2018

Strategies That Small Business Leaders Use to Motivate Millennial Employees

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MBA, Trident University International, 2007

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Millennial workers occupy the majority of employment positions worldwide, which is a

concern to business leaders in the United States related to having knowledge and ability

to train, motivate, and retain millennial employees. Using Gilbert's behavior engineering

model as a conceptual framework, this multiple case study explored the strategies that

business leaders used to motivate their millennial employees. The study population

included 4 leaders of small restaurant businesses in eastern North Carolina. Data were

collected from semistructured, face-to-face interviews using 7 open-ended questions and

review of company documents, websites, and social media. Data were coded and

analyzed following Morse's method of data analysis. Three themes emerged from data

analysis: rewards and recognition, high-quality leader–member relationship, and

professional development. The findings of this research are significant for small business

leaders who want to implement effective motivational strategies to manage millennial

employees to keep their organizations productive and profitable. The implications of this

study for positive social change include the potential to help millennial workers grow in

their careers, become financially stable, and develop into prospective leaders prepared to

propel their organizations and societies in the future.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my wife, Annaliza Obedoza Nilo, who has been my constant partner, support, and strength throughout my graduate studies. I also dedicate this doctoral study to my children, Jason Alain and Jasmine Anne. This is evidence that nothing can stop you from pursuing your dreams. Your mother and I will always be there for you. Moreover, I dedicate this to my dad, the late Reverend Jeremias Beltran Nilo, and to my mom, Mrs. Rosalina Alvaro Nilo. My parents believed in the utmost importance of higher education, so they sacrificed everything in order to send their five children to college. This doctoral study is also for my siblings (Luzviminda, Jessie, Joy, and Janet), the rest of my family, and all my friends who believed in me and supported me through their prayers and encouragement. As the first member of Alvaro and Nilo clans to have earned a doctorate degree, I can attest that we can and we should break the glass ceiling. Lastly, I dedicate this to my SELFIES Travel and Tours Team–my millennial employees who constantly forgive me for my shortcomings in understanding them yet inspire me to pursue writing my doctoral study.

To God the Father; my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit, my Protector; all glory and honor belong to you! Amen!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

A historic employment turnover exists that suggests an unprecedented proportion worldwide. In 2010, baby boomers had started to retire, and by 2030 around 60 million Americans will be at the retirement age of 66 years or older (Manda, 2015). Although generation X moves up to take upper management positions, millennials are flooding the global workforce. Born between 1982 and 2000, millennials comprised 83.1 million, or about a quarter of the U.S. population, in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The social, economic, political, and environmental experiences of these generations have shaped their values. Aside from experiences, the employees from different generations bring with them their values, attitudes, and personal beliefs in their workplaces that define them as workers (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017). It is in this light that the study of generation Y (millennials), the largest group in worldwide employment (Nolan, 2015), has become an ever-important subject. The motivation strategies toward the older generations may not necessarily work towards the youngest generation employed today. Understanding what motivates millennials is a necessary undertaking in helping businesses continue to be productive and profitable.

Background of the Problem

The departure of baby boomers from the employment sector creates challenges to industries. The baby boomers will leave skilled job positions that are difficult to fill (Ng, Gossett, & Winter, 2016). Although millennials are entering the workforce in massive number, they are known to have such high expectations of their employers, and they are likely to hastily leave their jobs if employers fail to meet those expectations (Tews, Michel,

Xu, & Drost, 2015). It is a managerial challenge not only to hire the best talent, but to ensure that businesses are able to keep them employed. Without a strategy in place, businesses stand to see a high turnover among their millennial workers.

Millennials will constitute the largest generation of employees in the whole world. In 2017, millennials comprised half of the world's workforce (Lewis & Wescott, 2017), and by 2030 they will occupy three out of four positions (Kilber, Barclay, & Ohmer, 2014). Researchers have known that the entry of millennials has caused conflict with the older generations, and this is the reason why the study of millennial behaviors and values continue to be of interest for many researchers (Stark & Farner, 2015). As millennials enter the workplace, they bring with them distinct values, behaviors, and beliefs. Understanding the characteristic of millennials will pave the way to understanding how to support and motivate them in their positions.

Indeed, millennials continue to be a misunderstood generation. Much of what managers know about millennials comes from what the media portray them to be or through personal observations from their own children who show similar traits (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015). Managers hold negative stereotypes concerning their millennial employees, and they are unsure whether millennials should adjust to their workplace or the managers should adjust their leadership styles (Kilber et al., 2014). Nearly 75% of managers worry about their ability to manage and keep their millennial employees due to a new set of challenges millennials bring into the organization (Ferri-Reed, 2014a). Because millennials bring with them distinct behaviors, beliefs, and values, current management practices may not be as effective towards millennial workers. Business

leaders and members of the management teams need a new strategy in managing their millennial employees, so that their millennial employees continually show motivation to work and remain committed in their jobs.

Problem Statement

By 2030, approximately 88 million millennial employees will occupy 75% of the world's workforce, and employers continue to show frustrations, concerns, criticisms, and cynicisms towards their millennial employees' distinct attributes and behaviors compared with older workers (Kilber et al., 2014). More than 73.5% of business leaders show distress due to their inability to motivate, supervise, and train their millennial employees (Ferri-Reed, 2014a). The general business problem that I addressed in this study is that employee motivation affects productivity and profitability. The specific business problem that I addressed in this study is that some small business leaders lack strategies to effectively motivate millennial employees.

Purpose Statement

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that small business leaders used to effectively motivate millennial employees. The target population for this study consisted of four small business leaders from restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina who have successfully led and motivated a millennial workforce. The implications for positive social change included the potential to promote understanding of the characteristics, values, and preferences of millennials that may eliminate negative perceptions towards them. Fostering acceptance and understanding of millennials, business leaders and community members can provide

opportunities for millennials to achieve their highest potential and enable them to make a positive difference in the world.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative research methodology to explore the strategies restaurant managers use to effectively motivate their millennial employees. Qualitative researchers study the experiences and actions of individuals that do not associate with numerical appraisal (Rudnick, 2014). Quantitative researchers study data made available by the organization or as a result of surveys that yield a quantified or measured set, and the researchers who use statistics to analyze the data (Stichler, 2016). Mixed methods researchers include components of qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a broader and deeper understanding of a research problem (Wanqing & Watanabe-Galloway, 2014). Because I did not measure data in quantified terms and I did not use statistics to analyze data, I did not use quantitative or mixed methods.

I used a multiple case study design for this research. A case study researcher conducts research in a natural setting to understand the essence of current processes to further advance knowledge in the area being studied (Andrade, 2009). A phenomenological researcher studies the participants' lived experiences to uncover what the experiences and perceptions mean to them as it relates to phenomena (Matua, 2015). Because there were no phenomena to study, I did not use a phenomenological design. An ethnographic researcher seeks to learn the organizational context to include understanding of the culture, people, intentions, past and future events, and the researcher needs to employ insider and outsider views to the observed ethnographic perspectives

(Brooks & Alam, 2015). Because I did not study the culture of the restaurant managers, and I did not look at the past and future events of the organizations, an ethnographic design was not suitable for this study. A grounded theory researcher undertakes theory generation as a result of intensive data collection and analysis on human action (Cho & Lee, 2014). Because I did not generate a theory, I did not use a grounded theory design.

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

The central research question of this study was the following: What strategies do small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees?

Interview Questions

The interview questions reflect the central research question:

1. What strategies do you use to motivate your millennial employees?

2. What, if any, training opportunities or resources does your organization provide to help you motivate a millennial workforce?

3. How did your millennial employees respond to your various motivation techniques?

4. How do you determine the effectiveness of implemented strategies to motivate millennial employees?

5. What were the key challenges you faced in motivating a millennial workforce?

6. How did you overcome those key challenges?

7. What other information regarding motivating millennial employees can you provide that we have not already discussed?

Conceptual Framework

I used Gilbert's (1978) Behavior Engineering Model (BEM) as the conceptual framework for this study. Gilbert proposed the measurement of competence within an organization to achieve *worthy* performance. The three components of BEM are (a) the measurement of competence in relation to a worthy performance, (b) the measurement of performance from typical to exemplary identifying potential for improving performance (PIP), and (c) management's measurement of performance deficiencies by identifying less satisfactory behaviors and lack of organizational support tools. On the individual behavioral level, the three constructs that influence competence are (a) knowledge, (b) capacity, and (c) motives, whereas the environmental (organizational) support factors that influence performance are (a) information, (b) resources, and (c) incentives. According to Gilbert (1978), most business leaders implement measures to correct behaviors of the employees while developing organizational supports alone can help catalyze employee performance.

I used BEM theory to explain leadership based on a premise that leaders can scrutinize employee competence and help improve performance by providing environmental support factors, one of which is the motivation incentives. As applied to this study, the BEM holds that I would expect the propositions advanced by the theory to allow participants to explore perceptions and experiences regarding employee motivation. The BEM theory is the conceptual framework for this study to gain an understanding of how business leaders and members of the management teams can use strategies to motivate millennial employees by providing environmental and organization support.

Operational Definitions

Baby boomers: Born between 1946 to 1964, the baby boomers experienced swift economic recovery after World War II (Chiao, 2017).

Generation X: Born between 1965 and 1978, the generation Xers, also known as the *latchkey kids*, prefer a work-life balance, are self-reliant, individualistic, and accept diversity in their day-to-day lives (Derzis, Meyer, Curtis, & Shippen, 2017).

Helicopter parenting: Helicopter parents are those who exceedingly get involved in the affairs of their children, provide hefty support (financially or emotionally), and interfere in their children's decision-making abilities, which oftentimes results to mental health issues of their emerging adult children (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle, & Ferraro, 2016).

Job retention: An employer attempts and endeavors to keep their desirable workers to continue to meet organizational goals (Shahvazian, Mortazavi, Lagzian, & Rahimnia, 2016).

Job satisfaction: Using a frame of reference, job satisfaction is the positive or satisfying feeling towards one's employment as a result of evaluation of the job versus individual expectations (Batura, Skordis-Worrall, Thapa, Basnyat, & Morrison, 2016).

Millennials: Also known as generation Y or the baby boom echo, millennials were born between 1982 to early 2000s, and they are well-educated, considered the *trophy kids* being recipients of trophies for mere participation, and the *most praised* generation as recipients of upbringing that built self-esteem (Anderson, A. Buchko, & Buchko, 2016).

Organizational commitment: An employee's attachment and loyalty to an organization that also affects job satisfaction, and the goal of employers to retain their workers (A. Singh & Gupta, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are the knowledge accrued throughout the lifetime of the researcher imbedded in the subconscious mind that might influence how a researcher reflects on the data (Pitard, 2017). I made three assumptions in this study. My first assumption was that participants have practical knowledge and experience motivating a millennial workforce. My second assumption was that the study participants would provide honest answers on strategies they use to motivate their millennial employees including an honest assessment of strategies that may not have worked well. My third assumption was that the study participants do not hold negative stereotypes towards their millennial employees that may affect bias on their contribution to the study.

Limitations

Research limitations are systematic biases that a researcher could not control and may influence the outcome of the study (Price, 2004). Limitations in research are normal because of the improbability to conduct a limitations-free study, and by including limitations in a research study, other researchers get a chance to take the study further (S. Singh, 2015). My study had two limitations. First, because the participants were small business leaders from restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina who have successfully led and motivated a millennial workforce, the motivational strategies

directed specifically toward millennial workers may not be as effective towards the older workers. The second limitation was that the results of this study may pertain only to small businesses, particularly in the restaurant sector, and may not be relevant to other businesses in eastern North Carolina.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the research, identifying what the researcher did not do, which can affect the validity and generalizability of a study (Ellis & Levy, 2009). My study had three delimitations. First, my focus in the study was limited to the experiences of four small business leaders in motivating a millennial workforce from restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina. Second, the scope of the study did not cover leading and motivating baby boomers and generation X employees. Third, I did not include participants working in the public sector.

Significance of the Study

It was my goal in this qualitative study to provide value to businesses by helping alleviate concerns, frustrations, and cynicisms toward millennial employees. I intended to understand and discover the characteristics, learning preferences, and work values of millennial employees. The practical knowledge gained from this study may help business leaders and members of the management teams meet the emerging needs of their millennial employees and effectively motivate them. As a result of understanding millennial generation's behavioral tendencies and workplace preferences, business leaders may shift strategies to make training, mentoring, evaluation, and rewards programs more appropriate and effective in motivating their millennial employees.

Contribution to Business Practice

Business leaders and members of the management teams may use the recommendations derived from this study to effectively motivate their millennial employees. Lin, Li, and Hou (2015) discussed that when business leaders support the work values of their employees, the employees are likely to remain satisfied in their jobs, perform well, and stay committed in their organization. Although interest is increasing in the study of millennials, the availability of information and research done on millennials in the workplace is sparse (Smith & Nichols, 2015). It is vital to reduce the gap in existing knowledge by using the information from the current study of millennials' job motivation.

Implications for Social Change

Aside from benefits provided to businesses and business leaders, the eastern North Carolina community may also benefit from reviewing and potentially adapting the recommendations from this study. Understanding what motivates millennial employees and meeting their motivational needs can lead to sustained job motivation, retention, and increased productivity (Ferri-Reed, 2014a). Highly productive and profitable organizations may lead to increased corporate social responsibility and sustainable programs benefitting the communities they serve. Understanding and supporting the preferences, tendencies, and values of millennial employees removes the negative stereotypes towards them, allowing them to thrive and flourish in their careers. For example, supporting millennial employees' preferences for unconfined careers and work-life balance (Ertas, 2015) may lead to stronger family units as millennial employees

spend more time to be with their loved ones. These stronger families are the backbones of

stronger communities. Successful millennial employees may become positive

contributors to the development of their societies.

<p style="text-align:center">**A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**</p>

In this literature review, I explored the literature regarding the conceptual

framework of Behavior Engineering Model (BEM) theory as well as supporting and

contrasting theories. The literature review section included articles related to the central

research question: What strategies do small business leaders use to motivate their

millennial employees? I addressed the brief history of millennials, their upbringing,

negative stereotypes towards them, their general characteristics, millennials' learning and

work preferences, their preference for leadership and coworker support, and their

organizational commitment. I reviewed literature about understanding the different and

distinct attributes and behaviors of millennials and how organizations can benefit from

adjusting management practices to cater to the motivational needs of their millennial

employees. I discussed the importance of understanding the preferences and tendencies of

millennials as this will open opportunities to implementing effective motivational

programs to help the organizations become productive and profitable.

Millennials comprise 25% of the global population, and by the year 2024 they

will become the majority workforce (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). By the year 2030,

millennial workers will comprise 75% of worldwide employment, yet employers do not

fully understand the distinct traits and behaviors of their millennial employees (Kilber et

al., 2014). In this review of academic literature, I discussed the characteristics and

behaviors of millennials and other relevant information regarding motivating millennial workers that may help improve organizational performance.

I used databases containing peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from EBSCO Host, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The keywords I used included (a) *behavior engineering model*, (b) *motivation theory*, (c) *generation Y*, (d) *millennials*, (c) *job motivation*, (d) *job characteristics*, (e) *human motivation*, (f) *intrinsic motivation*, (g) *extrinsic motivation*, (h) *managing generation Y*, (i) *job satisfaction*, (j) *job preferences*, and (k) *job burnout*. I included a total of 79 sources in this literature review–70 peer-reviewed articles (88.61%), seven non-peer-reviewed articles (8.86%), and two seminal works (2.53%). Also, at least 88% of the total sources have publication dates of less than 5 years from my anticipated completion date of 2018.

Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model Theory

The conceptual framework that grounded the research for this study was based upon Gilbert's (1978) BEM theory. Gilbert created human performance technology (HPT), and the author posited that although many business leaders correct employee behavior, improving the work environment was crucial in improving employee performance (Pershing, 2016). Through the power of observations and asking critical questions, a manager can use BEM theory towards improving human competence.

Behavior engineering deals with modifying and altering behaviors to achieve worthy performance. According to Gilbert (1978), efficient performance is only a part of BEM theory, and all managers must understand that their role is to engineer human performance by measuring competence and identifying behavioral causes. To realize

efficient behavior, managers can start by fixing behavior deficiencies and by implementing a blueprint to achieve higher efficiency (Gilbert, 1978). When employees work efficiently, they hone competence and perform in a way that meets or exceeds expectations of their jobs. In essence, Gilbert (1978) posited that workers have the knowledge, capacity and motives (called the *behavior repository*) that they carry with them in their workplace necessary to do their jobs. When employees use their behavior repository supplemented by organizational support tools and stimulated by incentives, they are able to perform in a way that may yield desired accomplishments.

Gilbert (1978) discussed the management theory in BEM in which incompetence is more likely the manager's failure to define accomplishments and assign responsibilities. If this occurs, managers can troubleshoot by looking at whether the deficiency is with the environment (support tools provided by the business) or the employee's behavior. Gilbert believed that most managers summarily fix the employee's behavior rather than identify deficiencies in the workplace; providing appropriate tools including motivation incentives can easily solve performance issues. In fact, the lack of organizational support is the cause why employees fail to achieve exemplary performance (Dean, 2016). Behavior change, supported by environmental tools, and stimulated by incentives can generate worthy performance (Gilbert, 1978). It is, therefore, wise for a manager to identify missing support factors when diagnosing performance issues in the workplace before they start addressing their employee's behavior.

Diagnosing performance using BEM. BEM is a tool used to improve
performance. Gilbert (1978) explained that managers could use BEM to organize and
analyze behavior as they ask the questions as listed in Table 1. As depicted in the
following table, managers can use BEM to diagnose deficiencies and determine how to
engineer superior performance (Gilbert, 1978). Gilbert (1978) classified BEM into six
components of data, instruments, incentives, knowledge, capacity, and motives. Gilbert
also numbered in sequence where a manager should look for deficiencies starting from
data and ending in motives.

Table 1

Sequential Diagnosis of Behavior Deficiencies

	Information	Response	Motivation
Environmental support	(1) Data - Do employees know how well they perform based on company standards?	(2) Instruments - Do the employees have the best tools for exemplary performance?	(3) Incentives - Are incentives satisfactory to cause employees to perform meritoriously?
Behavior repository	(4) Knowledge - Do employees have all the information and knowledge for superior performance?	(5) Capacity - Do employees have the capability to perform exemplary?	(6) Motives - Are employees motivated to work exemplary for available incentives?

Note. As depicted under the *Information* column, employees use their knowledge
(behavior repository) and data (provided by the organization) to perform at a satisfactory
level (Winiekie, 2015). On the other hand, as depicted under the *Motivation* column,
employees may use their set of motives (behavior repository) and incentives (provided by

the organization) to perform at a level that exceeds managerial expectations (Winiecki, 2015).

Gilbert (1978) suggested for managers to determine any issues or concerns with environmental (organizational) supports beginning with data, instruments, and incentives. For example, a manager should ask if there are enough and reliable guides given to employees. The employees can use the guides to know how they should perform, and they use managerial feedback on their performance for further improvement. Gilbert (1978) argued that improper feedback has become a major source of incompetence in the workplace. Next, a manager should diagnose tools and materials because if employees use the best tools the company can save on training. Third, a manager must ask questions relating to incentives and if incentives are contingent on satisfactory work achievement. If all environmental support tools are sufficiently in place for employees to perform satisfactorily, a manager can start looking at the employee's behavior repository beginning with knowledge to determine whether training is needed to improve job knowledge. By following the table in sequence, managers do not rush into addressing the employee's behavior but provide necessary work support tools to improve performance.

Valuing BEM. Gilbert (1978) formulated BEM to help managers see deficiencies in performance and improve behavior. Gilbert postulated the importance of standardizing competence, so that as the manager measures competence the employees are given proper guidance on achieving worthy performance. Gilbert based his BEM on these three constructs: (a) the measurement of competence in relation to a worthy performance, (b) the measurement of performance from typical to exemplary identifying potential for

improving performance (PIP), and (c) management's measurement of performance deficiencies by uncovering deficient behavior repertory and environmental support factors. Cox, Frank, and Philibert (2006) argued that business leaders consider BEM a leveraged solution valuable to any organization. Business leaders and members of the management teams can find value to BEM as a framework in analyzing performance issues and in applying systematic solutions without the need to rush into conclusion that employee behavior is the culprit in performance problems. Providing environmental support tools can aid employees improve performance at the least possible cost to the organization.

Carl Binder's Six Boxes

Table 2

The Six Boxes Approach

Environment	(1) Expectations and feedback	(2) Tools and resources	(3) Consequences and incentives
Individual	(4) Skills and knowledge	(5) Selection and assignment (capacity)	(6) Motives and preferences (attitude)

Perhaps one of the prominent adapters and also critics of BEM is Carl Binder. Binder (1998) created six boxes to simplify BEM and encourage nonexperts in behavioral psychology to implement human performance diagnosis and improvement. As seen in Table 2, Binder changed data from Gilbert's (1978) BEM into *expectations and feedback*. Moreover, Binder changed incentives from Gilbert's (1978) BEM into *consequences and incentives*. According to Binder (1998), the change in terminology is necessary so that managers can engage employees into a clearer discussion of how organizations can

provide data, incentives, and other resources in a way that can help employees improve

performance. According to Teodorescu and Binder (2004), Gilbert introduced BEM

underscoring the importance of improving employee behavior to achieve competency

rather than putting an emphasis on accomplishments. Teodorescu and Binder further

argued that a disagreement exists on the way researchers define and measure *competency*.

By following the six boxes model, managers can first determine their desired results, then

identify accomplishments, practices, and strategies they can use to attain their desired

business results (Teodorescu & Binder, 2004). With this backward approach, business

practitioners and, virtually, anyone in the organization can trace those strategies that

affected desirable and reliable outcomes. One particular goal of Binder in developing the

six-box methodology is to entice all personnel into more fluid conversations regarding all

aspects of performance in a way that participants understand the framework better, look

at a performance-focused model, and find strategies to improve performance (Winiecki,

2015). Any employee in an organization can use the six-box approach to grasp human

performance knowledge and connect with practical solutions as applied in the real world.

Environmental Support Tools

Gilbert (1978) emphasized looking first at any issues and concerns in

organizational support towards employees. Looking back at BEM Table 1, the manager's

task is to first determine ways to enhance knowledge, tools, or motivations before

providing training to improve knowledge. Herzberg (1966) and Maslow (1994) posited a

broader approach to human motivation.

The two-factor theory. Herzberg (1966) asserted two distinct management

functions necessary to understand human motivation. Improving job satisfaction may not

necessarily eliminate job dissatisfaction while improving conditions to negate job

dissatisfaction may not really improve job satisfaction. According to Herzberg,

employees derive their job satisfaction from motivators and hygiene factors hence the

two-factor theory. The motivators include recognition, achievement, career advancement,

and growth opportunities while the hygiene factors include compensation, workplace

relations, supervision, working conditions, and tenure (Herzberg, 1966). According to

Herzberg (1966), the employees have increased motivation when motivators are in place

while hygiene factors do not necessarily increase motivation, but rather prevent job

dissatisfaction. To motivate performers, managers must employ factors that increase

motivation while, on the other hand, they must formulate ways to reduce job

dissatisfaction which are an entirely different sets of elements (Vijayakumar & Saxena,

2015). Following the two-factor theory, business leaders and members of the

management teams can employ environmental support tools that increase motivation and

identify hygiene factors that may cause job dissatisfaction. This two-pronged approach

can help increase motivation and maintain job satisfaction.

Hierarchy of needs theory. Motivating a person involves looking at the need of a

person to self-actualize. Maslow (1994) posited that the foundation of motivation theory

is one that takes into consideration the integrated wholeness of a person and the person's

ultimate goal to achieve highest potential. There are fundamental human needs a person

strives to meet to survive, and a person fulfills those needs and goals based on their

hierarchy of importance. On top of the hierarchy is the need to self-actualize or achieve

the highest potential. Maslow stressed the importance of meeting the very basic needs of

safety, stability, and health before the needs of love, self-esteem, and, ultimately, self-

actualization. Upadhyaya (2014) discussed that although Maslow has many critics, the

hierarchy of needs theory is still relevant in today's businesses. Many organizations

struggle to provide the physiological and safety needs of their employees while the social

needs are the organized roles and interactions within the company aimed at achieving

self-esteem and self-actualization (Upadhyaya, 2014). By understanding the essence of

Maslow's theory, organizations can motivate employees based on the hierarchy of goals

and needs each person values. Organizations can start from the most basic needs and

strive to provide opportunities for employees to grow and self-actualize as an individual

and collectively as a team.

Social Identity Theory

Researchers can use social identity theory to better understand how people behave

in a social group in which they belong. The social identity theory is a theory used to

understand how a group of people identify with themselves and act as members of the

same group (Korte, 2007). The members of the same group "make sense of themselves

and other people in the social environment" (Korte, 2007, p. 168). Members that identify

themselves as part of the social group behave in certain ways based on their perceived

status, shared history, values, goals, motives, and needs (Korte, 2007; Koskinen, 2015).

Millennials belong to a social group that has distinct values, motivations, needs, and

behaviors. It is essential to use the social identity theory to understand that members of a

social category behave in such manners different from outsiders though such practices are not necessarily wrong.

Iconic Moments of Millennials

In this study of millennials, it is helpful to take a look at their history. Generation Y, or those individuals who were born from 1980 to early 2000s (Anderson et al., 2016; Hammer, 2015), witnessed several historical events growing up. Millennials confronted many challenges and these experiences forged their political and even economic values specifically with regard to their neoliberal thought processes (Wadsworth, 2017). Wadsworth (2017) argued that millennials inherited a country that promotes neoliberal economy. Millennials believe that the economic development is the center of a nation's strength (Wadsworth, 2017). Millennials believe in capitalism, and they show consumerism tendencies.

Millennials grew up witnessing some momentous global events. Several significant historical events that happened as millennials were growing up helped them develop their idiosyncrasy and assumptions (Hammer, 2015). Millennials watched the fall of Enron, the Columbine High School shootings, the scandal surrounding Bill Clinton's alleged affair with Monica Lewinsky, the 9/11, and the proceeding War on Terror (Hammer, 2015). Their parents also got involved in social issues important to them. The socially-active parents of millennials passed on developmental traits while pursuing plights such as the promotion of equal rights for gays and lesbians and women's rights to choose abortion (Anderson et al., 2016). It is important to understand the

upbringing of millennials to better appreciate how they think, what they value, and how they react to events around them.

Millennials take an interest in the world around them, show genuine concern for the state of their world, and volunteer to causes important to them (Wadsworth, 2017). They exercise their right to assemble and to freely express their opinions, and their participation in social causes leads to a political and social awakening (Fortin & Hennessy, 2015). The use of social media to disseminate information and to rally support from peers and the public spring millennials into action. Their presence in many demonstrations around the country is notable.

Each generation in our world today experienced many social and political events that are different from the time of other generational cohorts. Understanding the history of each generation can help understand why each generation behave a certain way. According to Watroba (2017), there is not an absolute rule to follow when classifying a population into different generations by the use of age ranges. What is more important is to check the shared history of each generation as common experiences during each generation's formative years shape their behaviors, values, and job approach (Watroba, 2017). Business leaders can recognize similar viewpoints and behaviors among their millennial employees because millennials grew up in a shared cultural, political, and social context.

Helicopter Parenting

Millennials are known to be the recipients of *over parenting* with as much as 40-60% of college students confirming this experience (Kwon, Yoo, & Bingham, 2016).

Helicopter parenting means parents get overly involved with their children's affairs (Desy, Reed, & Wolanskyj, 2017). While millennials have a strong self-entitlement due to over parenting, their generation also became the highest educated of all the generations (Desy et al., 2017). Segrin, Givertz, Swaitkowski, and Montgomery (2015) identified ways parents are overly involved in their children, such as offering excessive advice, problem-solving, and expensive material gifts, mixed with interference in the child's emotional welfare. Helicopter parenting became a major force in the formative years of millennials. The incessant participation of parents allowed millennials to be academically successful.

However, there are some disadvantages of helicopter parenting. The inability of millennials to have autonomous decision-making experiences will lead to some difficulties renegotiating the parent-child relationship in adulthood (Kwon et al., 2016). Also, overly involved parenting can hinder the psychological development of a person that also compromises the ability of an individual to have a sense of control leaving them vulnerable in adulthood (Kwon et al., 2016). Several colleges and universities have acknowledged the negative effects of helicopter parenting and put policies in place to limit parental involvement. For example, Harvard University discourages parents in extending too much assistance to their children. New York Institute of Technology instructs parents to step aside to enable students to initiate decision-making activities, and Morehouse College does not allow parents to enter the campus (Earle & LaBrie, 2016). Parents hold their children in high regard and only want the best future for them. Parents become overly involved in their children's lives, but when a child fails to meet the

expectations of their parents, resentment and anger toward the parents may follow

(Segrin et al., 2015). While parents of millennials may have the best intentions, being

overly involved can be disadvantageous to a child. It is, therefore, important to

understand how helicopter parenting shaped the upbringing of millennials.

Managers can understand that millennials lack problem-solving skills as a result

of helicopter parenting (Wiedmer, 2015). Managers need to realize that their millennial

employees will require more supervision and efforts towards strengthening their place in

the company such as constant feedback and structure in their work (Wiedmer, 2015).

Millennials appreciate constant feedback from their superiors, mentoring, and having a

close relationship with their leaders (Meola, 2016). With this knowledge, managers can

create opportunities for their millennial employees to improve their problem-solving

skills and utilize their strengths in making improvements in the workplace. Through

proper guidance, managers can guide their millennial workers towards success.

Stereotypes Towards Millennials

Much of the frustrations, concerns, criticisms, and cynicism towards millennials

come from negative presumptions gained by managers and supervisors from various

sources. Hammer (2015) posited that the unfavorable stereotypes built surrounding

millennial generation overshadowed most of the positive characteristics of millennials.

Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) underscored the growing research on generational

differences and how workplaces evolve in terms of job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and turnover. There has also been a steady change in personality

characteristics of the workforce regarding social dominance and narcissism. Some of

these stereotypes are as follows:

Self-entitled and narcissistic. Overly involved parents raised self-entitled millennial children (Desy et al., 2017). Helicopter parenting promoted and protected the self-esteem of their millennial children during their children's formative years (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015). Millennials believe they can achieve anything, and even though they are cognizant of their environment, they are cynical and narcissistic (Hammer, 2015; Stark & Farner, 2015). Overly involved parents provided for all the needs and wants of their children. This type of parenting resulted in self-entitled and narcissistic traits of some millennial children.

Impatient. Generation Y children show impatience. They were born during the rapid development of technology in a post-digitized world (Kilber et al., 2014). They grew up in a wireless environment and are the main user of the social media and texting. Millennials are driven by consumerism and globalization and rely heavily on social media that they assert what they want when they want it, and how they want it (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). Information gathering has become instantaneous because of technology. Millennials show impatience being dependable to technology.

