1: Based on Herzberg's two-factor research and theory, what positively and negatively motivates the Millennial public servant?

Herzberg (1974) suggested that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are produced by different work factors. "What makes people satisfied at work are factors that relate to the content of their jobs—specifically, achievement, recognition for achievement, interesting work, increased responsibility, growth and advancement" (Herzberg, 1974, p. 18). "They are present in appropriate amounts in any organization, they bring about work motivation as a corollary to their creating positive attitudes of job satisfaction" (p. 18). While hygiene factors are not directly associated with the job they comprise the physiological, safety and love needs from Maslow's hierarchy (Baah-Dartey & Amoako, 2011, p. 2). While not necessary to maintain satisfaction they are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. Importantly, Herzberg (1966) stated that even improving these conditions will not create motivation.

The responses to interview questions are presented according to the open codes ascribed to them from 1-12 as detailed beforehand in Chapter 3.

1. Achievement – Q3

The researcher has chosen not to provide verbatim responses from participants under this factor, largely because they were very descriptive and provided insight into what agencies and operating units the interviewees were employed by. Overall, this question provided the most animated and expansive responses from all interviewed.

Herzberg (1974) placed achievement as a top motivator in his classic profile although he

stated that “the most important motivators occur with the least frequency. Personal growth is the end goal of the motivators, while achievement is the starting point for any personal growth” (p. 20).

I have accomplished a lot. Thinking outside the box, by starting programs that were not there, building a legacy. (Participant 2, male)

My greatest motivation is to help others. In order for me to get where I am someone helped me along the way so I want to pass on the torch as well.

(Participant 7, female)

I feel like I am actually making a difference. (Participant 10, female)

Theme 1: Importance of achievement. All of the respondents provided lengthy responses when asked about their accomplishments. Achievements were largely tied to the mission of the public sector and appeared to be valued more because they provided opportunities for the respondents to align with their values. Achievements that also provided the opportunity to do their best work – to be trusted and empowered to put forth solutions were repeatedly mentioned by all of the participants. “*Being empowered,*” “*thinking outside of the box,*” and “*opportunities to lead*” were mentioned. All of the respondents mentioned accomplishments proudly and appeared to believe that based on these accomplishments other motivators, such as recognition and advancement, should follow.

2. Advancement - Q7

Five of the participants indicated that they had received a promotion in their present position. The remaining 15 participants shared that they had not and that it does

impact their motivation. Four then added that they have further developed themselves to “self-motivate.” All 20 of the participants responded that advancement is a motivator for them but several questioned whether they were in the right field, or whether they had to take matters into their own hands through training and even looking for other opportunities.

No, because the next step would be the director’s job. Am one step away from the top and I am not interested in the director job. (Participant 1, male)

No, and I have to build myself in my own way through training. Motivates me to do better, the agency does not do it. (Participant 2, male)

Yes, I was promoted within my first year. Yes, it impacts my motivation.
(Participant 3, female)

No, but the opportunity is there. (Participant 4, male)

Yes, I have had two promotions. Yes, there is power in being able to reach a new milestone and everybody is expected to progress and move up. (Participant 5, female)

No, I would like to move up but right now I am not sure if local government... I am questioning what field I want to be in right now. (Participant 7, female)

We do have regular postings available but they are not things that I am interested in. It does impact my motivation, but for people that are looking to move around in certain areas there are opportunities. That is not necessarily the way I want to go in my career. (Participant 8, female)

I have had a chance to learn and grow and things of that nature will help me for when I make that next move. So advancement in a personal development sense.

(Participant 12, female)

Theme 2: Advancement is a goal but not necessarily immediate. Five participants had already received promotions and stated that they were encouraged to advance but the remaining majority had not. Among those not yet promoted, however, there appeared to be some uncertainty as to whether they were in the right career field and acknowledgment that they could advance if they wanted to. One respondent likened training and professional development opportunities to advancement and found this to be an important motivator.

3. Recognition – Q4

While recognition was interpreted differently by several respondents as detailed below, 18 of the participants indicated that it is important to them and it appeared that recognition could motivate them to do even more.

My staff value the support and feel protected and have the tools to get the job done. And across the agency. My superior also because I have tried to resign and they do not want to let me go and they constantly reach out to me to make sure I have the tools. I am not talking about a plaque or something like that. (Participant 1, male)

No, not in District of Columbia government. I have to self-motivate and the people around me because at the end it's about the people that we serve.

(Participant 2, male)

Sometimes. Yes, it does impact my motivation. (Participant 3, female)

By my boss, I do. I get a lot of e-mails... Makes me want to continue and to take more training... it makes me want to do more. (Participant 6, male)

Yes, at times. I would get recognition from my supervisor saying the activity was well put together. I am not really big on recognition. (Participant 7, female)

It does impact my motivation because it makes me feel like on a day to day basis they actually care about what I am doing. (Participant 8, female)

I will tell you that I will go above and beyond for the people that are more appreciative of the work then I am for those less appreciative. (Participant 9, female)

No, definitely not. It is definitely important. It is kind of discouraging when you work so hard... (Participant 11, female)

I do from my immediate supervisor. I do not think that we get the same recognition from the top... Affirmation is important, it is nice to know that what you are doing meets the approval of the person immediately above your boss, to let you know how you are contributing to the overall mission. (Participant 12, female)

I do not want others to be credited for my work. I don't need to get credit but I do not want other people to get credit for my work. (Participant 18, male)

Theme 3: A little recognition goes a long way. Eighteen respondents felt recognition was important to them but, interestingly, recognition could consist of an e-mail of thanks or verbal communication. Several participants stated that they wanted their

superior to notify their superior – “recognition from the top” seemed to be lacking and craved. Two participants claimed that recognition was not important to them, and two others proclaimed – *“just don’t give others credit for my work.”*

4. Responsibility – Q6

Sixteen of the respondents concluded that they have high levels of responsibility, with most saying that they could even take on more. Three of the respondents indicated that while their levels of responsibility are high, they do not feel that they are trusted.

There is always room for improvement, I could do more... (Participant 1, male)

I would like some more responsibility. (Participant 3, female)

A lot, the span of control is too broad. I have over 25 people reporting to me and it is not effective way for performance management. (Participant 5, female)

I wish certain people would trust more in their employees and at the same time I wish that managerial level would be more engaged with what the frontline staff is doing. They are really good with delegating. My level of responsibility is a lot... (Participant 9, female)

There are certain things that I feel like I am given too much responsibility for... (Participant 10, female)

I think I have a lot of responsibility but it kind of goes underappreciated or not valued as much it is kind of played out like I have not much responsibility. (Participant 11, female)

The position did not have any built in responsibility but I sought out opportunities for leadership. (Participant 14, female)

I think that my level of responsibility is vast and I look forward to it increasing because I have a personal investment in advancing myself but for those that I serve. (Participant 15, male)

I think again it depends on the environment. In school, I have received recognition. It is more difficult in the work environment because you are not necessarily in a position to create your own project. If you do well, you do well and you hopefully get recognized for that. (Participant 17, female)

It is high. But I do not have enough autonomy to make it as impactful as it could be. (Participant 18, male)

Theme 4: More responsibility desired. As mentioned beforehand, 16 of the participants valued responsibility and while they already believed their level of responsibility was high, they appeared to welcome more. Several respondents added that they wanted to be trusted to do more and appreciated for having so much responsibility. There were, however, two respondents that indicated they had too much responsibility, not allowing them to manage or perform effectively.

5. Work itself – Q5

The nature of the work done received high levels of enthusiasm in the responses received, second to the responses to the achievement question.

I really like it. It's dynamic. You are always doing something. Big opportunity to innovate and do things differently. Such a large area and touch parts of the organization in a good way. You never get bored. (Participant 1, male)

It is hard because we are working with kids that are underprivileged. The underprivileged community because they are not the issue but generations before them and they are paying the price. (Participant 2, male)

I like it. Sometimes I feel that I have reached the point of growing or learning. But most days I am challenged and that is why I love the job. (Participant 3, female)

The work that I do is very crucial work from all generations from 0-99 – all populations. It is rewarding. You can have a positive effect on people's lives, it is inspiring. (Participant 5, female)

I love the work itself... have the opportunity to rarely but occasionally look into some of my own ideas is very rewarding and exciting. (Participant 10, female)

I think it is definitely important work, this is an important field. (Participant 11, female)

It is pretty interesting and varied. I like the work. It is unique and a lot of interacting with people. It gives me an opportunity to use a lot of different skills that I have. (Participant 12, female)

I enjoy it. I think it is important because the work is actually interesting and important to the public. (Participant 18, male)

Theme 5: The nature of the work is important. Millennials appeared to tie the nature of the work itself to their public service orientation. As government workers they all stated that they liked their work. It is “*hard*” but they stated that they were in “*important*” fields.

6. Salary – Q8

Eight participants indicated they were not receiving fair compensation for the work they do and 6 added that it impacts their motivation. Two of the 8 participants that said they were fairly compensated added that they realized that government salaries are lower than the private sector.

I know governments don't pay as well. I intended to leave law school and work in nonprofits so my perspective may be skewed. My sister works in a law firm down the street and makes triple what I make, but I am only expected to work 40 hours. So there is a give and take. (Participant 12, female)

Theme 6: Money isn't everything. Despite literature that described their focus on salary, Millennials in the study acknowledged compensation was low, but they were largely aware of the "limitations" of government work and did not express great concern.

7. Policy and Administration – Q15, Q17, Q18

Existing policies – Q15

Six respondents indicated that they understood their workplace administrative policies and were in agreement with them. The remaining 14 respondents were not in agreement with the policies.

No. I do not think there are clear and transparent policies. I guess a lot of times we operate on the fly and it changes almost daily. (Participant 4, male)

No. I guess some of the internal and external policies can be adjusted according to the situation or who is connected to who or who is close to who – and you see that a lot across the government. ...that has an impact on the workforce and

productivity. It is a challenge to do your job and that affects motivation.

(Participant 1, male)

Job Security – Q18

Eleven participants felt that they had job security. The remainder had quite opposite feelings based on their negative comments to include:

No, I go to work every day as if it was my last day. I am always ready for any decision. (Participant 2, male)

No, and I would think that you want to have job security and not knowing that one day may be your last (Participant 6, male)

It is one of those things from day to day... (Participant 8, female)

You never know when this will be your last day. (Participant 11, female)

Theme 7: Job security is not as critical a concern. The nine that expressed they did not have job security seemed to attribute it to the nature of government work and politics and not an impetus to find employment elsewhere.

Work life balance – Q17

All but three of the respondents indicated that they do have work/life balance and that it is very important.

It can be better. It more because of me and not the working conditions. I have to balance that better. I am a workaholic and I could probably do better, and do more social activities. And it is ironic because I always try to get my staff to have more balance but I do not have it myself. It is a choice. (Participant 1, male)

Not as much as my peers that do the same thing in my profession. Closer to no.

(Participant 5, female)

No. I feel like I don't since I have been working there. Yes, it is important to me.

(Participant 7, female)

Theme 8: Work/life balance is critical. Millennials seemed to place extremely high value on work life balance. While this “hygiene” does not appear in Herzberg’s factors, this new generation of workers could place life balance under the heading of motivators given the value they place on it.

8. Technical Supervision – Q13

All but 3 participants believed they had the appropriate level of technical supervision. Four added that there are other things they would like to learn, but they believed they did have the appropriate level of support. Of those that responded negatively, one stated that it was assumed that because she is young she is technologically savvy, however, she did not feel her skills were strong enough to do the required task so she had to learn it.