Lazy. Millennials are lazy due to their self-entitlement tendencies. They suffer from a chronic delay of maturity (Orchowski, 2014). Weirich (2017) confirmed that one of the negative stereotypes for millennials is being lazy. Their parents gave into all their needs to the point that the parents became overly involved even in the emotional welfare of their children. The easy access to massive information gathered by millennials from using technology also contributed to their inability to work harder.

Stereotypes are not beneficial for organizations. Stereotypes of generations have become a business strategy that most decisions affecting employees based on their social identity generate more problems for managers (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015). Understanding the generational differences is essential in developing management practices so that managers can implement different leadership styles as required by different generational preferences (Berry, 2016). Understanding millennials based on research can remove the presumptions and stigmas from business practices. In addition, understanding millennials in today's world can help business leaders and members of the management teams effectively deal with their workers.

Characteristics of Millennials

Misunderstanding the general characteristics of millennials and their motivational aspirations can lead to continued struggles in the workplace. Millennial employees assume majority of positions in all industries around the world, and managers tend to have a difficulty understanding them (Kilber et al., 2014). In fact, frustrated employers show concerns, criticisms, and cynicism towards their misunderstood millennial employees that hinder efficiency in the workplace (Kilber et al.). Following are some of the general characteristics of millennial generation.

Socially aware. One of the characteristics of millennials is being socially aware. Even though many stereotypes millennials as cynical, they are also socially aware (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015). Being social aware means millennials are sensitive to the feelings and inclinations of their peers (Buzdar, Waqas, Mohsin, & Nadeem, 2016). Employees who are socially intelligent can build harmonious relationships and

collaborative teams (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014). Socially aware millennial employees contribute to the greater good of their communities, do their civic duties, and volunteer to causes (Dimitriou & Blum, 2015). Being socially aware is an important trait that millennial workers can bring to their workplaces. Their sensitivities allow them to act according to the demands of the situation.

Confident. Another characteristic of millennials is being confident. Millennials are not only team oriented, but they are also confident achievers (Carballo & Badilla, 2014; Hammer, 2015; Phillips & Trainor, 2014). Their belief of achieving anything in life makes millennials optimistic and practical (Dimitriou & Blum, 2015). While millennials are competitive, as seen in their self-trust and individualistic tendencies, they can also work with others due to an upbringing that incorporated working in groups (Pinzaru et al., 2016). Confidence is another great asset millennial workers bring to their workplaces. Being confident will enable them to capitalize on their strengths and achieve great things.

Opinionated. Self-confident millennials are also opinionated, and they act in ways that seek social influence (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). However, the ability to freely express one's rights, thoughts, and feelings is beneficial as it also leads to the acknowledgment of other people's rights, thoughts, and feelings (Warland, McKellar, & Diaz, 2014). Understanding the importance of being able to express thoughts and feelings, managers and supervisors can help their millennial employees express feelings to take better control of behavior and in relieving built up stress to become healthy and resilient (Hewitt, 2015). Being opinionated, millennial workers can share their ideas for the benefit of their workplaces. They can also express themselves in ways that can help

their team leaders understand their needs and desires.

Digitally connected. Millennials were born during the advent of the Internet. Because of this, millennials became digitally connected and were even sometimes referred to as the *digital natives* (Anderson et al., 2016; Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). Millennials have a strong desire for commercialism and globalization through their avid use of technology, and the older generations find this difficult to understand (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). In fact, Villena-Alvarez (2016) argued that technology shaped millennials and their prevalent use of smartphones and other devices become a source of frustration for older generations. Millennials' lifestyle involves the constant use of technology and internet-enabled devices. Business leaders are wise to accept this fact and offer opportunities to make their millennial employees productive through the utilization of technology. The high volume of information gained from technology makes millennials well-informed.

Smart. Since millennials are the highest educated generation (Desy et al., 2017) and can access information from diverse sources, they are also smart. Millennials are not only smart, but they also think it is awesome to be smart (Belcher, 2015; Phillips & Trainor, 2014). Technology played a role in shaping a millennial generation that has a high degree of motivation to increase understanding, improve skills, collaborate with others, and to build knowledge utilizing different strategies (Carballo & Badilla, 2014). Millennials are smart, have the aptitude to access information, a desire to improve themselves, and the ability to work with others that make them a valuable asset to any organization. They can make a difference in any chosen endeavor.

World changers. The self-entitled and narcissistic millennials have a desire to do good. Millennials are also known as the *purpose-driven generation*, and they do their part to make a difference in the world (Belcher, 2015). Millennials like to work for organizations that are socially responsible (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). In fact, they believe that organizations should have a positive influence on society, and business leaders should incorporate sustainability and social responsibility into the organization's activities (Belcher, 2015). Wadsworth (2017) discussed that millennials are staunch volunteers to social causes, and they present real apprehension about the state of the world. Campione (2016) suggested that volunteer work can help millennial employees with adaptations and adjustments that can result in a positive experience in the workplace. Millennials yearn to do good deeds, and it is important for business leaders to understand this trait. Supporting volunteer efforts and involving millennial employees in corporate social responsibility programs can benefit both the organization and millennial employee.

Multitaskers. Millennials grew up in a family where they spent time doing extra-curricular activities and sports. As their parents wanted them to be successful, millennials grew up to be consummate multitaskers who are high achievers which has allowed them to be open for professional help (Rickes, 2016). Understanding this characteristic is important for business leaders because millennials are the highest and the best-educated generation (Desy et al., 2017; Rickes, 2016) as they acquired knowledge, honed a variety of skills, and cultivated a wide range of talents. The fresh knowledge they bring to any organization can become useful as business leaders try to remain competitive. Millennials

have the drive to go the extra mile due to their tendencies to aspire to greatness.

Ambitious. The sheltered millennials are immensely ambitious about their careers and their future (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). However, Navarro and Malvaso (2016) warned of millennials' difficulty in handling important life decisions to include career and life directions. Millennials take comfort in the guidance provided by their parents, but are often in need of professional help (Navarro & Malvaso, 2016). Business leaders need to understand this trait, so that they are able to set out clear expectations for their millennial employees while ready and able to provide guidance when necessary.

Learning Preferences of Millennials

Millennials demonstrate different learning preferences. Millennials show strong confidence derived from their trust and positivism (Smith & Nichols, 2015). It will be beneficial for organizations to cater to the needs of their millennial employees in terms of training programs tailored to their millennial employees' learning style. Some of the recommendations provided by Desy et al. (2017) were one-on-one mentorship and personalized learning plans tailored to millennials' learning styles, and collaborative, team-based learning with their peers. Organizations can also offer leadership roles fit for their confident and achievement-focused millennials that will allow them to excel in their work (Smith & Nichols, 2015). It is, therefore, apparent that the old ways of managing and training employees may not be as effective to the younger workforce. Business leaders need to craft learning programs accordingly to address their millennial workers' preferences.

Millennials learn in different ways. They consider grades and feedback as

important tools in learning as well as giving their best in their work (Phillips & Trainor, 2014). Understanding this learning preference allows a business leader to provide constant feedback and evaluation which are useful tools in evaluating and helping their millennial employees maintain good work performance and growth in their careers (Fork & Yeung, 2016; Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). Millennials appreciate receiving feedback in a timely fashion.

Experiential learning. According to Philips and Trainor (2014), teachers now understand that the traditional format in classrooms may not work well for their millennial students. Teachers are adopting techniques that allow millennial students to learn through experiential activities (Boysen, Daste, & Northern, 2016). Experiential learning involves simulations, games, online or video-based lectures, problem-solving, and other activities (Phillips & Trainor, 2014). Experiential learning helps millennials gain experience through hands on learning. Engagement through experiential learning allows them to engage into more active conversations with their instructors and their peers.

Engaged learning. Since millennials are multitaskers, it is also important to consider their attention span. Engaged learning is a strategy in motivating millennial students to learn by implementing activities appropriate for their learning preparedness and readiness. For example, pre-recorded lectures are provided ahead of time with a maximum of 20 minutes so that teachers and students spend most of the classroom time with activities and discussions that engage the critical thinking skills of the students (Phillips & Trainor, 2014). Phillips and Trainor (2014) further posited that active learning

deals with creating a deep understanding of the lessons with practical implications rather than just storing the knowledge in their minds. Business leaders can adopt similar experiential and engaged learning strategies in their company training and development programs. Through engaged learning, the business leaders will continue to capture the attention of their millennial employees and promote effective learning activities.

Conventional learning. Millennials enjoyed a close partnership with their parents throughout their growing and formative years. In spite of their experiential and engaged learning preferences, Rickes (2016) argued that millennial students have conventional learning preferences. In fact, they tend to enroll in more traditional schools. Some school leaders recognize the importance of conventional learning that they have incorporated programs and events with direct participation of their millennial students' parents and families (Rickes, 2016). Millennials enjoy collaborative learning with their peers, such as doing travel studies in groups, which allows them to feel more relaxed and confident. Conventional learning, therefore, is still an effective type of instruction for millennials.

Access to technology. It is also important to recognize the integral aspect of technology in the way millennials learn and work. Millennials learn best by incorporating technology in the learning process as they associate their technological competence in relation to their ability to connect with their peers (Desy et al., 2017). Ferri-Reed (2014a) supported this idea by encouraging business leaders to tap into on the technological skills of millennials as it relates to working with their coworkers. Business leaders may encourage their millennial workers to work on special projects with their older peers utilizing and integrating new technologies. Allowing access to technology, the business

leaders can identify ways to make learning and working fun while accomplishing organizational goals.

Millennial employees enjoy learning with people similar to their preferences and businesses that provide avenues for them to grow. Aside from mentoring, millennials also prefer tailor-made, collaborative, and technology-based learning (Desy et al., 2017). Business leaders, therefore, should consider these learning preferences, so that they can continue to support their millennial employees. In addition, business leaders can engage their employees into higher levels of discourse and produce substantial knowledge for the benefit of their organizations.

Work Preferences of Millennials

The work preferences of millennials are different from that of the other generations. These generation Y millennials have different and distinct attributes compared to older generations, and millennials are creative and technologically savvy that seek instant rewards and constant feedback (Fork & Yeung, 2016). Access to information becomes a stepping tool for millennial workers to improve their skills.

Constant feedback. Millennials show a preference for a good relationship with their supervisors who consistently give evaluation of their employees' work. Millennials prefer to receive constant feedback from their superiors, continued coaching, close relationship with management, flexibility, individualism in the workplace, and adaptability for change (Meola, 2016; Ferri-Reed, 2014a). In fact, favorable feedback is not only preferred by millennials, but they also demand it from their supervisors (Anderson et al., 2016). Millennials grew up to a constant supervision of their parents in

their lives that they also prefer constant feedback from their supervisors and easy access to information in the workplace.

Access to information and good communication. Information is a vital commodity in the workplace, and millennials prefer to work with the ability to access necessary information and communicate effectively. Millennial employees show a preference for an open and positive communication between employees and superiors and the ability to share information instantaneously with peers (Hall, 2016). The process of encouraging open communication, involving millennial employees in a decision-making process, and providing constant feedback for performance create an atmosphere of transparency welcomed by millennials (Ferri-Reed, 2014a). The ability to work effectively with access to information allows millennial employees to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings and have a harmonious relationship with their coworkers. Millennials enjoy open communication and constant feedback because as a result, they can improve their skills.

Skills improvement. Millennial employees are confident and they are able to work effectively utilizing their strengths and abilities. They will show loyalty to an organization that allows them to improve and expand on their skills (Boysen et al., 2016). Meola (2016) further encouraged business leaders to help develop the soft skills of millennials through leadership training and communications skills enhancement. Millennial employees desire to achieve what they want when they want it (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). They seek constant improvement of their skills to become better. As millennial workers constantly improve their skills, they are able to achieve greater results

in the workplace.

Work Values of Millennials

The workplace values of millennial employees differ from their preceding generation. Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, and Ng (2015) explained that important behaviors and decision activities of millennial employees have to do with their work values. Campione (2015) further added that understanding millennial employees in the workplace requires an understanding of their work values and behaviors. It is, therefore, important to understand how millennials value their work and the factors that shape their career decisions. Following are some work values that business leaders should understand about their millennial workers.

Work-life balance. Millennial employees prefer a healthy work-life balance. They have the tendency to hop from one job to another if the workplace conditions are not right for them (Ferri-Reed, 2014c). Part of the work preferences includes unrestricted careers, work-life balance, and tangible rewards such are competitive pays and bonuses over intangible one (Ertas, 2015). Compared to the preceding generation, millennial employees prize work-life balance more and consider money as their top priority (Anderson et al., 2016). In fact, the inability to spend sufficient time with personal obligations and pursuits as much as spending sufficient time with work can be a cause of dissatisfaction for millennial employees (Nolan, 2015). It is, therefore, important to note that heavy workloads can compromise personal aspects of millennial workers' lives. Consequently, this may have a detrimental effect on their motivation on their jobs. Millennials value having personal time off away from work.

Actively involved parents raised family-centric millennials, which made their children more focused on their private lives than in their careers. Having time with their families is valuable for millennials, therefore, they desire a work-life balance (Chen & Lian, 2015; Smith & Nichols, 2015). In fact, millennials measure success through the quality of life that they have (Hammer, 2015). Without work-life balance, millennial employees are more likely to change jobs and employers than the older workers (Ertas, 2015; Hammer, 2015). It is, therefore, vital to understand how managers support the work-life balance demands of their millennial employees to help prevent turnover. The changing preferences of the workforce may force business leaders to rethink the way they conduct business and implement ways to promote and protect the quality of life of their employees.

Individualism. Millennial employees prefer work pursuits that are geared toward helping them achieve their best potentials and value individual workplace contributions. Millennials are more likely to show individualistic traits of self-esteem and determination than the older generation (Campione, 2016). These younger employees value opportunities to self-actualize in their jobs which includes self-growth and in achieving personal interests (Chen & Lian, 2015). The individualistic tendencies mean millennial employees value their ability to contribute and their feeling of involvement in their work (Anderson et al, 2016). Millennials were raised as trophy kids, desire to pursue the things that they want, and they believe in their abilities. Employers and managers need to support the individualistic behaviors of their millennial employees and offer opportunities for personal growth.

Recognition and involvement. While millennial employees excel in individualistic endeavors, they also yearn for involvement and recognition. Millennial employees are attracted to organizations that promote employee recognition and involvement (Catano & Hines, 2016). Being involved means the employers accord millennial employees the opportunities to participate in decision-making activities especially when the issues affect them (Dimitrou & Blum, 2015). Also, millennials expect rewards and recognition for their accomplishments (Pinzaru & Mitan, 2016). Managing millennial employees requires creating an environment of respect, recognition, fairness, growth, and encourages involvement (Fork & Yeung, 2016). Goal-oriented millennial employees achieve great things for themselves and their organizations. It is, therefore, essential for business leaders to recognize the contributions of their millennial workforce and to keep them involved in their jobs.

Leadership Support and Influence

Business leaders and management teams have a very important role to play to help their millennial employees thrive in their careers. Desy et al. (2017) believed in the importance of building a bridge between millennials and their leadership team as well as with their peers of older generations. Hall (2016) also observed that the need for millennial employees to have a close relationship with their team leaders comes from their similar relationship with their parents. Business leaders and management teams are the persons in authority whom millennial employees can count on for influence and guidance. It is, therefore, a vital training program to arm the business leaders and management teams with the understanding of their millennial employees' characteristics,

tendencies, learning preferences, and work values. The business leaders and management teams can further provide support and influence through several aspects of employment.