9. Interpersonal Relationships with Peers - Q12

Seventeen participants had good relationships with peers. Two of the participants that stated their relationships were poor:

That is challenging because I guess they have different perceptions of what a manager is and what a senior manager is and I think they are focused on the authority and power and benefits, but they have a different perception of what a manager is. Your success depends on the team and as a senior manager you

cannot be rated a 5 and your subordinates a 2, your success is directly correlated to them. If you do not provide the tools, you don't coach or train part of your job is not being accomplished. (Participant 1, male)

Fair... my peers are much older than I am and don't perform at the same level that I do and their errors affect my work and the work of the agency and I cannot do anything about it because they are my peers. (Participant 18, male)

10. Interpersonal Relationships with Subordinates – Q10

Four individuals that participated did not have any subordinates. One participant stated that the relationship with subordinates was fair. Four participants indicated they had fair relationships with superiors and cited a lack of communication for this.

They do not communicate, they underestimate me. (Participant 2, male)

They are not approachable. (Participant 8, female)

11. Interpersonal Relationships with Superiors – Q11

Four of the participants had a fair relationship with their superior, or superiors, and researcher noticed that these four were all stating that it is their superior's superior that is the source of the challenges.

Very good with my immediate superior. With regard to my superior – not good at all. (Participant 12, female)

Good for my immediate superior and fair to poor with my not so immediate supervisor. (Participant 14, female)

Table 8

Summary of State of Interpersonal Relationships

Participant No.	Peers	Subordinates	Superiors
1	Poor	Good	Good
2	Good	Good	Fair
3	Good	N/A	Fair
4	Fair	Fair	Good
5	Good	Good	Good
6	Good	N/A	Good
7	Good	Good	Good
8	Good	Good	Good
9	Good	Good	Good
10	Good	Good	Good
11	Good	Good	Good
12	Good	Good	Good
13	Good	Good	Good
14	Good	Good	Good
15	Good	Good	Good
16	Fair	N/A	Fair
17	Good	N/A	Good
18	Fair	Good	Fair
19	Good	Good	Good
20	good	Good	Good

Theme 9: Interpersonal relationships at work are not as critical. While the respondents believed their relationships were largely favorable, they did not appear to have significant weight in whether or not they found satisfaction in work.

12. Working conditions – Q16

Six of the respondents stated that their working conditions were fair, two stating environmental factors. Most stated that their expectations, in terms of the physical space, were low because they are in the public sector.

Resources – Q14

Seventeen of the participant stated that they had the adequate resources to do their jobs. Three did not believe they did. Resources were interpreted as supplies, access to technology and training in most instances.

13. Other – Q1

When asked whether other generational cohorts in their workplace have a good understanding of what factors motivate them and their Millennial colleagues, all participants believed that there is a generational gap in perspectives and a lack of understanding of Millennials. Of these respondents, 3 believed that there were some that understood them, if they were skilled in organizational development and/or had children that were Millennials.

Not necessarily. Huge gap between generations. How they relate to the job, ownership, motivation and technology, in the process of growing through the organization and career path. (Participant 1, male)

No, they don't. I think we have a gap between different generations and it causes a lot of issues because people have this ownership and Millennials think they deserve certain things and the people that were there before feel like they have been there. I have seen both sides before being a manager and now. You see a lot of resistance (Participant 2, male)

Sometimes I think that they don't. It just seems that sometimes there seems to be division between people that have been in government for many years and Millennials so catering to both can be difficult. You cannot please everybody. Some people, well some are wonderful, are comfortable where they are.

Millennials are constantly trying to move on or move up so they are looked at as if they are trying too hard or stepping on people's toes. (Participant 3, female)

I do not. I think that in District government there is a culture and there are professionals that have only worked in the District government so they are accustomed to the agency culture and used to way things have always been done. Our generation brings a different kind of energy but it is still inclusive. (Participant 5, female)

I do not think that they do. When I worked at a smaller agency they did because we didn't have a generational gap. The older generation, the one that is about to retire, do not understand what drives us. (Participant 6, male)

I think that if I look at older generations vs Millennials that are now working there is that type of a gap. People that are older... things were done differently and there is a difference in technology and evolution of things and I think there is a still a gap that needs to be bridged so that things can be done inter-generationally and we can all work together so that we can all not only do we perform well but you can also see Millennials move up in their careers in leadership and so forth. (Participant 7, female)

No, I do not. I feel like people that are a bit older have a tendency to see things differently in the workplace. In our field of work I see laziness and complacency, to be honest. They are set in their ways and do not care to excel in the workplace and are comfortable where they are. The majority of my generation want to do well and you can see a difference, the way we approach our work and the way we

position ourselves and generally the way we operate. The way we dress, the quality of our work... (Participant 8, female)

Some yes and some don't – I find it personal to the person instead of the generation. I would say that my manager level staff, at least the ones I have had the most interaction with, typically are 1 to 2 generations before me – are more in tune when they are parents to children my age or are more, how do I say this, in tune to organizational development and organizational growth so they are more seeking to grow the workforce in that way. So they are listening to things in order to grow to help retain staff. I would say that those people are few and far between. But the ones who are in tune to that are really good about asking their employees what about professional development are you interested in and what can we do to help. I have one of my three managers that I work with that really cares about that. But then again, I would say, the ones that have children that are young in the workforce are also more in tune as they are experiencing it within their family. (Participant 9, female)

Some yes and others do not. I don't know if it is a generational thing – yes it is a generational thing because obviously our bosses are generally older than us and you know some of the motivational factors they use are not always effective.

(Participant 10, female)

I think there is a difference between us and some of the older colleagues we have. We have a little different expectations going into the workforce than the older generation. A lot of the older colleagues seem to be content with where they are. I

don't know if that is because we are fresh out of school or what but a lot of us seem more ambitious and kind of like we are – I don't want to say we are losing our motivation here but it is a little stifling. (Participant 11, female)

I think they have some idea – the older generations. It is slightly different because people in my age group either don't have families yet or are starting families so our motivations are more about our own careers and developing ourselves whereas the older already saw themselves in their careers in their early thirties. Motivations are a little bit the same, i.e. money but a little different in what you hope to get out of your job. (Participant 12, female)

I think so, we are lucky with the leadership that we have in this office, they seem very modern and progressive and open to feedback on top of the policies already being not overly strict or stringent or old school. It is a very modern office. (Participant 13, male)

Yes, some of them do – it is more of an individual or maybe socioeconomic thing rather than generational. Some of those that are older do understand – we have shared experiences. (Participant 15, female)

No. I don't think mostly because we are considered the lost generation. The morals and values that caused them to work in the public workspace are different then what motivates us. (Participant 16, female)

No. I do not think they do because the government and the system that is in place in terms as far as rewarding motivated or high performers is not really existent or

strong, the system is set up to reward employees who just don't do enough to not get terminated but have done enough to be disruptive. (Participant 18, male)

I believe there is a big gap in understanding us. They seem to want things to remain the same. They expect us to do their work too. (Participant 20, male)

Theme 10: Millennials believe there is a generational gap. As was overwhelming evidenced by the quotes above, the participants did believe there is a lack of understanding of their generational cohort. This finding will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Research Question 2: Are there specific strategies Millennial public servants can recommend to positively motivate and retain them?

Below are strategies that were provided by the participants in their responses, organized by the themes that appeared most critical.

Theme 1: Importance of achievement. Provide opportunities for achievement/accomplishments. There are a variety of ways expressed by participants such as (a) more learning and skill development; (b) empowerment and trust to get the job done; and (c) opportunities to innovate and think differently.

Theme 3: A little recognition goes a long way. Sixteen of the respondents indicated the importance of the recognition they receive.

Several participants mentioned that even e-mails "*make them want to do more*". Recognition from their supervisor was important, and their supervisor's supervisor, lacking. "...*He takes the time to let our director know who did what... It does impact my motivation because it makes me feel like on a day to day basis they actually care about*

what I am doing.” “Kudos in a staff meeting. One of my managers took his team out for recent accomplishments to recognize people.”

Theme 4: More responsibility desired. While most indicated that they had a great deal of responsibility, and several thought it may be too much, having significant responsibility motivates this cohort. Many suggested they can be trusted, empowered and given even more.

Theme 5: The nature of the work is important. All Millennials liked the work they do and thought it was important. Given the significance of that sentiment, it appears that ensuring that they feel they are contributing in a significant way and serving the public is important.

Theme 8: Work/life balance is critical. Allowing this generational cohort the opportunity to balance their busy lives was important to all participants. Most seemed to enjoy the predictability of their 9-5, government jobs. While most seemed to have this flexibility, three noted that they needed more flexibility but added that this may be their own doing.

Theme 10: Millennials are not understood in the workplace. There was a unanimous sentiment that Millennials are not understood in the workplace. Offering a myriad of reasons and perspectives, it is clear that they want to be understood, but are not offering many suggestions on how this can be accomplished. One participant stated that her leadership was open to feedback, a sound strategy for public administrators. Another stated that those with more organizational development training were able to narrow the generational gap.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the factors that motivate Millennial public servants based on the gap in research on these workers, and, in particular, providing their own point of view. The responses obtained from the interview sessions were rather similar, however, given the small sample of 20, it is not appropriate to offer overarching findings on the Millennial public worker. Based on the responses analyzed, both male and female respondents offered similar views. In instances where outlier quotes were offered, they added to the understanding that these workers, like all others, are individual people and should not be subject to stereotypes or generalizations. It appears that Millennials, despite the volumes written on their cohort, are much like other workers. They are positively motivated by the factors deemed “motivators” by Herzberg and while they may be dissatisfied by those factors deemed “hygienes” this does not contribute to their opinion of the work they do and its impact.

This chapter offered an overview of the pilot study, setting, participant demographics that led to the actual data collection, analysis and results of the interviews conducted on 20 Millennial government workers. Issues of trustworthiness were also presented. Chapter 5 will interpret the study findings and delineate the limitation of the study, recommendations for further research and the potential impact these findings, and further research can have on the public sector workforce.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

As the Millennial generation entered the public sector workforce, they began to outnumber the three older generations that preceded them. Their numbers alone signal that change is coming to the workplace. However, the lack of scholarly research on this generation has contributed to the lack of understanding of these workers. This research examination of factors that motivate Millennial workers in the public sector was conducted to begin to address the gap in the literature and provide their perspective through the use of hermeneutic phenomenology. Other methodologies of the qualitative nature were considered, most extensively the case study and grounded theory. However, the Millennial perspective compelled the selected discipline.

While this study was limited by the size of the criterion sample of 20, the findings offer a beginning glimpse of what factors are of more importance to these workers and suggested strategies for public administrators to implement. Herzberg's (1959) research, despite the many other motivational theories available and the extensive criticism lobbed at the two-factor theory for almost five decades, continued to be relevant as evidenced in Sachau's (2007) call to "resurrect" the theory (p. 377).

The 20 interviews conducted were intended to provide the Millennial participants, public servants in the District of Columbia government, the opportunity to address each of the motivator and hygiene factors and resulted in themes that address the research questions and provide important insight into the minds of this large generation of workers.

The findings of this study are consistent with Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory and supportive of his research, as these workers were positively and negatively impacted by the same factors that impact the larger population of public servants. There were some exceptions and some areas, such as job security and work-life balance, that appear to be more heavily weighted in terms of priorities—with job security not being as important but work/life balance being of utmost importance—which differentiates this generational cohort from others in the public sector workplace. However, this could be typical of any new generation entering the workplace.

The finding of unanimous sentiment expressed by Millennials public servants, that there is a generational gap between them and their coworkers, is important. While generational studies, such as Monteferrante's (2010) and Salahuddin's (2010) examination of four generations in the workplace, concluded that there are unique perspectives and noticeable differences, these studies did not highlight large gaps in intergenerational understanding and the largely negative perceptions held by Millennials of older workers and impact that negative perceptions held by older workers has had on Millennials.