Preventing job burnout. The type of support and relationship millennial employees have with their team leaders can influence their success in their jobs. In fact, Jiang and Yang (2016) highlighted the need for the compatibility between the management style and the employees' psychological characteristics to relieve job burnout of the employees especially with millennials. Job burnout can cause employees to have health issues such as the feeling of weariness after an exhaustive use of energy, apathy and indifference from the task ahead, and to believe that they are incompetent (Tong, Wang, & Peng, 2015). There is an academic and general interest in job burnout among generation Y millennials despite limited research (Jiang & Yang, 2016). Unless academicians do more empirical studies on job burnout among millennials, and business leaders establish proactive measures to help alleviate stress among their millennial employees, it is very likely that the rate of suicides among millennials will continue to go unabated.

As job burnout and its consequences are a reality in today's workforce, business leaders and management teams need to further address this to alleviate stresses and health concerns of their millennial employees. Jiang and Yang (2016) examined millennials in China and discovered that work overload and work ambiguity add to job burnout while leadership support, co-worker support, and job autonomy may prevent job burnout. Organizational leaders must get to know their employees' burnout experiences and mental processes to be able to respond and intercede effectively (Tong et al., 2015).

Leadership support, harmonious workplace relationships, and the ability to work independently can lead to a higher chance of assuaging job burnout. Appropriate and timely intervention can also help millennial employees succeed in their positions.

Personalized job motivation. Small business leaders can use the knowledge of the characteristics, values, and tendencies of their millennial employees to motivate them. Hammer (2015) discussed that millennial employees who like to get things done and have a close relationship with their superiors could flourish in their careers as a motivated workforce. Campione (2015) explained that the need for a more personalized feeling within an organization is evident as millennial employees' preferences. Furthermore, millennials, according to Campione (2015), prefer smaller firms because they can get closer supervision, attention and more personalized feedback, and career development guidance compared to being employed in a larger organization. Millennial workers desire a connection with their managers and supervisors, and they, in fact, want their team leaders to be their coaches or mentors (Gilley, Waddell, Hall, Jackson, & J. Gilley, 2015; Meola, 2016). It is then necessary for business leaders and members of management teams to understand that motivating their millennial workforce may require a more individualized approach. As millennial employees receive personalized attention and feedback, they thrive in their positions.

Extrinsic over intrinsic motivation. There are two types of motivators: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivators are rewards that come from within such as achievement and development, while extrinsic motivators are external rewards like bonuses or promotions (R. Singh 2016). Ertas (2015) argued that millennial employees

prefer extrinsic over intrinsic rewards. Chen and Lian (2015) supported the idea that

millennial workers prefer extrinsic rewards such as money to support their lifestyle and

work-life balance preference. Lin et al. (2015) tested the relationship between utilitarian

(extrinsic) motivators and job performance in a Chinese context. Lin et al. (2015)

discovered that millennial employees who prefer extrinsic motivators perform better in

in-role performance to maximize direct benefits (salary increase or bonuses) as well as in

extra-role performance to achieve more significant indirect benefits (improved standing

in the workplace or competitiveness for promotion). Business leaders can learn from this

concept so that they can further support the utilitarian or extrinsic motivation preferences

of their results-oriented millennial workers. Millennials can perform well in their

positions if given the rewards that may mean more to them.

Job autonomy. Millennial employees also value job autonomy. While millennial

workers value a closer relationship with their superiors and cherish receiving constant

feedback from their team leaders, they still prefer working with some aspects of

autonomy in their job. Henstra and McGowan (2016) explained that millennial

employees have less interest in intrinsic motivation and prefer a healthy work-life balance

including autonomy from supervision. Job autonomy is the ability to decide, determine

the goals, plan, schedule, and implement independently (Jiang & Yang, 2016). However,

Park (2016) warned that job autonomy might not have the same employee outcomes for

all organizations. There is still a gap in literature as to the effects of job autonomy to

individual employee outcomes in relation to a business strategy context. Business leaders

should carefully understand a healthy balance between constant feedback and supervision

and job autonomy.

With job autonomy, millennial employees can take ownership of their work. As millennial employees like to get involved in their organization and contribute to decision-making activities (Catano & Hines, 2016; Dimitrou & Blum, 2015), job autonomy, according to Park (2016), is how business leaders value the work and contributions of their employees towards organizational goals. Millennial workers do not take responsibilities lightly. They value increased responsibilities with job autonomy and the ability to tackle challenges to get things done (Jiang & Yang, 2016). One of the reasons millennial employees succeed is if they have autonomy in their jobs and can work independently to utilize their skills.

There are some emotional and psychological considerations as to why employees prefer job autonomy. For example, there is a correlation between the absence of job autonomy and the feeling of work pressure in some individuals, or the inability to achieve job objectives when there is lack of job autonomy for millennial employees (Jiang & Yang, 2016). If employees have the autonomy to decide on how they complete their work and gain support for their decisions, they can produce more innovative ideas (Woods, 2016). Sometimes, employees experience hierarchical plateau, or face dim prospect of promotion in their current workplace. Managers can help their employees re-identify work fitness by granting job autonomy (Xie, Xin, & Bai, 2016). Job autonomy reduces stress, and when employees perform autonomously they are also able to trust their organization more (Cho & Song, 2017). Job autonomy can have significant emotional positive effects on millennial employees. Business leaders should seek to understand the

job autonomy preference of their employees to help them prosper in their jobs.

On the other hand, job autonomy may also become a hindrance to success. Gov (2015) argued that empowering and giving job autonomy to employees might even give them a sense of competence that may result in lowered pay satisfaction. Since job autonomy is an intrinsic motivator and millennials prefer extrinsic rewards, job autonomy may not be as effective to some millennial employees. R. Singh (2016) recommended understanding the job autonomy preferences of the employees and providing them the leeway to decide on their work without micromanagement from their superiors, but with clear accountability. Millennial employees can utilize their skills and their ability to work independently. However, business leaders and management teams must also communicate work expectations and hold their millennial employees accountable.

Job satisfaction. Aside from job motivation, it is also important to ensure job satisfaction of millennial employees. Recruiting the best talents in the market is not the end of a hiring manager's job. Job satisfaction is the employees' overall assessment of their workplace, how they feel about their jobs, and, upon weighing alternatives, they arrive at a conclusion of the quality of their employments (Campione, 2015). Millennial workforce has specific expectations of their jobs and their workplace, including placing an importance on their ability to improve their skills, work on challenging tasks, and opportunities for promotions (Boysen et al., 2016). Boysen et al. (2016) explained that if businesses fail to meet these expectations millennial employees may leave their jobs. In essence, upon evaluating their job situation, millennial employee decides on whether to continue being employed in their current workplace or to look for a job elsewhere. Job

satisfaction, therefore, is related to job retention.

There are several ways to support job satisfaction of millennial workforce. Supervisors that provide constant feedback support job satisfaction and employment longevity (Hammer, 2015). Work values influence the job satisfaction of the employees (Kuron et al., 2015). Millennials also look for good communication between their peers and their leadership teams as an indicator of job satisfaction in the workplace (Hall, 2016). Millennial workers enjoy infusing fun in the workplace as a predictor of job satisfaction, which includes fun job activities, leaders promoting a fun workplace, and coworker socialization (Tews et al., 2015). Smith and Nichols (2015) explained that since millennial employee strives to overachieve, they value mentoring and opportunities to enhance their jobs and, as a result, increases their job satisfaction. Business leaders and members of the management teams need to understand the distinct job satisfaction of their millennial employees. Through relationship building and open communication, they can glean valuable information and help support their millennial employees in their job assessment towards a satisfactory conclusion.

Job satisfaction is different for the different generational cohorts in the workplace today. Understanding the job satisfaction of the diverse workforce requires particular and distinctive managerial attention and knowledge to support the various working styles of each generation of employees (Lewis & Wescott, 2017). Lewis and Wescott (2017) added as it relates to job satisfaction, it is essential for managers and business leaders to create dynamic, collaborative teams through the recognition of organizational skills diversity resulting to increased production, work proficiency, and job satisfaction. The

work culture and values of the older generation may not fit with the values of millennials. For example, one way to create a dynamic, virtual collaborative cross-generation team is to encourage each generation of employees to utilize their strengths in helping solve intricate business problems (Ferri-Reed, 2014b). In case of millennial employees, business leaders can provide the technological hardware to allow them to perform well and enjoy their work. Business leaders may bring their organizations forward by using the diversity of talents and by supporting the job satisfaction of all generational cohorts in the workplace.

Job retention. To retain their best talent and prevent costly employee turnovers, it is an essential task of employers to support job retention. Aruna and Anitha (2015) posited that the generation Y employees value six job retention enablers that include mentoring, career advancement, job satisfaction, involvement, work environment, and nature of work. Researchers have long recommended several job retention strategies such as improving training and development programs, increasing compensation, and providing career development paths, but business leaders can also use several job motivation strategies useful for managing millennial employees such as work engagement and extrinsic rewards (Deery & Jago, 2015). Management teams can initiate conversations with their millennial employees, and craft policies that can help increase retention rates since the needs of each employee may vary from their peers. Managers and supervisors have the ultimate task of job retention.

Business leaders and members of the management teams can create a work climate that can support job retention. According to Thompson and Gregory (2012),

millennial employees leave their managers, not their jobs, if they are not happy. Therefore, the kind of leadership support and relationship can determine the job motivation and retention for the generation Y workers (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Leadership styles used towards the older generations may not be as effective when used towards millennial employees, so Nolan (2015) suggested customizing leadership strategies to meet the demands of their millennial employees when it comes to job retention. Some leadership supports needed to help retain millennial workers include looking past the common negative stereotypes and assisting them with their career development goals, creating a work environment that fosters meaningful and trustful peer interaction, and endorsing job autonomy (Nolan, 2015). Establishing and maintaining a healthy relationship with generation Y employees is a key to successfully leading an organization. Job motivation and job satisfaction both have a goal of retaining employees.

Millennials and Their Organizational Commitment

The volatility of job retention for millennial workers due to their misunderstood workplace values and learning preferences is a sign for an overall assessment of ways to keeping them employed for a long time. Breaking down barriers brought about by negative stereotypes towards them, resolving management frustrations, concerns, and cynicism, and adjusting management styles can help lead millennial workers to be successful in their positions, keep them employed for a long time, and can affect their commitment to their organizations. Smith and Nichols (2015) underscored the importance of learning more about job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees especially since millennials have come to meld with the older generations in

the workplace. Also, managers must understand what satisfies and motivates millennial employees to attract the best talents and keep them employed (Smith & Nichols, 2015). If employees have a strong commitment to their organizations, they go above and beyond the expectations of their performance description (Anggraeni, Dwiatmadja, & Yuniawan, 2017). Organizational commitment in essence is a psychological contract between the employer and the employee where personal and organizational values create results that inspire mutual trust. For example, millennial employee who seeks continual meaning and a sense of purpose in their jobs also wants their organizations to behave in a socially responsible manner (Martin & Ottemann, 2015). Business leaders can seek to understand the work and personal values of their millennial employees to learn how to lead them positively and effectively. When millennial employees show commitment to their organizations, they also stay employed for a long term.

In a study whether organizational commitment across generational cohorts has to do with age or education, Jones (2015) discovered that there were no differences in organizational commitment among nurses from various generations (age), but nurses with different qualifications (education) demonstrated varying levels of organizational commitment. For example, baby boomers with a bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing showed the highest levels of organizational commitment. Jones (2015), however, also noticed that work preferences varied from different generations with millennials working smarter rather than harder, placing importance on work-life balance, and they utilize their technological skills and best practices that benefit the organization. Due to differences in organizational commitment across generations, it is vital for business

leaders and members of the management teams to understand the various needs of their employees and support their distinct expectations to remain committed in their jobs and their places of work.

Unleashing the Best Potential of Millennial Workers

Meeting millennials where they are and realizing their preferences and tendencies are crucial to unleashing their best potential. The negative stereotype of millennials will not help an organization; tapping on the best qualities of millennial workforce can help teams succeed. Business leaders need to take into consideration the psychological factors affecting the motivation of workers, their productivity, work autonomy, social concerns, and interpersonal relationships in the workplace as these can drive productivity for the organization (R. Singh, 2016). Furthermore, business leaders need to understand the hierarchy of motivations of their employees and the degree to which an employee values each aspect of their job–from the basic units of safety and belongingness to higher degrees of self-esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1994). Lastly, business leaders and management teams need to understand the generational differences, dynamics at play, and to foster effective communication and collaboration among members of different generations to improve company performance (Njore & Yazdanifard, 2014). Since different generations have different shared values, motivating employees also require strategic steps to ensure efficiency while finding that common core that everyone can share together since employees, regardless of generations they belong to, are motivated by reasonably similar things in the workplace (Njore & Yazdanifard, 2014). By understanding the unique traits, preferences, and values of millennial worker, business

leaders can implement motivation programs and create work environment that are effective in bringing out the best in each employee.

Transition

In this section, I discussed the background, nature, and importance of studying the effective strategies business leaders use to motivate their millennial employees. Through an extensive literature review, I also discussed the iconic history, common negative stereotypes, learning preferences, characteristics, and work values of millennial workers. In Section 2, I described my role as the researcher and the importance of adhering to the strict ethical research standards as spelled out by Belmont Report and Walden University's IRB. I discussed the data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, and the process I took in data analysis. In addition, I explained the procedures I took to achieve reliability and validity of the study, which includes steps in ensuring dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I describe my role as the researcher and how to adhere to strict

ethical standards as spelled out by Belmont Report and the Walden University IRB. I

discuss the data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization

technique, and the process I take in data analysis. Also, I explain the procedures I make

to achieve the reliability and validity of the study, which includes steps in ensuring

dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

Purpose Statement

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that

small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees effectively. The target

population for this study consisted of four small business leaders from restaurant

businesses located in eastern North Carolina who have successfully led and motivated a

millennial workforce. The implications for positive social change included the potential

to promote understanding of the characteristics, values, and preferences of millennials

that may eliminate negative perceptions towards them. Fostering acceptance and

knowledge of millennials, business leaders and community members can provide

opportunities for millennials to achieve their highest potential and allow them to make a

positive difference in the world.

Role of the Researcher

It is crucial for researchers to understand their role in the entire research

development to maintain objectivity in the study. In a qualitative study, the researcher is

the data collection instrument, and it is vital to assess the researcher's role in the process

(Orange, 2016). The researcher will collect data from participants and organizations in their normal daily situations, make appropriate arrangements to become an observer, and follow proper organizational procedures including observance of participants' work schedule (Yin, 2014). I collected data by administering semistructured and open-ended interviews to study participants in their workplaces previously set up through an agreed schedule. I adjusted to the comfort and needs of each participant, and I was flexible in accommodating their availability.

A researcher must carefully examine the researcher-participant relationship to encourage the free flow of conversation and the generation of knowledge (Berry, 2016). While I do not have any personal or professional relationship with any of the participants, I built trust with them by ensuring they knew who I am and my background. It was also important that the participants understood my purpose of my study, and they were comfortable. I had them sign an informed consent form that contained an overview of the study, so they understood the nature and purpose of the research.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979) published the Belmont Report aimed at outlining ethical and safety guidelines for researchers using human subjects. The report includes respect for participants' anonymity, protection for individuals with *diminished autonomy* or those who are unable to make self-determination, voluntary participation, providing adequate information to participants, ensuring the well-being of the participants, and justice in participant selection without prejudice to social class (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). The protection of persons with *diminished autonomy* includes children, incapacitated

individuals, and other vulnerable persons (Harrison & Gannon, 2015). No children took part in the study and neither any incapacitated nor vulnerable participant. Study subjects should participate voluntarily and provide truthful and useful information (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). I did not coerce any participant to join the study, and I observed confidentiality in all knowledge shared. The Belmont Report's principle of justice pertains to risks and perks equally distributed among participants (Bromley et al., 2015). I did not provide any form of remuneration, expressed or implied. I did not harm any participant, and I ensured all participants were comfortable. I abided by the guidelines set forth by Walden University's IRB in conducting this study.