This final chapter will interpret the study findings, limitations, recommendations, and further delineate suggestions for further scholarly inquiry. The importance of understanding factors that motivate Millennials in the public sector will be further discussed as well as the need for public administrators to understand these workers to ensure they are positively motivated in ways that will impact their performance and retention. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for significant additional

studies and the potential impact further research will have on society. This generational cohort of 83.1 million individuals and a third of the public sector workforce are important contributors to our local, state, and national governments. The results of this research will begin to affect positive social change by providing insight and data to public administrators charged with improving the productivity and motivation of their workforce. This study is intended as foundational analysis and underscores the critical scholarly gap of research that helps administrators better understand these Millennial public servants as they will be a significant majority component of the workforce in the near future.

Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to analyze the motivations and perceptions of Millennial public servants to provide insight, recommendations, and potential strategies to better understand and engage this large cohort of workers. The use of the phenomenological research methodology was intentional to address the gap in the literature that sought the perspectives of this most recent cohort of public servants. The gap in peer-reviewed literature sparked interest in these workers, as well as the plethora of literature that ascribed characteristics, both positive and negative, to a quarter of the workforce.

The factors that motivate Millennial public servants appear to be consistent with Herzberg's (1966) findings. Sachau (2007) described Herzberg's work and theory as positive psychology. Sachau described Herzberg's findings that workers feel good about motivator factors for long periods of time but hygiene factors for short periods (p. 380).

“Hygiene needs escalate, but motivator needs do not. Motivator factors are addictive, and hygiene factors are not” (p. 380). While this study did not seek to provide a hierarchy to those motivators as Herzberg did (See Figure 4), based on the content-rich descriptions offered by the responses, it is evident that achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth provide positive motivation to these workers as they are all related to psychological growth. For example, some of the participants had negative experiences concerning recognition. Their responses, however, indicated that if they were given more responsibility and recognition, they would do more. None of the respondents indicated that if they were paid more, had a better office, better peer relationships, and so forth, they would do more.

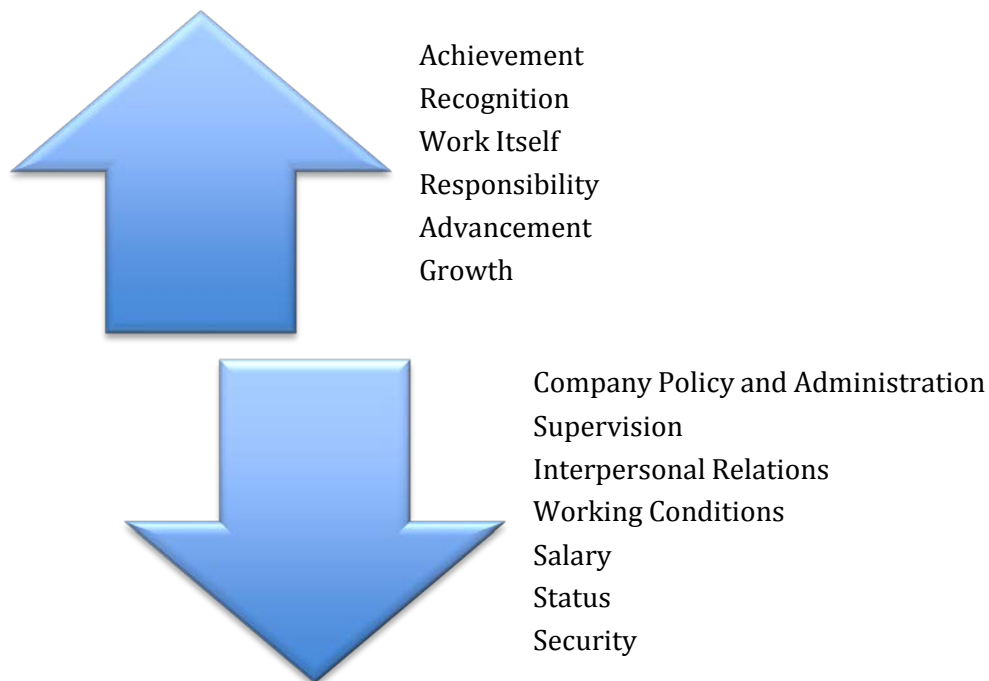


Figure 5. Herzberg’s (1974) “Classic” Profile of Factors in An Organization.

The most salient themes identified from the data provided from the participants appear in Table 9:

Table 9

Themes

	Theme	Factor
1	Importance of Achievement	Achievement
2	Advancement is a goal but not necessarily immediate	Advancement
3	A little recognition goes a long way	Recognition
4	More responsibility desired	Responsibility
5	The nature of work is important	Work Itself
6	Money isn't everything	Salary
7	Job security is not as critical a concern	Policy & Administration
8	Work/life balance is critical	Policy & Administration
9	Working conditions are good enough for government	Working Conditions
10	There is a generational gap	

Bell et al. (2011) described Millennial workers as ambitious and having high levels of achievement. The participants studied did have interest in accomplishments and achievement, but most stated that their achievements afforded them the opportunity to “*help others,*” “*make a difference,*” and offer innovative solutions. Herzberg (1966) placed achievement as the top factor impacting job attitudes (p. 112). In a study of 1,685 employees, when asked what events led to satisfaction or extreme dissatisfaction in their work, Herzberg reported that the key element leading to dissatisfaction was not being able to do their best work.

While the unrealistic expectation of pace and advancement appeared to be pre-eminent in Deloitte’s (2010) findings, one third of those studied herein had been

promoted, and the remaining participants acknowledged that opportunities were there but they were either not interested in the next level of position or they were not sure if they wanted to further pursue a career in their current field.

Recognition was of importance to 18 of the 20 participants in this study. Thompson and Gregory (2012) had termed Millennials as “needy” and in search of validation at work and recognition (p. 241). While acknowledging that recognition does motivate them to do more, the types of recognition desired—an e-mail or acknowledgment from the boss’ boss—could be typical of any worker.

The desire for more responsibility was mentioned by 16 of the 20 participants, despite most believing that they had very high levels of responsibility at the current time. These findings appear to be consistent with Deloitte’s (2010) study, although it is assumed that Millennials seek more responsibility because of their constant quest for advancement. The participants herein stated that increased responsibility was wanted because they believed they could accomplish more if they were empowered and trusted in the organizations.

Ng et al. (2010) identified Millennials as wanting to “make a life” and being more concerned with the social aspects of work (p. 289). The Millennials that participated in this study stated that they were looking for more responsibility, and all stated they “*liked*” or “*loved*” their work. The responses to their opinions of work itself focused on the “*important work*” and “*opportunity to give back,*” which appeared to be compatible with the “civic minded” perspective attributed to them by Raines and Ewing (2006).

Concerning the hygiene factors, and in alignment with the literature reviewed, Millennials appeared to be informed on the government pay scales and had aligned their expectations accordingly (Ng et al., 2010). While 18 participants felt that they were not fairly compensated, it did not appear that this was a deterrent to continuing to work in their present positions, rather it afforded the flexibility for work/life balance and or the opportunity to do important work.

Concerning policies and administration as identified by Herzberg (1959), the participants expressed dissatisfaction with existing policies because of the volatility in leadership. After elections, and/or when new leaders are brought in, policies change and, therefore, there is a lot of change, uncertainty, and even stagnation. Job security and work/life balance were added to this hygiene factor; however, they could also be considered working conditions. The policies of the government and how they are implemented address the issue of job security and life balance.

Most of the participants were “term” employees. These are defined as “an appointment lasting more than one year but less than four years, with a specific expiration date” (USAjobs.gov, 2015, p.1). Eleven of these term employees believed they had job security given their level of performance. Concerns about job security were more squarely attributed to the changes in leadership and the turnover rates as they perceived them.

Work/life balance was important to everyone in the study, as was found in the extensive literature reviewed on this topic (Bannon et al., 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Gesell, 2010). The desire to not work long hours and have flexibility to address family issues

were highlighted by participants. The Millennials studied herein described opting for lower pay given the ability to have “regular” work hours.

The study participants believed they had the appropriate technical supervision and working conditions to do their jobs. The expectations were again tempered with government work or a government setting. None of the participants mentioned the need for newer technology or equipment despite the literature reviewed that stressed the interest Millennials have in the latest technologies (Monteferrante, 2010).

Interpersonal relationships with peers, subordinates, and superiors were largely good among the participants surveyed. Suleman and Nelson (2011) highlighted the need for Millennials to socialize in the workplace and work collaboratively. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) suggested that Millennials lacked the ability to work well with others and value and respect their colleagues (p. 225).

The resounding belief of participants that there is a generational gap in their workplace, that they are largely not understood by their older colleagues, was the most significant finding of this study. While some of those that responded believed that some of their colleagues, those with organizational development orientation or being parents of Millennials, had a better understanding of the factors that motivated them in the workplace, it was clear that there was a disconnect impacting the workforce negatively. In their responses, participants offered suggestions for their colleagues such as being more open to change, empowering their younger colleagues, trusting, respecting, and jointly problem-solving; it is clear that the lack of understanding impacts workers on both sides.

Herzberg (1987) also stated that organizations that invest more in hygiene factors will not find a corresponding return in employee satisfaction. However, by investing in the actual jobs through job enrichment, there is a corresponding increase in motivation. Job enrichment adds responsibility, achievement, recognition, growth, learning, and advancement and is “not a one-time proposition but a continuous management function” (Herzberg, 1987, p. 117). The findings of this study support this. Adding components that increase responsibility and the opportunity to contribute to the “*important work*” they do is important to Millennials. When the members of other generations, whether superiors, peers, or subordinates, understand that all employees need to feel valued and able to do their best work, motivation improves as does job satisfaction in the workplace.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the sample size of 20, which limits the ability to make broad generalizations based upon the findings detailed herein. While this sample size is typical of a phenomenological study, the desire to bring light to the perspectives of Millennials outweighed this concern.

Additionally, I sought to obtain a sample that was similar to the composition of the federal work force, which is 43.2% female, however the current study included 60% female participants (US Office of Personnel Management, 2015, p.1). The responses of the males and females were analyzed to determine outliers and if the large percentage of females in the present study impacted the results. Based on this examination, there were no outliers that were either male or female and general agreement in all of the responses. In addition, the study was blinded with regard to race. The sample size included 9 Blacks,

4 Hispanics, 1 Persian and 6 White individuals which is also dissimilar to the federal workforce which in 2014 included 18.1% Black, 8.4% Hispanics and 64.7% White (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2015, p. 1). Again, the responses that were outliers were not attributable to any one race and, therefore, the impact of the decision to blind the sample to race and gender is sound.

The District of Columbia government holds Mayoral elections every four years, as is customary in most governments at all levels. Interviews were conducted six months into the new administration, which could have impacted the perceptions and opinions of study participants. As is typical, changes in administration include swift changes in leadership, which was evident from responses received from participants. For example:

Participant 8 – *“we are going through a huge shift with having a new director and we are moving towards his vision but we are not there yet.”*

Participant 9 – *“With new leadership came a push for new updated policies so there is no enforcement because we are kind of stuck in between two sets of policies.”*

A limitation of this study included that most of the employees were term employees in the District of Columbia government. While this is a standard form of employment according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, term employment adds uncertainty to the workplace and increases job insecurity. This is an important factor that can skew an employee’s level of commitment. Ng et al. (2010) suggested that Millennials are not interested in long-term employment commitments, so perhaps these term arrangements are ideal for this generational cohort.

Interviews were conducted both in person and via telephone due to participants' scheduling challenges. Seven participants were afforded the opportunity to be interviewed by phone. In all but one of those telephonic interviews, the responses received from participants were lengthier and contained more content.

The District of Columbia government provided the setting for this study and employees from six agencies were represented. While a larger sample and the use of other governmental organizations, such as the federal government would have increased the data obtained, the District of Columbia government provided a good proxy given its state/local status and proximity to federal workers.