In qualitative studies, it is essential for the researcher to check for personal biases that may affect data collection and interpretation. Checking for personal biases in research procedure is vital because these biases may influence the process a researcher selects the study setting, participants, data collection, and in interpreting the data (Orange, 2016). I reflected on my personal views regarding the subject matter and removed my own opinions from the study. As an objective researcher, I documented my research process appropriately by utilizing a voice recorder and notes.

Interviewing participants is a core process of qualitative research. A researcher conducts interviews with a purpose of understanding the meaning of human experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Interview protocols are important in qualitative research with interviews. With interview protocols, the researcher can ensure that the interview questions align with the research questions and that the interview is not only conversational but also inquiry-driven (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview questions

in this study were simple, concise, and answerable and aligned with the research question. After the interview, I conducted member checking by letting participants review my notes and their answers to the interview questions for accuracy and provided an opportunity for them to clarify or make follow up responses.

Participants

A researcher must lay out protocol and criteria in selecting the population. Consequently, a researcher must use a system to identify the study participants that can best provide the most precise data (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). Alase (2017) also suggested that the researcher must determine a selection of participants that can corroborate or refute a case or a phenomenon. According to Gelling (2015), the researcher may employ inclusion and exclusion criteria to reach an adequate size of participants that can reflect research objectives. The participants in this study were small business leaders in restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina. Eligibility requirements for the participants include having a minimum of 2 years full-time small business leadership experience, at least three millennial subordinates, and implemented successful strategies that they are using to motivate millennial employees.

After a researcher identifies the criteria for study participants, it is also important to determine strategies for gaining access to participants. Before a researcher can gain access to the research site and the participants, the researcher secures ethics approval from the university to ensure the safety of study participants (Gelling, 2015). The researcher enters into a formal agreement with the participant with regards to rules surrounding the research activities (Talamo, Mellini, Camilli, Ventura, & Di Lucchio,

2016). Aside from getting informed consent from all participants, the IRB will also issue formal approval of the proposed research (Yin, 2014). I sent an invitation to the participants with detailed information on the nature of my study. I asked for a signed letter of participation allowing me to conduct a research study in their businesses. I secured a signed informed consent from each participant using a template that I created. Moreover, the Walden IRB approved my proposal before I accessed the participants.

After getting organizational approval, a researcher may contact participants for their study. Fostering individual rapport with the participants by discussing the plans and goals of the study is a vital part of building mutual trust (Talamo et al., 2016). Alase (2017) added that allowing the study participants to get to know the researcher and the researcher's trustworthiness may put the participants at ease. Researchers can build rapport with the participants before and during the interview through trust and respect (Agula, Barrett, & Tobi, 2015). In a letter of invitation, I detailed the nature and value of the study, the participation requirements, and a link to my LinkedIn profile. The link to my LinkedIn profile was essential so that the study participants got to know me ahead of time. After identifying the participants and informed consent forms I received, I set up a time and place for the interview. I also reinforced the value of the study and expectations during the face-to-face interview. In all my interactions I showed respect, empathy, and interest in hearing what the participants have said. I also explained the confidentiality and safety of the participants as well as their ability to withdraw from the study at any time.

Research Method and Design

I chose to conduct the study using a qualitative method and a multiple case study design. Several factors influence a researcher's decision to utilize any research method and design. This section contains justification for the chosen research approach.

Research Method

A researcher goes through a planning and discerning process in determining the proper research approach. In selecting the research process, a researcher considers the research question, the literature review, the researcher's know-how, and the practicality of seeing the study through its completion (Gelling, 2015). A qualitative researcher poses *what* and *how* questions in an attempt to understand observed processes and lived human experiences in a specific situation or context, rather than using *effect* and *influence* more commonly used in quantitative research (Doody & Bailey, 2016). The goal of the qualitative researcher is to connect with the readers using impartial, dependable, and essential knowledge (Kruth, 2015). A qualitative researcher can still show rigor and reliability by following systematic procedures in data collection and interpretation, conceptualizations, data analysis using computer programs, and in ensuring verifiability against established theories (Petrescu & Lauer, 2017). By understanding the nature of the research question, a researcher can identify the best method to use. A qualitative research methodology was the best methodology for conducting my study due to the following considerations.

A researcher can employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach. In the study of human experiences and behaviors, a qualitative researcher does not use

statistics (Rudnick, 2014). A quantitative researcher highlights the comparison and relationship of variables such as cause-effect (Doody & Bailey, 2016). To compare, a qualitative researcher understands human experiences by examining themes while a quantitative researcher tests a theory by analyzing numerical data (Gelling, 2015). A mixed-methods researcher uses the elements of qualitative and quantitative research procedures in collecting and analyzing data in one study (Wanqing & Watanabe-Galloway, 2014). I chose a qualitative method because of the nature of the research question, which was to understand strategies that small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees. I asked *what* and *how* questions with an objective of exploring small business leader experiences and strategies in motivating millennial employees. While I did not hypothesize a theory or tested the relationship of variables such as to cause and effect, I used established scientific procedures in data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Research Design

After identifying the method of study, a researcher selects the best research design to follow. A research design is a strategy a researcher undertakes to connect the research question into a conclusion (Yin, 2014). A researcher uses a research design as a detailed procedure for collecting and analyzing data, and the process of inquiry to answer the overarching research question (Ngulube, 2015). The five research designs I considered for this study were case study, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. I used a case study design over the other four because case study was best suited for my research.

A case study is the examination of an individual or a circumstance using different angles in hopes of getting a more profound understanding of the case (Kruth, 2015). A researcher uses a case study to conduct comprehensive data collection to include interviews, observations, and the examination of documents and various recorded media to gain better knowledge and understanding of the case (Willgens et al., 2016). Moreover, a researcher uses a case study to gather information based on a context of studied phenomena (Ngulube, 2015; Percy, K. Kostere, & Kostere, 2015; Ridder, 2017). I used a case study design because I intended to understand small business leaders in the restaurant sector in their successful motivation strategies of millennial workers. I aimed to study individual perspectives and experiences and collected data through interviews.

I selected a case study from five study designs because a case study was the best suited in my research project. A phenomenology researcher studies the lived and shared experiences of individuals to gain meaning within a phenomenon (Alase, 2017; Percy et al., 2015). A researcher uses a phenomenological research design to understand the *essence* of the experience within the phenomenon (Willgens et al., 2016). A narrative researcher also seeks to understand the lived experiences rooted in sociology and anthropology (Willgens et al., 2016). The narratives, akin to storytelling, involves a chronological description of events (Kruth, 2015). A narrative inquiry involves understanding and interpretation of the transaction between humans, as a society, and the world around them (Carmel-Gilfilen & Portillo, 2016). The absence of a phenomenon made this research design inadequate for this study. Moreover, since I was not

interpreting human transactional and historical experiences, I did not use narrative inquiry.

Grounded theory and ethnography were, likewise, not a good fit for my study. A grounded theory researcher develops an argument or tests a theory based upon sociological progress and development (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015; Willgens et al., 2016). The source of data for the theory generation evolved over a period of time (Percy et al., 2015). Since I did not generate nor tested theory, I did not use grounded theory design. On the other hand, an ethnography researcher studies human actions within a culture identifying demonstrated patterns (Kruth, 2015). Human activities and behaviors in an ethnography study include beliefs and practices shared within a culture (Percy et al., 2015). Observation of cultural behaviors is one of the primary sources of data for ethnography (Willgens et al., 2016). Ethnography was not appropriate for this study because I did not study a culture.

It is essential for a qualitative researcher to ensure data saturation. Data saturation means a researcher has gathered all pertinent information necessary to complete the study (van Rijnsoever, 2017). A researcher cannot quickly determine data saturation based on any number of study participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). Data saturation may become difficult to achieve when having a large sample due to the enormous amount of time and resources needed to analyze and interpret data (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). A researcher may have gathered adequate data when no new information emerges from interviews

(Hancock et al., 2016). I ensured data saturation by identifying recurring themes. I reached data saturation when I could no longer identify new information.

Population and Sampling

A population is a group of individuals who share common characteristics and identifying the population at the early stage of research is crucial (Asiamah et al., 2017). Selecting a sample population should mirror homogeneity present among the participants (Alase, 2017). The population in this multiple case study included small business leaders in restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina who met the participant criteria. I employed purposeful sampling for this research study. Researchers use purposeful sampling for most research studies that are not meant to be exhaustive as if they can gather enough data to answer their primary research question (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). Through purposeful sampling, a researcher identifies a population that can provide ample information for a comprehensive study (Gentles et al., 2015; van Rijnsoever, 2017) as well as selects individuals or groups that can best share knowledge and experience about a case or a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). An individual with the knowledge and experience in using effective strategies to motivate millennial workers can help address the central research question. Identifying the study population is a step a researcher needs to take to determine the sample size required.

I selected four participants in this study to gather in-depth data. A qualitative researcher's goal is to gain an understanding from participants who can share an in-depth knowledge with regards to the research questions (Asiamah et al., 2017). Qualitative

researchers use smaller sample sizes and ensure data saturation (Gentles, 2015). Data

saturation is the determining factor in the adequacy of qualitative sample size.

I interviewed small business leaders, and I ensured data saturation. A qualitative

researcher can reach data saturation when no new information emerges from the data

(Hancock et al., 2016; Kline, 2017). To reach data saturation, the researcher must ask

multiple participants the same interview questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). When the

researcher no longer receives new information, data are sufficient (El Hussein, Jakubex,

& Osuji, 2015). I encoded the participant responses into categories for coding. When I

could no longer see the emergence of new themes, I had sufficient data and reached data

saturation.

A researcher narrows down the target population by establishing participation

criteria. A researcher selects fewer interviewees who are accessible and can provide

detailed information on a research topic (Asiamah et al., 2017). A researcher determines

the criteria for selecting participants such as tenure, gender, or type of business

(Anderson, 2010). I interviewed participants who have small business leadership roles at

restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina. To be eligible, the participants

must meet the following criteria: a minimum of 2-year fulltime small business leadership

experience, at least three millennial subordinates, and implemented successful strategies

that they are using to motivate millennial employees. The criteria were appropriate to

ensure richness in information contingent with my goal of exploring strategies that small

business leaders use to motivate a millennial workforce effectively.

Aside from determining criteria for selecting participants, it is also vital to

identify and assess the appropriateness of the interview setting. One of the roles of the researcher being the data collection instrument is to observe, so it is essential to interview participants in a real-life environment (George, Kruger, & Tennant, 2012). The researcher needs to make special arrangements to ensure participants' comfort and availability in their natural context (Yin, 2014). Interview location is an important aspect a researcher must consider to ensure participants are receptive and comfortable (Ecker, 2017). I scheduled a 1-hour interview with each participant at a time and place that were convenient for them. I arranged to conduct the interviews in a private room without any distraction (such as TVs, radios, or coworkers) and with a table where I placed my voice recorder and made notes. The privacy ensured participants could speak freely.

Ethical Research

A researcher observes several ethical considerations with the goal of protecting human subjects. A researcher must adhere to strict ethical standards in conducting any study and must follow the minimum guidelines provided by the Belmont Report (Bromley et al., 2015). I secured informed consent from all participants before conducting the study. Informed consent includes the ability of participants to understand, think, and eventually consent to a research study, and the participant is deemed to have the autonomous ability to make a capable and sound decision (Kadam, 2017). It is also best to include verbiage in an informed consent where participants can withdraw from the study at any time since participating in the study is at the discretion of the participant (Sil & Das, 2017). Those who responded to e-mail invitations received an informed consent form. The informed consent form listed my purpose of the study, approximate length of

the interview, a statement on the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, how to withdraw from the study, and the interview questions. I set up an interview with each participant by calling them, emailing them, or visiting them directly. At the beginning of the interview, I reminded each participant that they might withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty by sending a verbal notification to me. After I receive such notification, I would confirm with the participant of their official withdrawal and assure them that I would immediately destroy all records of their participation. Researchers must consider the ethical implications of providing incentives to attract and retain study participants, and consider the policies set forth by Institutional Review Boards or IRB (Abshire et al., 2017). Since Walden University's IRB prohibits incentivizing participants, I did not provide any form of incentives or remuneration to the study participants. I indicated in the recruitment letter and informed consent form that I would not offer payments or remuneration to the study participants.

Part of my obligation was to assure the ethical protection of participants. I attempted to seek the participation of nonvulnerable adults for this study. I ensured that participants had a full understanding of their part in this study as outlined in the recruitment letter (see Appendix A) and informed consent form including a statement on voluntary participation without any type of incentive and assurance of confidentiality for all information shared. If a participant withdraws from the study at any time, I would immediately destroy all info from that participant. I stored all documents, transcripts, and recordings in a locked, fireproof safe for 5 years. After the 5-year period, I will adequately destroy all files, transcripts, and records, both electronic and hard copies. I

kept all personally identifiable information confidential to include names, background information, and the participants' responses. Instead of using the names of participants, I used numerical codes assigned to each participant to ensure confidentiality. The Walden University approval number for this study is IRB 09-10-18-0634593 and expires on September 9, 2019.

Data Collection Instruments

A researcher identifies the instruments needed in collecting data. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Orange, 2016). Other data collection process includes interviews, focus groups, observing, and reviewing company records (Rimando et al., 2015). Aside from interviews, a researcher may also collect data from written reports and other formats to gather information from the participants (Willgens et al., 2016). I used semistructured interviews in collecting data for my study. To conduct triangulation of data, I also reviewed company records including company websites and social media.

I crafted each interview question in a way that addressed the research question. Qualitative researchers most commonly use the interview in collecting data (Wilson, Onwuegbhuzie, & Manning, 2016). To maintain the quality of data collected, a researcher implements data collection protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). A researcher may also include essential items in data collection protocol such as plans on catering to the scheduling needs of the participants, listing the interview questions, and making observation notes during interviews (Yin, 2014). After I set up the interview schedules, I began the data collection process of conducting semistructured, open-ended interviews

using seven interview questions (see Appendix C) developed to explore strategies that

small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees. I also reviewed company

records such as training and curriculum the company uses relating to motivating

millennial employees, performance improvement plans, coaching/mentoring notes,

measured key deliverables showing successes, management assessments, and

documented customer feedback as well as company websites and social media.

To enhance reliability and validity of data collection, I used member checking.

Member checking is a way to improve the reliability and validity of data collection

instrument (Hadi & Closs, 2016). A researcher uses member checking by providing a

transcript of the interview to the participants to ensure that the researcher represents the

participants and their concepts accurately (Simpson, 2016). Furthermore, a researcher

conducts member checking to ensure accuracy and credibility of the data collection

process (Boswell, Wilson, Stark, & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Therefore, after each interview,

I provided the participant the chance to review my notes and make changes to their

answers to the interview questions before leaving the meeting. After I completed

conducting all interviews, I sent the recorded conversations to TranscribeMe for

professional transcription into written texts. I could analyze the data collected properly by

using written texts.