Recommendations

The experiences shared by the participants afforded the ability to begin to have a better understanding of this generational cohort and how they are faring in the public sector. The positive responses received around the work itself, demonstrating that all of those that participated either liked or loved their work and how it made them feel, gives an indication that this large cohort of employees are enjoying the work that they are doing and the contributions they are making. While the results of this study are limited and inconclusive in terms of whether this generation is any different than the other three in the public sector workplace, this was not the intent of this study. What is clear is that there are motivators and hygiene factors that, as found by Herzberg through the past five decades, these workers receive positive and negative satisfaction from some of the same factors.

The recommendations for further study include that scholars need to devote more time and research to study this generation. A case study is recommended for further research allowing for more in depth analysis with identified variables, such as being in a career job classification vs term employment. Additionally, Millennial public servants from other jurisdictions in the United States could offer compelling insight and perhaps different findings from the present study. A larger study, perhaps of the quantitative design, could survey Millennials to gather data on their levels of satisfaction in the workplace. The researcher also found the positive characteristics of Millennials, which study participants appeared to agree with, could be more closely associated with high levels of Perry's (1996) public service motivation theory. Studies that analyze Millennials and their public service motivation scores could offer more insight into whether this generation is more suitable for public sector related careers.

The shared belief among participants that Millennial government workers were not understood by other generational cohorts does suggest that further studies are needed to determine whether this is a typical generational gap as is seen by every new cohort or if there is an increasing gap in intergenerational understanding. Additionally, as suggested by Levenson (2010), longitudinal studies are needed, as are intergenerational studies that examine the perspectives of the multiple generations and ways in which they can be jointly motivated, if at all.

While the present phenomenological study offers limited insight into what Millennials think public administrators can do to better understand them, the insight

offered by this study are useful groundwork in beginning to ensure that one-quarter of the public sector workforce is better understood, engaged, motivated and valued.

Implications

This research was intended to begin to fill a gap in studies that examine the Millennial public worker and how they are faring in the workplace. The participants in this small study shared the factors that motivate them in the workplace. While these factors are not much different than those that motivate the workforce, it is clear that they feel that there is a gap in this understanding and that they are different from their public sector colleagues. The key for public administrators is to ensure that all workers feel that they are understood and that their preferences and contributions matter, but it is difficult to begin to put strategies in place without a thorough understanding of these workers. The impact of having this understanding could be significant and can change the dynamics of the public sector workforce. Espinoza et al. (2011) urged leaders to “suspend” any bias they may have towards Millennials to become effective managers (p. 21).

Transformational leaders with an interest in understanding the needs of their workers as individuals are key to gaining the trust and support of Millennial workers (Thompson & Gregory, 2012, p. 243).

Through their words, study participants suggested that they be trusted more in the workplace and provided more opportunities to develop themselves which is consistent with Herzberg's (1974) suggestion that job enrichment is the key to the employee's psychological development. Increasing accountability and taking away barriers or impediments to excel and do more are important strategies to engage Millennial workers.

Also, providing acknowledgment (even via e-mail) is important to these public servants. They are adamant that the nature of their public sector work is important; now they need to feel important too.

Reflections of Researcher

After a 20 year professional career as a public servant in state, local and federal government, and as a consultant to international governments, my passion for ensuring that government works; respect and admiration for those who serve compelled the pursuit of the doctoral degree and more specifically the present study. As the global environment becomes more complex and interpersonal interactions are increasingly limited due to new technologies, the human element of the public sector workforce continues to fascinate and inspire further inquiry. Having had the opportunity to work with all four generations in the public workplace, I continue to be amazed by their dedication and service. In the end, workers of all ages are individual beings with their personal preferences, experiences and world view. It is increasingly important for public administrators to know the people that they lead and to ensure that they feel they are understood and appreciated.

Conclusion

There is a large segment of the public workforce that may not feel fully understood by their colleagues. Whether this is typical of any new generation entering the workforce or not, this lack of understanding can muddy a public administrator's ability to lead effectively. This study begins to shed light on the preferences and lived experiences of Millennials by seeking to determine what motivational factors impact these workers. While the sample size is small and the findings are largely consistent with the results of

Herzberg's (1966) studies on motivators and hygiene factors, these new entrants must feel their potential, input and efforts are understood and appreciated. Given the importance of effectively engaging 83.1 million workers, scholars must begin to address this gap in the literature. And given the increased constraints given economic conditions and volatility it is imperative for public administrators to know there is a generational gap and to determine ways to more effectively engage all of our workforces.

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Appendix A: Introductory E-mail

Dear Potential Interviewee:

Hi, my name is Lisa Mallory and in addition to being a District of Columbia government employee, I am a doctoral student in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University (www.waldenu.edu). Our research at Walden is focused on achieving positive social change, and with that in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. I am doing a study of Millennial District Government workers to determine what factors motivate them in the public sector workplace by obtaining data from Millennials directly. My work is being supervised by a Dissertation Committee and while I have requested permission from the District of Columbia government to seek your participation, this study is not being done for the District of Columbia government, rather seeks to inform public administrators more broadly. I will also strictly adhere to several standards, namely that your participation is voluntary, entirely confidential and that your answers will not be attributable. ***You can terminate your participation at any time without any explanation needed.***

In the interest of full disclosure, I was previously a District of Columbia government employee. If this causes concern, please simply decline to participate. However, this is academic research that will not be provided to the District of Columbia government or any of its agents or assigns. You may receive a copy of the Final Dissertation if you so choose. I would ask that you participate in an up to forty five minute, preferably face-to-face interview. I know your time is valuable and I promise to ensure we work as expediently as possible. You will receive a \$20 CVS Pharmacy gift card for your participation.

Note: Your email response indicating your willingness to participate indicates that you understand the nature of this research and your participation is voluntary. Please respond with a YES or NO to this email.

If you are also interested in receiving a final electronic copy of the dissertation please add that to your response.