Data Collection Technique

The primary research question of this study was the following: What strategies do

small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees? The data collection

technique for this study included interviews with four small business leaders from four

restaurant businesses and a review of their records such as training and curriculum the

company uses relating to motivating millennial employees, performance improvement

plans, coaching/mentoring notes, measured key deliverables showing successes,

management assessments, and documented customer feedback as well as company

website and social media. According to Yin (2014), the six sources of evidence for a case

study research are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations,

participant-observation, and physical artifacts. A researcher may use an interview

protocol to keep data collection free from bias (Palacios-Ceña et al., 2017). A researcher

uses a semistructured interview to understand the contextual perspective of participants'

experiences (Shelton, Mort, & Smith, 2016). I used semistructured interviews with open-

ended questions so that I could gain a better understanding of small business leaders'

strategies in motivating their millennial employees. Moreover, through semistructured

interviews, the study participants contributed knowledge on concepts that were important

to them (O'Keefe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic, & Sinha, 2016). I asked the participants to

schedule 1 hour for the face-to-face interview. I met the participants at a previously

agreed location, and I used a voice recorder to record the interview. There was also a

portion in the interview protocol to write down detailed notes of my observations. I also

reviewed company documentation to triangulate evaluation of data sources.

There are several advantages of a face-to-face interview. Gardiner, Allen, Moeke-

Maxwell, Robinson, and Gott (2016) explained that one of the benefits of face-to-face

interviews is the ability of the researchers to engage with the study participants. Through

face-to-face interviews, the researchers can help in building rapport compared to

telephone interviews (Oates, 2014). Also, Gardiner et al. (2016) posited that researchers using face-to-face interviews help make the participants confident in participating. Crothers (2015) agreed that researchers using face-to-face interviews could gather an ample amount of data. During the face-to-face interviews, I also got an opportunity to review company records that study participants elected to share that could help answer the research question.

I recorded the interview and utilized the service of TranscribeMe for the transcription of the recorded interview into a written transcript. I made a note in the informed consent form that I would be sending all recorded interviews to a third-party transcription service. I secured a signed confidentiality form from TranscribeMe before using their service. Qualitative researchers use member checking to allow interviewees to substantiate or reject the content of interview transcript (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). Member checking is part of the process that ensures accuracy, trustworthiness, and transparency of a research study (Hadi & Closs, 2016; Morar et al., 2015). As part of member checking, I gave each participant a chance to review interview notes and their answers to interview questions so they could make necessary corrections while they were still in the room. Through member checking, the study participants clarified answers given and made appropriate modifications as needed to reflect their original intent. I began data collection after IRB approval.

Data Organization Technique

It is also necessary for a researcher to establish techniques in data organization. It is a challenge for students to create a considerable amount of qualitative data while

working with finite time and resources (Fraser, 2015). Data organization techniques is an approach of a qualitative researcher to organize and properly store data collected so that the researcher can easily access data for analysis, evaluation, and validation (Tripathi, Shukla, & Sonker, 2017). I searched literature from the Walden Library, and I downloaded and saved them on a password protected computer. I created a spreadsheet of articles listing the article title, author names, year of publication, journal name, and keywords for easy referencing.

For collecting data from study participants, I conducted semistructured interviews and recorded the responses using a voice recorder. I also used interview notes to record highlights of participants' answers for their review after the interview. Since I collected an enormous amount of data through interviews, I used TranscribeMe third-party transcription service to convert recorded speeches into written texts. I secured a confidentiality agreement before utilizing this service (see Appendix D). Qualitative researchers use software such as NVivo for ease of data organization and retrieval and to add credibility to a research study in the audience perspective (Rodik & Primorac, 2015). Researchers use NVivo to handle qualitative data better such as being able to store, code, and organize (Barnett, Hoang, Stuart, & Crocombe, 2015). I used NVivo to find themes from the interviews and properly coded the data until no new emerging themes had emerged and I had reached data saturation.

I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of data collected through interviews. Researchers use member checking to give the study participants the opportunity to confirm their contribution so that the researchers accurately represent

original intents of the participants (Ang, Embi, & Yunus, 2016; Delmas & Ivankova, 2018; Simpson & Quigley, 2016). I also created a spreadsheet listing the study participants identified only by their code names to hide identity, scheduled interview, place of interview, date of member checking, and other pertinent information. I kept track of the progress of each participant in this study by using a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is password protected. If a participant withdraws from the study at any time, I would immediately destroy all information from that participant. A researcher must consider the importance of anonymity of participants and the control of data collected due to the sensitive nature of participants' contributions (Alami, 2015). Childs, McLeod, Lomas, and Cook (2014) raised concerns about the protection of data collected and the researchers' control of data sharing or reuse. I would not reuse in the future any data collected in this study. I stored all documents, transcripts, and recordings in a locked, fireproof safe for 5 years. After the 5-year period, I will adequately erase all documents, transcripts, and recordings, both electronic and hard copies.

Data Analysis

Data triangulation of data sources was an appropriate data analysis process for this case study. A researcher uses data triangulation to analyze data from more than one source of evidence (Yin, 2014). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data triangulation improves the accuracy of study findings. Ang et al. (2016) discussed that researchers maintain credibility and achieve trustworthiness in their work through triangulation of multiple data sources. I analyzed data from semistructured interviews and from a review of company records such as training and curriculum the company uses relating to

motivating millennial employees, performance improvement plans, coaching/mentoring notes, measured key deliverables showing successes, management assessments, and documented customer feedback. I also analyzed recorded observations as notated in the interview protocol.

I used Morse's (1994) stages of data analysis of (a) comprehending, (b) synthesizing, (c) theorizing, and (d) recontextualizing. The comprehension stage started as soon as I began gathering data. Comprehending involves gathering data through interviews a researcher will use to describe and write a research study (Morse, 1994). After conducting semistructured interviews, I used TranscribeMe third-party transcription service to convert recorded interviews into written texts. I secured a signed confidentiality agreement with the vendor and reviewed the transcript for accuracy.

The utilization of technology in data collection and analysis was appropriate. A researcher may utilize any computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) in handling, managing, and manipulating large amounts of data (Houghton et al., 2015). I transferred the transcript into NVivo qualitative data analysis software and used the tool to help with the assignment of codes and the analysis of data. A researcher may identify codes that emerge from the data (Willgens et al., 2016). Cho and Lee (2014) explained that through coding, a researcher could establish the manifest as well as underlying meanings of texts. Morse (1994) demonstrated that a researcher might use NVivo to unearth concepts and to expose thoughts within the texts. I utilized NVivo qualitative data analysis software in coding data and generating themes. However, the

actual analysis of data depended on my research skills as NVivo was only a tool that aided me.

The second stage in data analysis was synthesizing which involved synthesizing the data and organizing it so that a researcher could code the data appropriately. A researcher synthesizes the coded data by looking for patterns and creating memos from those patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that the memos are summary statements of each code that a researcher uses to understand each data better. A qualitative researcher organizes the codes into nodes or themes and analyzes these themes as they emerge (Harif & Hoe, 2018; Houghton et al., 2015). I identified themes that developed from analyzing the codes. I organized the nodes that arose to check how these nodes or themes answered the research question.

After identifying themes, I proceeded with the third stage, which involved theorizing the data. Theorizing involved a comprehensive appraisal of the data (Morse, 1994) and an assessment of the relationships among the data (Houghton et al., 2015). I looked for relationships among these themes and their meanings. I crosschecked the themes with the literature review to demonstrate correlation with Gilbert's BEM, the conceptual framework of this study. I ensured to identify themes from participant responses that addressed the following central research question: What strategies do small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees? I asked the study participants to bring company records that contain information on strategies to motivate millennial employees successfully.

When no new themes emerged, I attained data saturation. A qualitative researcher meets data saturation when no new concepts or ideas arise (Hancock et al., 2016). Data triangulation does not only enhance the validity of the study but helps achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I triangulated data collected from the semistructured interviews and review of company records as well as my notes to look for common themes, to boost the reliability of the study, and to help achieve data saturation. The fourth stage of data analysis involved recontextualizing the data, which included the development and presentation of study findings (Morse, 1994). I will present the results and analysis in Section 3 of this doctoral study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability deals with the accuracy of a research study (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Reliability also means the dependability of a qualitative study (Dunn, Margaritis, & Anderson, 2017; Nelson, 2016). Validity in qualitative research pertains to whether the researchers examined what they intended to examine (Juros, 2011). Reliability and validity in qualitative study are not measurable. However, I complied with the following procedures to establish reliability and validity in my research project.

Reliability

I followed established procedures in qualitative research to adhere to reliability requirements of the study such us leaving an audit trail, using member checking, and data triangulation. A qualitative researcher shows consistency in procedures throughout the study to establish reliability (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). A qualitative researcher uses methodical strategies that can include audit trail, member checking, and triangulation

(Ang et al., 2016; Hadi & Closs, 2016). As part of the steps I took to ensure reliability, I documented all my activities to leave an audit trail.

Using an interview protocol will promote consistency of semistructured interview with all the participants. The utilization of an interview protocol will ensure interview questions align with the research question and the researcher's approach is inquiry-driven (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). As part of member checking, I gave the participants an opportunity to review their answers to confirm or clarify contents. Giving the study participants a chance to comment as part of member checking augments credibility of the research study (Pompeii, 2015). A researcher uses different data collection instruments such as observations, interviews, questionnaires, and document reviews to conduct triangulation (Ngulube, 2015). I used a combination of interview transcripts, analysis of company records, and personal notes in triangulating data. When no new information develops from the data, the researcher achieves data saturation (El Hussein et al., 2015; Hancock et al., 2016; Kline, 2017). I used interview protocol and consistency in asking the same interview questions to all the study participants to help reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured to follow an interview protocol for consistency. Also, I conducted membership checking and triangulation to ensure the dependability of my study.

Validity

A researcher also needs to ensure the validity of a study. A qualitative researcher upholds the validity of a research study by establishing that findings are trustworthy and defensible (Olson, McAllister, Ginnell, Walters, & Appunn, 2016). El Hussein et al.

(2015) stipulated that fittingness (transferability), auditability, credibility, trustworthiness, and saturation are all aspects of validity of a qualitative research study. I ensured the validity of my research study by establishing credibility, confirmability, and transferability in my study findings.

Credibility. A qualitative researcher ensures the credibility of a study by conducting procedures in a trustworthy manner (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). A qualitative researcher can ensure trustworthiness in research procedure by providing a detailed description of the entire research process (Hadi & Closs, 2016). According to Colorafi and Evans (2016), a qualitative researcher may also ensure the credibility of a study by triangulating data and associating discovery to a theoretical framework. Nelson (2016) added that member checking ensures credibility of a study. To achieve the credibility of the study, I triangulated data from multiple sources and used member checking. I identified new and recurring themes from data analysis so that when no new information emerged, I have reached data saturation.

Confirmability. Confirmability deals with the objectivity of a research study. Confirmability of a research study means the researcher has no bias in the study, and the researcher provided detailed description of procedures and methods taken (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Pompeii, 2015). A researcher can conduct member checking to ensure accurate representation of the participants' viewpoints and not the researcher's ideas (Nelson, 2016). A researcher can ensure the confirmability by leaving paper trails, personal journal, and detailed descriptions of research process taken (Pompeii, 2015). A researcher can also establish confirmability of a study by providing a detailed explanation

of data analysis and presentation of study findings (El Hussein et al., 2015). I used an

interview protocol to ensure that I was asking the same interview questions to all the

study participants. I triangulated data from multiple sources to get a complete picture of

the strategies that small business leaders use to motivate their millennial employees. I

also ensured that I represent the viewpoints of the study participants alone, and not mine,

by conducting member checking and allowing them to confirm, clarify, and make

comments on the interview transcripts.

   Transferability. Transferability deals with the ability of other researchers to

transfer the findings of the study to a larger setting (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Pompeii

(2015) explained that a researcher could satisfy transferability by conducting purposeful

sampling and in providing a detailed description of the process in doing the study to

include the methods use, analysis of strategies employed, and the development of

constructs. Other researchers can make a proper judgment on the transferability of study

findings to other groups or avenues. I provided a detailed explanation of each step I took

in data collection and analysis. I used an interview protocol to ask the same interview

questions to all the participants (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Data saturation is another

aspect of transferability of a study (El Hussein et al., 2015). I am leaving the

transferability of study findings to other researchers to determine.

<div align="center">

Transition and Summary

</div>

   In Section 2, I described my role as the researcher and how to adhere to strict

ethical standards as spelled out by Belmont Report and Walden University's IRB. I

discussed the data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization

technique, and the process I took in data analysis. Also, I explained the procedures I took

to achieve the reliability and validity of the study, which included steps in ensuring

dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

In Section 3, I will present the findings of my study in relation to the overarching

research question. I will discuss the emerging themes in data collection and analysis as

they relate to Gilbert's (1978) BEM. In addition, I will present my findings based on how

they apply to professional practice in business. The aim is to help improve business

practice as well as help contribute to a positive social change. Moreover, I will discuss

recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and a reflection on

my experience within the doctoral study process.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

My purpose in this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that small business leaders used to motivate their millennial employees. I conducted semistructured interviews using seven open-ended questions with four business leaders from four restaurants in eastern North Carolina. In my analysis of data, I discovered that the participant responses and my review of company records match the motivational strategies consistent with Gilbert's (1978) BEM and my review of the professional literature. Based on my data triangulation and analysis, I identified three major themes. The first was the utilization of rewards and recognition that include compliments and incentives. The second theme was building a high-quality leader–member relationship. The third theme was the implementation of professional development to include access to communication/feedback, training, and skills improvement.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study is the following: What strategies do small business leaders use to motivate millennial employees? I used methodological triangulation of all data sources to include interviews and review of company records as well as company websites and social media. I entered all data collected into NVivo 12 for Windows to identify nodes or themes. As shown in Table, 3, three themes emerged from my data analysis: (a) rewards and recognition, (b) high-quality leader–member relationship, and (c) professional development. When no new information or themes

appeared from my data analysis, I have reached data saturation. I also used member checking to ensure I represent the ideas of the participants accurately.

Table 3

Emergent Themes

Themes	Sources	References
Rewards and recognition	8	20
High-quality leader–member relationship	12	20
Professional development	17	30

Theme 1: Rewards and Recognition

The business leaders who participated in this study agree that one of the prime motivators for their millennial employees is rewards and recognition. In my analysis of data, two subthemes emerged: (a) compliments and (b) incentives. Compliments include verbal praises and written reviews while incentives include tips millennial employees receive from their customers and bonuses they receive from their company for meeting certain goals.

Table 4

Rewards and Recognition

Subthemes	Sources	References
Compliments	6	10
Incentives	2	10

Compliments. Business leaders indicated that compliments are important in keeping their millennial employees motivated. Participant 1 said, "You have to use–and also to motivate them–pretty much, basically, always be grateful and thankful for them, and let them know they are doing a great job, and compliment them." Participant 3 agreed by saying, "I praise them when they're doing really good things." Whether an

employee does an exceptional job or learns from a mistake, business leaders who give verbal compliments keep millennial employees motivated. According to Participant 4, "I just make sure that they are on the same level as me. I congratulate them. And when they make a mistake, I help correct them. And, then they get it right, we high five, and we keep it moving."

Customer reviews through websites and social media are also a way for business leaders to relay compliments from customers to their millennial employees. However, customers do not always include the names of the employees in their reviews. Participant 2 explained, "You get Google reviews, you get the Yelp reviews or complaints, but it doesn't say said person. It says 'This business did this.'" Participant 1 added, "If customers are leaving reviews either on TripAdvisor or any of those websites that provide that review information and, then, they mention the name… and, then, they provide their [server's] name like, 'Oh, such employee give me awesome service'" it would be helpful in complimenting their employee. Both praises and corrections are necessary tools in ensuring millennial employees' success in their jobs. Anderson et al. (2016) posited that managers need to have a balance in complimenting and correcting their millennial employees. An effective approach in praise and correction will help millennial employees understand how managers value their work and the ways millennial employees can always improve.