Thank you,

Lisa Mallory

Ph.D. Candidate, Walden University

Appendix B: Introductory Phone Call

“Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Maria Mallory and I am a doctoral student at Walden University in the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. Do you have a few minutes so I can determine your interest and availability?”

If yes, proceeds as follows:

“First of all, this is a confidential conversation. I am a doctoral student in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University (www.waldenu.edu). Our research at Walden is focused on achieving positive social change, and with that in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. I am doing a study of Millennial District Government workers to determine what motivates them in the public sector workplace by obtaining data from Millennials directly. My work is being supervised by a Dissertation Committee and while I have requested permission from the District of Columbia government to seek your participation, this study is not being done for the District of Columbia government, rather seeks to inform public administrators more broadly. I will also strictly adhere to several standards, namely that your participation is voluntary, confidential and that your answers will not be attributable. You can terminate your participation at any time without any explanation needed.

In the interest of full disclosure, I was previously a District of Columbia government employee. If this causes concern, please simply decline to participate. However, this is academic research that will not be provided to the District of Columbia government or any of its agents or assigns. I would ask that you participate in an up to forty five minute individual, preferably face-to-face interview which will be audio recorded. I know your time is valuable and I promise to ensure we work as expediently as possible. In appreciation for your participation you will receive a \$20 CVS Pharmacy gift card. You may receive a copy of your audio recording and/or a copy of my final dissertation upon request. Are you interested in participating?”

If yes, proceeds as follows:

“Again, the interview will be recorded. I am flexible in terms of accommodating your schedule and can either conduct the interview in a private conference room located at 455 Massachusetts Avenue, NW or at a place of your choosing that is free from distractions and allows for the audio tape. I have the following dates and times available:
_____. Please let me know where you would like to meet...”

Thank you so much for your time. I will follow up with a quick phone call confirming our meeting and should you need to contact me you can do so by calling [phone number].”

Appendix C: Script of Phone Call Requesting Participation in Interview

“Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Maria Mallory and I am a doctoral student at Walden University in the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. I am calling in reference to an email from me dated _____. Do you have a few minutes so I can determine your interest and availability?”

If yes, proceeds as follows:

“First of all, this is a confidential conversation. I am a doctoral student in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University (www.waldenu.edu). Our research at Walden is focused on achieving positive social change, and with that in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. I am doing a study of Millennial District Government workers to determine what motivates them in the public sector workplace by obtaining data from Millennials directly. My work is being supervised by a Dissertation Committee and while I have requested permission from the District of Columbia government to seek your participation, this study is not being done for the District of Columbia government, rather seeks to inform public administrators more broadly. I will also strictly adhere to several standards, namely that your participation is voluntary, confidential and that your answers will not be attributable. You can terminate your participation at any time without any explanation needed.

In the interest of full disclosure, I was previously a District of Columbia government employee. If this causes concern, please simply decline to participate. However, this is academic research that will not be provided to the District of Columbia government or any of its agents or assigns. I would ask that you participate in an up to forty five minute individual and preferably face-to-face interview which will be audio recorded. I know your time is valuable and I promise to ensure we work as expediently as possible. In appreciation for your participation you will receive a \$20 CVS Pharmacy gift card. You may receive a copy of your audio recording and/or a copy of my final dissertation upon request. Are you interested in participating?”

If yes, proceeds as follows:

“Again, the interview will be recorded. I am flexible in terms of accommodating your schedule and can either conduct the interview in a private conference room located at 455 Massachusetts Avenue, NW or at a place of your choosing that is free from distractions and allows for the audio tape. I have the following dates and times available: _____ . Please let me know where you would like to meet...”

Thank you so much for your time. I will follow up with a quick phone call confirming our meeting and should you need to contact me you can do so by calling [phone number].”

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewee:

Code #: (1-20)

“Hello, first I would like to thank you for participating in this interview. My name is Lisa Maria Mallory and I am a doctoral student at Walden University in the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. The intent of this interview today is to gather data that will inform an academic study on the Millennial public servant. The information collected here today is non-attributable, you will be coded using a participant number and this discussion is in strict confidence. All materials, including audio tape and notes, will be safeguarded in my personal office computer under lock and key and will not be provided to the District of Columbia government. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you are no longer willing to participate, or if you decide at any point in time that you do not want to participate please let me know. No further explanation is needed.

Thank you.

I am first asking for demographic data that, again, will be blinded.”

Race:

Gender:

Level of Educational Attainment:

Department:

Thank you. Now we will begin with the questions.

- 1) Do you feel that other generational cohorts in your workplace have a good understanding of what factors motivate you and your Millennial colleagues?
- 2) What adjectives would you use to describe yourself as a Millennial public servant?
- 3) Can you describe your accomplishments in your present position?
- 4) Are you routinely recognized for your work? If so, how are you recognized? If not, how does this impact your motivation?
- 5) What is your opinion about the work itself?
- 6) What is your opinion about your level of responsibility?
- 7) Have you had opportunities for advancement since you were hired? If not, does that have any impact on your motivation?
- 8) Do you feel that you are fairly compensated?
- 9) Do you feel that there is a possibility for further growth?
- 10) How would you rate your relationships with your subordinates? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.
- 11) How would you rate your relationship with your superior? Good? Fair? Poor? Please elaborate.
- 12) How would you rate your relationships with your peers? Good? Fair? Poor? Please elaborate.
- 13) Do you feel you have the appropriate technical supervision to do your job?
- 14) Do you have the adequate resources to do your job?

- 15) Are you fairly satisfied with how existing policies are administered?
- 16) How are your working conditions? Good? Fair? Poor? Please expand.
- 17) Do you have work/life balance?
- 18) Do you feel that you have job security?
- 19) Is there anything further you would like to add?

“Thank you so much for your participation. I would like to provide you with this CVS Pharmacy gift card in the amount of \$20 in appreciation of your time and input. Again, if you are interested in obtaining a copy of the Final Dissertation or your audio recording, I will provide that to you once it has been completed.”