Incentives. Participants 1 and 2 both reported incentives as part of their motivational strategies. When asked about the effectiveness of implemented strategies in motivating millennial employees, Participant 1 replied, "Well, basically, here it's really

easy because you do it on–I base it on, for example, the tips they get. And that's the best

way, just on tips and basically reviews." Participant 2 also explained, "We have

incentives. We have weekly prizes. And, so those incentives and those weekly prizes

normally keep my whole crew motivated to what I need them to do." Participant 2 delved

deeper on the incentive program and how this strategy helps prevent absences among

millennial employees:

> And, then, the things that I do is, again, based off the incentives We have this
>
> thing, hours. So, the more peak hours you work, the more incentive points you
>
> receive. So, a lot of my employees don't like to call out for the peak time. Oh,
>
> they love it. They love it because my incentives are good. So they love it. The
>
> computer automatically sets goals. And, so, if they reach their goals, I let them fix
>
> their own food of their choice. So, they love the techniques that we use here.
>
> They're motivational techniques because they know what they need to get done.

According to Participant 2, it was the first time during our interview in many months that

an employee missed work during peak hours except during the hurricane event. The

incentive program seems to be working for Participant 2's team. Participant 2 also

explained the add-ons incentive:

> We have a real integrated system. And, the system spits out goals and objectives
>
> daily, weekly, and monthly. And, basically, that way I know if it's reaching them
>
> if we reach those goals…. Everything is based on add-ons. So, if a large pie is
>
> $10, you want to do some type of add-on…. When I first bought this business,
>
> there was no incentives. There were no add-ons. Now, we have incentives for

cleaning time, box folding time. So, all of the challenges were overcame by the

incentive packages that we put in. They have a system in place where they don't

have that error.

According to Participant 2, through incentives, not only would millennial employees get

the job done, but they would get the job done in a shorter period of time without any

mistake. As millennial employees do their tasks more efficiently, they are also helping

increase business sales by upselling products through the add-ons. In return, millennial

employees get incentives from the restaurant which they really love.

The participants confirm my review of the professional literature as well as

Gilbert's (1978) BEM, the conceptual framework of this study. Gilbert (1978) argued that

managers can enhance human competence by improving organizational support factors

including incentives. Managers need to ensure that incentives are satisfactory to allow

employees to perform well. Millennial employees prefer extrinsic (or tangible) rewards

over intrinsic (or intangible) rewards (Ertas, 2015; R. Singh, 2016). Millennial employees

like monetary rewards in order to support their lifestyle (Chen & Lian, 2015). On the

other hand, George and Wallio (2017) argued that while millennial workers place a high

importance on extrinsic rewards, they also find it difficult to accept corrections. Catana

and Hines (2016) added that millennials thrive in an organization that recognizes

employees. Verbal praises, customer reviews, and tangible incentives are effective

strategies in keeping millennial employees motivated. It is important for business leaders

to find ways to compliment their millennial employees, correct them in a manner that

promotes learning, and provide incentive programs tied with individual and company

goals to keep their millennial workers motivated while increasing productivity and profitability.

Theme 2: High-Quality Leader–Member Relationship

All participants reported effective leadership through a high-quality leader–member relationship as another strategy in motivating their millennial employees. Millennials have different attitudes and behaviors compared to their older coworkers. The small business leaders agreed that they need a different management style when dealing with their millennial employees. Participant 2 believed "Millennials are special. They're a different group." Participant 4 added, "Learn your employees." Participant 1 explained "Well, this is very important–the way you approach them because that's the… basically, to start building your structure. Does that make sense? So, it's got to be very important the way you approach them." There are four subthemes that emerged under high quality leader–member relationship theme: (a) respect, (b) trust, (c) support, and (d) right balance.

Table 5

High-Quality Leader–Member Relationship

Subthemes	Sources	References
Respect	3	5
Trust	3	4
Support	3	7
Right balance	3	4

Respect. The participants expressed that a respectful relationship can help motivate their millennial employees. Participant 4 underscored that millennial employees do not do well with authority:

It's kind of hard just because you're not allowed to be yourself. You can't have

the same attitude that you would with somebody just outside of work… And, that

takes a lot for some people especially when you have those that like to talk back,

or tell you what they're going to do, and how they're going to do it. Those cause

problems.

In order to overcome this challenge, Participant 4 suggested to find a different approach

in dealing with millennial employees. "And, just the way you talk to them," Participant 4

added. "That's the big thing. A lot of them, they want you to be more friend-like versus a

boss." Participant 3 agreed with Participant 4, and uses the Golden Rule:

I treat them like humans. I treat everybody equal to me. I don't treat them as

employees where I'm the manager, so I'm above them. And, to me, that's the

biggest thing. It's treating them exactly like I want to be treated by other people.

The Golden Rule, basically.

Participant 3 further explained that millennial employees respond to their leaders a whole

lot better when treated with respect. "Whether it's something they enjoy or not, they, at

least, respond to it with respect," said Participant 3. "And, just because I'm their manager

doesn't mean they have to jump down and respect me right away. I have to give them a

reason to want to respect me," Participant 3 added.

Trust. A trusting leader-millennial employee relationship is another strategy the

business leaders disclosed. According to Participant 1, providing training alone is not

sufficient. "Train them to where you can trust them so you can execute your strategies,"

Participant 1 said highlighting the benefits of a trustful relationship to business.

Participant 2 capitalizes on the strengths each millennial employee provides without micromanagement. "If you say you have experience running the POS system after your first hour here, I'll just tell them to leave you alone for a few minutes to see how you actually focus and handle the situation," explained Participant 2.

Participant 3 stated that a manager, too, can benefit from a trusting relationship with their millennial employees. "I know I have a lot of feedback when they move me from store to store. I have a lot of employees get very upset that I'm leaving," Participant 3 explained. Participant 3 added that when employees trust their leader, "people seem to enjoy coming to work and wanting to fill shifts in and things like that."

Participant 4 agreed that millennial employees tend to be more open when the relationship is on a friendship level. "If they consider you a friend or you talk to them on a friendship level, they're more likely to take in what you're telling them versus you're just talking to them on a boss level." According to Participant 4, "Just telling them what to do versus asking them to do something, or just little things like that make it a lot easier approach to the ones that don't really do well with authority."

Support. The participants also noted that leadership support helps in motivating millennial employees. Participant 1 said, "I help them if they need help with anything. That keeps them motivated to know that if they still don't know everything, they still have a chance to ask more questions." The leadership support strategy is vital especially since business leaders deal with human beings with different types of needs. "They also have a personal life, correct?" Participant 1 pointed.

It is vital for business leaders to get to know their millennial employees. Being

able to anticipate and address their millennial employees' needs can help the business leader address any issues with staffing to prevent disruption of restaurant services. Participant 1 explained that it is unavoidable for employees to bring their personal life into their workplace:

> But, at the end, you still are a person. When they come in the door, you have to get to know your employees more to know their needs. As an employer, you have to make sure that your employees… that you get to know their needs as well like, oh, hey, this lady has three kids such and such and then you're prepared also in case something happens. You know that three of your four employees have kids, something is going to happen there.

Participant 1 understood the importance of anticipating problems before they occur. By getting to know millennial employees and their needs, business leaders can change plans to meet the demands of the business based on available staffing. At the same time, millennial employees appreciate their team leaders for providing leadership support.

Participant 3 believed that when millennial employees trust their leaders, they are more open about their situations, and the leaders are able to provide support when needed. "They're not afraid to come to me when they have a problem. They're not afraid to come to me if they feel something was unfair," Participant 3 expressed. Participant 3 added, "They're not afraid to come to me because they know I'm going to listen to what they're telling me and kind of take it into consideration." Participant 4 had similar thoughts, "To know your employees, it helps it go a lot better especially when you can tell when they're going through something by just the way that they're working."

Participant 4 pays attention to millennial employees' work ethics, "Their work ethics

drop when they're going through something. Just kind of be there for them. Have an open

relationship with them."

Right balance. The business leaders also pointed out that while having a trustful,

supportive relationship towards millennial employees helps, it is also important to keep a

right balance on the leader–member relationship. Participant 1 called this the structure

that does not frequently change, "If they have a structure, have a plan. The plans can be

changed. The structure, you don't change frequently because it's the structure. It's the

base." Participant 2 acknowledges the importance of technology for millennials, but

regulates the use of technology in the workplace. "I don't restrict their phone use," said

Participant 2. "We have areas for them to use the phone. And, we have areas for the

smokers to smoke," Participant 2 added. Participant 4 also clarified, "But, at the same

time, they have to know that, 'Okay, yeah. We're friendly, but I'm still your boss. And,

you still have to respect me and do what I asked you to do.'"

The answers of business leaders match that of Gilbert's (1978) BEM and my

review of the professional literature. According to Gilbert (1978), the managers have the

opportunity to observe their subordinates and ask important questions to determine how

they can support their subordinates. Utilizing BEM, managers can check and improve

organizational support factors such as *instruments* or the workers' ability to have the

resources they need to do their jobs. In fact, Gilbert postulated that a worker's failure to

meet work expectations can mean that the manager either showed incompetence or failed

to define accomplishments and assign responsibilities.

Millennial employees enjoy having a close relationship with their superiors (Meola, 2016; Ferri-Reed, 2014a). In fact, millennial employees respond better to superiors seen as leaders rather than those who are domineering or micromanaging (Rather, 2018). Millennial workers prefer inspiring leaders over managers–leaders who could encourage them to participate in decision-making activities, and leaders who could inculcate meaning in their millennial employees' work (Seheult, 2016). Since there is a disparity on millennial behaviors and values compared to their older peers, it is important for business leaders to bridge that gap and create a close relationship with their millennial workers (Hall, 2016). Business leaders can use their position and influence to help their millennial workers by establishing a respectful, trusting, and supportive relationship. It is also important for business leaders to be aware of their millennial workers' well-being, to be able to help when needed, and being responsive to the needs of their millennial employees. A positive leader–member relationship between business leaders and millennial employees can help millennial workers maintain motivation in their jobs.

Theme 3: Professional Development

The small business leaders revealed that since millennials work in a stressful environment, it is important to implement professional and skills development efforts. Participant 1 described, "Restaurant business is very stressful. So, that's the number one thing you have to start dealing with is the level of stress, so a lot of employees have to understand that." Participant 3 explained, "Just like the millennials, their learning styles are different. Just like the managers' managing style and teaching style is different." Participant 3 added, "I mean, this job's not for everybody, just like every other job's not

for every single person." Three subthemes emerged in my data analysis under the node

Professional Development: (a) access to information/feedback, (b) training, and (c) skills

improvement.

Table 6

Professional Development

Subthemes	Sources	References
Access to information/feedback	7	12
Training	5	7
Skills improvement	5	11

Access to information/feedback. Business leaders reported that access to

information is essential for millennial employees working in a restaurant. Information

gathering results in useful knowledge that millennial employees can use in their jobs.

Participant 1 said, "one of the most important things to me is, number 1, information."

Participant 1 explained, "information can help them understand different risks such as

cross-contamination or salmonella prevention." Providing work feedback gives the

business leaders a chance to correct mistakes and improve employee performance.

Participant 3 revealed:

When they're doing something that's not right, instead of scolding them per se, I

just go over, and I tweak it, or I teach them how to do it correctly. And, some

people don't learn the same way as other people, so sometimes I'll have to correct

them in different ways depending on their learning style.

Participant 3 explained that as millennial employees learn their duties and

responsibilities, they are bound to make mistakes. It is important for business leaders to

show patience in correcting their millennial employees. Moreover, business leaders must

allow learning to occur and understand that different people learn differently.

Participant 4 explained that when employees come from different stores, they usually do not follow procedures done at their new store. "But, the new people, they take it very well. They catch on pretty quick. And, they ask questions," Participant 4 added. Feedback opportunity is useful to Participant 4 by pulling aside their millennial employees who do not do well. "Try to figure out what the problem is. And, see if we can just fix the problem, and move on, and make it work," Participant 4 explained.

The feedback mechanism also works for Participant 3 even to those millennial employees who feel entitled. Participant 3 further added, "Because I explain, 'If so and so's not doing their job and you would have to pick up the slack, how would you feel about it?'" Participant 3 noted that millennial employees "look at it from the other point of view, and it most of the time seems to work."

Training. While the business leaders disclosed that training is part of their motivational strategies towards millennial employees, each restaurant offered a different type of training. Participant 1 highlighted that family-owned restaurants are different from chain restaurants. "It's different because this is a family-owned restaurant. So, compared to a chain or corporate restaurant, it's completely different," Participant 1 explained. According to Participant 1, the owners of their restaurant get themselves involved in training employees. "We have the owners directly, so you pretty much know what's going on and it's very small. So, it's really easy to do that to train people and keep people organized and stuff like that," Participant 1 further stated.

Participant 2 noted, "We, basically, train on the basic overall customer service, customer awareness, core values." However, these, according to Participant 2, are self-explanatory. "But, the add-ons is where I can tell who's going above and beyond," Participant 2 added. Participant 4 indicated online training available to all employees. "We have I TRAINs online that we have to do. It's pretty much videos that give you a step-by-step breakdown on different ways you can handle different situations, and learn how to teach people, train people a certain way," explained Participant 4.

Skills improvement. As part of training, business leaders divulged that skills improvement helps millennial employees overcome personality problems at work. Participant 1 offers stress management to their millennial employees. "By keeping calm, number one. A lot of jobs require a level of stress. So, if you know that it's already stressful and you're dealing with that every day then that's called experience," Participant 1 stated. Finding new things to improve daily is another strategy that works for Participant 1:

> If we start accomplishing small tasks, real tiny, tiny, tiny things, then we start feeling secure about accomplishing bigger tasks. So, you go from accomplishing something small. And, if you have those things that you do the same thing over and over, then it becomes easier and easier because you start getting experience, and you're performing, and your skills get stronger because you're constantly improving skills.

Participant 1 believes in second chances and the importance of harnessing skills by doing things repetitively. As millennial employees become comfortable doing the same things,

they also gain experience as well as confidence. For Participant 1, constant improvement of skills is necessary for a restaurant business.

Participant 2 reported that ineffective time management and not wanting to take responsibility have a negative influence on millennial employees' performance. "The biggest thing is effective time, using their time effectively," explained Participant 2. "You have all types of challenges from being lazy to being late to not wanting to take responsibilities," Participant 2 added. Participant 2 solved these challenges through the incentive program.

Participant 3 agreed with Participant 2, "A lot of them feel very entitled… That was my biggest key challenge that I had to overcome and figure out how to work around." Participant 4 had the same sentiment, "Their attitudes and the way they handle each new situation … as far as learning a new product or dealing with a disgruntled customer. Just the way they handle them." Participant 4 overcame these challenges by providing skills improvement to their millennial employees. "We teach them to assess the situation, ask questions, try to see if they can fix it. What can they do to fix it?" And, if millennial employees solved the issues, Participant 4 reminded to compliment them, "Give them a smile. Tell them, 'Thank you.'"

The business leaders, through their responses, confirmed Gilbert's (1978) BEM and my review of the professional literature. Gilbert argued that managers should first determine issues or concerns with environmental (organizational) supports beginning with data or information. According to Gilbert, to increase employee competence managers must provide feedback on how their employees are doing, set clear work

expectations, and give guidance on how to perform well. Binder (1998) also placed expectations and feedback as a priority in his Six Boxes Approach–a revision to Gilbert's (1978) BEM. The manager has an important role to play in ensuring employees are performing well.

Access to information and development opportunities are important to millennial employees. Millennial workers enjoy open communication with their superiors and the ability to share information with their colleagues (Hall, 2016). Rather (2018) explained that millennial employees move from one job to another because they continuously seek immediate growth opportunities, that is why they always want feedback from their team leaders. Seheult (2016) agreed that millennial workers value feedback and affirmation from their leaders whom they could consider as their mentors. Meola (2016) suggested that business leaders should help their millennial employees improve their soft skills through training and skills enhancement. According to Jones, Murray, and Tapp (2018), millennial employees believe in setting goals and working hard to realize their dreams, that is why they value mentoring and training from their leaders. Millennial workers consider training as an essential aspect of their work (Holden & Moser, 2016). Millennial workers will likely show loyalty to their jobs when given a chance to improve and expand on their skills (Boysen et al., 2016). Business leaders can keep their millennial employees motivated by helping them grow professionally. Even though millennials have distinct traits and attributes compared to the older generations, business leaders tailor their leadership style to meet the needs of their millennial employees, provide support, and help their millennial employees achieve their highest potentials.

Applications to Professional Practice

The study findings revealed rewards and recognition, high-quality leader–member relationship, and professional development as the top strategies that small business leaders use in motivating their millennial workforce. Since more than 73.5% of business leaders show concern in keeping their millennial employees motivated (Ferri-Reed, 2014a), it is vital for business leaders to learn more about their millennial employees. Business leaders can alleviate their frustrations, concerns, criticisms, and cynicism towards their millennial employees by understanding that negative stereotypes surrounding millennials are not helpful in business practices. K. Weeks, Weeks, and Long (2017) warned that negative stereotypes towards any generational cohort have negative consequences on the way people relate with each other. More specifically, K. Weeks et al. discussed that if people think millennials are lazy, they might treat millennials as untrustworthy, and lack of trust in an organization can often lead to lower productivity. If business leaders see younger workers as less desirable due to negative stereotypes, the business leaders might withhold career growth opportunities, increased responsibilities, and other benefits which can become discriminatory practices (Marchiondo, Gonzales, & Ran, 2016). Negative stereotypes are not only detrimental to workplace relationships but hinder growth and development which are valuable to millennial employees. Business leaders, therefore, can look at the positive traits of their millennial employees and use those qualities to benefit their organizations.

Business leaders can use Gilbert's (1978) BEM to help improve their millennial employees' performance. Following Gilbert's (1978) BEM, business leaders can improve

organizational support tools to help their millennial employees become successful in their positions. Business leaders can check if millennial employees are receiving enough information (data) and guidance on how they perform based on organizational expectations. Also, business leaders can provide tools and resources (instruments) so that millennial employees can do their jobs more effectively. Moreover, business leaders can ensure motivational strategies (incentives) are in place to enable millennial employees to perform exceptionally.

Business leaders can also learn from the findings of this study and adopt in their business strategies. Business leaders can improve their relationships with their millennial employees by becoming mentors instead of bosses. Millennial employees are more likely to become committed and engaged in their organizations if their superiors build trust, allow them to grow, and act as mentors rather than managers (Seheult, 2016). Savino (2017) encouraged team leaders to foster collaboration and a sense of belongingness for teams that include millennial members. Access to information, constant communication, and compliments are effective ways to create a family-like atmosphere (Savino, 2017). It is also crucial for business leaders to consider implementing rewards and recognition programs tailored to the needs of their millennial employees. According to Jauhar, Ting, and Rahim (2017), team leaders who offer financial rewards and bonuses, recognition, and genuine appreciation of their millennial employees help their employees become satisfied in their jobs and have less intention to quit. By being generous in praises, offering rewards and incentives for meeting goals, and recognizing good work, business leaders can motivate their millennial employees and help improve performance.

Implications for Social Change

The assumption of millennials to the majority of employment occupations worldwide poses significant concerns for business leaders and organizations. Millennials bring with them their distinct traits, behaviors, and values into their workplace. Organizations may not be ready to cater to the needs of their millennial workforce. The management strategies used towards the older generation may not necessarily work towards millennial employees. Meola (2016) explained that some challenges business leaders have include their ability to build relationships with their millennial employees and their understanding of their millennial employees' work motivation. Millennials also face many challenges, and without any solutions in place, there may be a grim prospect for millennials' future (Accius & Yeh, 2017). Accius and Yeh (2017) further contended that as millennials enjoy improved life experiences in their younger years, they will have a greater chance at financial security, healthy well-being, and contentment in their older years–benefitting their societies in general. Also, Rather (2018) pointed out that millennial workers will become the leaders of their organizations in the future, that is why organizations need to invest time and resources to their millennial employees. Helping millennial employees become successful have positive effects in securing the future of organizations and societies.

Organizations and business leaders also need to understand the work values and preferences of millennials. Researchers have pointed out that millennials value leisure more than work; therefore, it is necessary for organizations to implement a more balanced work-life program (Ertas, 2015; Woods, 2016). Millennial workers tend to move from

one job to another in search for career growth and sense of meaning (Bushardt, Young, & Bari, 2018; Ferri-Reed, 2014c; Meola, 2016). Supporting the work values of employees may influence job satisfaction and the employees' tendency to remain in their jobs longer (Hammer, 2015; Kuron et al., 2015). As millennial workers become motivated in their careers, they are less likely to look for employment elsewhere. They will have a chance to grow in their positions, become more stable financially, and earn sufficient experience to lead their companies as future leaders. Preventing costly employee turnover and having highly productive workers may result in increased profitability for businesses. In turn, companies may become contributors to the development of the communities they serve. Likewise, healthy, career-oriented, and financially-stable millennials can become social change agents.

Recommendations for Action

Business leaders and owners of small business restaurants should consider if the strategies revealed in this study align with their current strategy to motivate their millennial workforce. Based on the results of this study, there are three recommendations that can help business leaders and owners of small business restaurants in executing their motivational strategies. First, build a high-quality, trusting, respectful, and supportive relationship with millennial employees. Business leaders are in a position to develop a bridge between millennial employees and the leadership team (Desy et al., 2017). Business leaders can change their management style to fit the needs of their millennial employees and help narrow the gap with older generations to create a more efficient organization (Lewis & Wescott, 2017). When team leaders and millennial employees

establish a healthy relationship, there will be more open communication. Business leaders can inspire their millennial employees to carry out their business strategies. In return, millennial employees can feel at ease communicating their needs to their team leaders.

Second, business leaders and owners of small business restaurants should incorporate leadership training programs in their curriculum that deals with the management and leadership of millennial workers. Corporate training programs on how to work with millennials such as discussion on various leadership models have become a necessity for companies (Meola, 2016). Desy et al. (2017) recommended employee training programs focused on teamwork and collaboration as well as utilization of technology because these are effective in millennials' learning style. Understanding and learning more about the preferences, values, and behaviors of millennials can help business leaders implement appropriate organizational practices. These practices may include providing constant feedback, career advancement, and leadership opportunities for millennial employees (Meng, Reber, & Rogers, 2017). Through information and training programs, business leaders can eliminate negative stereotypes towards millennials, and help promote a more positive approach to dealing with their millennial employees.

Third, organizations must integrate a rewards system into their business strategies so that millennial employees can earn incentives as they help accomplish objectives. Organizations must revisit their practices including evaluation and rewards system as they cater to the needs of their millennial employees (Campione, 2015). Millennial employees value rewards at work such as higher salaries and position (Rather, 2018).

Millennials desire rewards and incentives as well as immediate feedback, career

advancement, and pay increases (Anderson et al., 2016). Business leaders can create

individual and organizational goals and encourage participation from their millennial

employees, giving them a chance to earn rewards as they meet those goals.

Business leaders, managers, and supervisors who aspire to increase success in

motivating their millennial workers should pay attention to the findings of this study.

Restaurant owners wishing to innovate their hiring and management practices may also

learn new methods in keeping their millennial employees motivated and committed in

their jobs. I can disseminate the results of this study to the North Carolina Alliance

Chambers, which has a network of chambers of commerce across eastern North Carolina.

I can also share the results of this study to Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) of

Camp Lejeune-New River. MCCS has various restaurant businesses that employ spouses

of active duty military personnel stationed at Marine Corps bases in eastern North

Carolina. Also, I might distribute the results of this study to the business leaders who

participated in my research, the stakeholders of their restaurant businesses, the libraries of

my former universities, and other organizations through a presentation at seminars,

training, and conferences. Lastly, Walden University will publish the final version of this

study through ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for access by doctoral students,

faculty members, and all other interested parties.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results from this study warrant further investigation of strategies that small

business leaders use to motivate their millennial employees from other doctoral students

and researchers. I interviewed four business leaders from four restaurant businesses located in eastern North Carolina. I recommend the exploration of motivational strategies in a multi-generational workforce that includes baby boomers and generation X workers. Soon, other researchers may also include generation Z workers in the study. Second, since this study pertains only to small businesses in the restaurant sector, I recommend further studies to expand the industry scope and investigate motivational strategies of other business leaders such as those in retail, service, communications, and entertainment industries. Third, I recommend that other researchers replicate or expand this study in demographic areas outside of eastern North Carolina. Fourth, I suggest that future research includes a larger sample size to enhance the reliability and validity of findings.

Reflections

I experienced several challenges while conducting this study. First, as a spouse of an active duty service member, I had to change the location of my research once due to a permanent change of station (PCS). Second, by the time I received the approval from Walden University's IRB to begin collecting my data, Hurricane Florence devastated our area which also affected my study participants. However, I welcomed every challenge as a stepping stone to success. With patience and perseverance, I was able to complete my data collection and analysis.

As a small business owner with five millennial employees in my payroll, I have biases concerning the topic of this study. However, I was able to delineate myself and my biases from the study by following stringent research procedures such as using an interview protocol and asking the same open-ended questions to all participants. I used

critical thinking skills in maintaining objectivity in this study such as synthesizing participant answers and checking if their responses confirm the conceptual framework of this study as well as my review of the professional literature. Lastly, as admitted by study participants that millennials are a different type of group with distinct attitudes and needs compared to generations before them, I also observed that business leaders are changing the way they manage their millennial employees so they can relate better and have a more productive relationship. As businesses innovate and management styles evolve, the study on millennials will continue to be a topic of interest.

Conclusion

Millennials are occupying the majority of the global workforce, and business leaders show concerns in training and motivating their millennial employees. I used qualitative, multiple case study to explore the strategies business leaders use to motivate their millennial employees. Four business leaders from four restaurants in eastern North Carolina participated in this research. I used semistructured, face-to-face interviews with seven open-ended questions as well as a review of company records to include company websites and social media. A methodological triangulation of data sources and thematic analysis of data revealed strategies business leaders use to motivate their millennial employees.

First, business leaders reported that rewards and recognition are prime motivators for their millennial employees. Business leaders use verbal compliments and written reviews as a way to appreciate their millennial employees as well as incentives as rewards for meeting goals. Second, business leaders develop a high-quality leader–

member relationship as a motivational strategy towards their millennial employees.

Millennials who do not do well with authority benefit from a respectful, trusting, and

supportive team leaders who listen to their concerns and help them resolve their issues

while maintaining the right balance in the relationship. Third, business leaders disclosed

professional development as another strategy in motivating their millennial employees.

Business leaders provide information and feedback on their millennial workers'

performance, offer training to enhance work knowledge as well as opportunities to

improve on skills such as interpersonal and problem-solving skills. The successful

utilization of these strategies can help keep millennial workers motivated in their jobs.

When employees are motivated to work, they remain committed in their careers, and

organizations become highly productive and profitable.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

[Date]

Re: A Research Study That May Interest You

Dear [Name]:

My name is James A. Nilo and I am currently a graduate student at Walden University pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree. I am conducting a research entitled: "Strategies That Small Business Leaders Use to Motivate Millennial Employees." I am interested in conducting a study on what leadership strategies influence millennial employees' motivation.

I am seeking to interview team leaders working under the (Company name) who fit the following criteria:

- Must currently have a minimum of 2 years full time small business leadership position;
- Must have at least three millennial subordinates;
- Must have successful strategies that they are using to motivate millennial employees.

I believe small business leaders who fit the criteria for this study could bring a unique perspective and understanding to this research. During the course of this study, I will conduct a face-to-face interview with the participant. Participants are also encouraged to share any documents of their choosing for my review relating to strategies in motivating millennial employees. Sample documents include training and curriculum, performance improvement plans, coaching/mentoring notes, measured key deliverables showing successes, management assessments, documented customer feedback, etc. You may mask or exclude any personally identifiable information that may be considered confidential by your organization. At the end of this study, I will share results and findings with the participants, other scholars, and the executive management team of (Company name).

If you meet the above criteria and is interested in participating in this study, please contact me at james.nilo@waldenu.edu. Participation in this study is voluntary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James A. Nilo
DBA Student
Walden University
LinkedIn.com/in/jamesnilo

Appendix B: Request to Schedule an Interview

[Date]

Re: Request to Schedule an Interview

Dear [Name]:

The purpose of this letter is to schedule an interview with you. I previously sent you a request to participate in the research study I am conducting on understanding the impact leadership strategies have on millennial employees' motivation. You have expressed your interest in participating, so I would like to take this opportunity to schedule a time and place for the interview.

Interviews can be conducted at your convenient place and time. The interview will take around 60 minutes or less. The interviews will be recorded, and you will be given a chance to review your answers at the end of the interview. As per Walden University guidelines, all interviewees retain the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

Once you review your schedule and determine your availability, please contact me at james.nilo@waldenu.edu to schedule the interview.

Thank you.

James A. Nilo
DBA Student
Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

I will use the following protocol during the face-to-face interview at an agreed location, date, and time.

1. I will thank the participants for their time. I will introduce a brief background of myself so the participants know more about me and will become more at ease.

2. I will ask the participants if they have read the Consent Form that was previously sent to them via e-mail. This is the time to either discuss more about the consent form or to answer questions they may have. I will also remind them that they can quit at any given time. If there are no further questions, I will ask the participants to ink sign my copy of the consent form, and I will give them a paper copy as well.

3. I will give a brief overview of the interview process. I will ask them to relax and to take time in answering each question. I will ask the open-ended interview questions with follow up probing questions as needed for depth and clarity of the discussion. When participants are ready, I will press the record button on my digital recording device and begin to ask the following questions:

1. What strategies do you use to motivate your millennial employees?

2. What, if any, training opportunities or resources does your organization provide to help you motivate a millennial workforce?

3. How did your millennial employees respond to your various motivation techniques?

4. How do you determine the effectiveness of implemented strategies to motivate millennial employees?

5. What were the key challenges you faced in motivating a millennial workforce?

6. How did you overcome those key challenges?

7. What other information with regards to motivating millennial employees can you provide that we have not already discussed?

4. During the interview, I will record any pertinent observations and reflections using the following format:

     Date/Time: _____

     Participant: _____

     Location: _____

     Observations: _____

     _____

     Reflections: _____

     _____

5. At the end of the interview, I will give each participant a chance to review answers to interview questions and my interview notes for clarification. Before I leave the interview, I will thank each participant for their time and participation.

6. Upon completion of the interviews, I will send the following "Thank you" letter to each participant:

Date:

Dear (Name of participant):

I would like to take a moment to thank you for participating in my research study entitled "Strategies That Small Business Leaders Use to Motivate Millennial Employees." Your gift of time and knowledge are vital in the successful completion of my project. I am currently analyzing all the data I have collected, and my doctoral study will go through a series of review from other scholars. Once completed, I will be more than happy to send you a copy. In the meantime, if you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

James A. Nilo
Doctoral candidate
Doctor of Business Administration
Walden University

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity as professional transcriber for this research: Strategies That Small Business Leaders Use to Motivate Millennial Employees. I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.

3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.

4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.

5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.

6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**