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Identifying Intrinsic Needs and How they Effect Millennials' Organizational Commitment

William Norman Jacobs
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William Jacobs

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Identifying Intrinsic Needs and How they Effect Millennials' Organizational

Commitment

by

William N. Jacobs

MA, Norfolk State University, 2012

BS, Northern Michigan University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

By 2025, 75% of the U.S. labor workforce will be composed of Millennials as Generation X managers leave the workforce. The influx of Millennials in the workforce has led to leaders of organizations encountering a serious challenge in terms of how to retain and motivate Millennials who on average change jobs every 2 years. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. The research question that guided the research was: What are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment. The conceptual framework for this study utilized the generational cohort theory by Strauss and Howe and the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan to address the phenomenon that was studied. Data were collected through Skype audio and email from 15 participants. The data analysis plan for this study consisted of transcribing and reviewing data, data analysis, and synthesizing and reporting what was found from data collected. Six themes emerged: Millennials place high emphasis on employee compensation, Millennials desire the opportunity for professional development, Millennials desire a friendly supportive environment, Millennials desire flexibility in their work schedule, Millennials desire appropriate treatment from leadership, and Millennials value recognition. The findings of this study contribute to social change on an individual level by helping employees and leaders understand that treating coworkers fairly and supporting them in the work environment can lead to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to La'Toya Jacobs, Daniel Jacobs and Ava Rae, who have supported me through this long journey. Through your love, support and encouragement I was able to stay the course and finish what I have started. I would also like to dedicate this to all my friends who have encouraged me along the way.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Low organizational commitment negatively impacts organizations of all sizes and in all sectors. Millennials now represent the largest working generation in the workforce, and they are exhibiting signs of extremely low organizational commitment compared to previous generational cohorts (Meola, 2016). For this study, Millennials are defined as individuals born between 1982-2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Millennials lack of organizational commitment contributes to employee turnover, which may directly contribute to lost revenue, generational stereotyping, talent-management issues, inadequate succession planning, brand management issues, and a variety of other issues that negatively impact daily operations (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton, 2015; Nolan, 2015). In fact, research has shown that the U.S. economy loses more than \$30 billion a year due to Millennial turnover (Adkins, 2016). The lack of organizational commitment is especially significant since Millennials have been in the workforce for almost 20 years and the negative trend continues to exist.

The fact that leaders of organizations have yet to find a solution to the problem suggests that we have yet to understand how to satisfy the needs of Millennials within the workplace. This qualitative phenomenological study provided insight on the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. Chapter 1 consists of a background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a brief summary.

Background of the Study

Each generational cohort is unique because historic events shape each generation and ultimately shifts attitudes, values, and behaviors of that particular generation.

Millennials are the generational cohort that was born after the Generation X cohort. Researchers have used a variety of age ranges to describe Millennials, but for this study Millennials were defined as individuals who were born between the January 1, 1982 and December 31, 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Millennials are replacing previous generations in the workforce and there is still a lot to be learned about the needs of Millennials within the workplace. Meola (2016) found that leaders are having trouble building relationships with Millennial employees, which includes motivating them and retaining them.

In 2015, Millennials became the largest generational cohort within the U.S. labor force, which surpassed Generation X as the generation with the most active members working in the U.S. workforce (Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi, 2017). Researchers have indicated that by 2025, Millennials will represent approximately three quarters of the U.S. labor force as Generation X managers start retiring (Meola, 2016). The influx of Millennials within the U.S. workforce represents a unique challenge for leaders of organizations because Millennials appear to exhibit a lack of organizational commitment. Diskiene, Stankeviciene, and Jurgaityte (2017) found that Millennials on average tend to switch jobs every two years. The U.S. Department of Labor (2014) found that between 2004 and 2014 Millennials displayed very little organizational commitment by staying employed with organizations on average of 1.3

years. Hoffman (2018) believed the number one reason Millennials leave their organization is because of the culture of the organization.

The lack of organizational commitment leads to the question of what motivates Millennials to commit to an organization for the long-term. Henstra and McGowan (2016) concluded that Millennials are more satisfied with their jobs when they have greater autonomy from supervision and a healthy work-life balance. Tulgan (2016) found that Millennials are more likely than other generations to view their job as less of a priority than other factors that make them happy in life such as family and a good work-life balance. Mishra and Mishra (2017) found that intrinsic motivation directly impacts employee retention. Not all researchers agree that Millennials workplace needs are different. Krell (2017) cited a seven-year study and found that Millennials are not that much different from previous generations in the workforce. Koppel, Deline, and Virkstis (2017) even suggested that Millennial job-hopping is due the abundance of new opportunities available in today's job market.

Although there is a vast amount of research on the Millennial generational cohort's needs, most of the findings appears to be contradicting or inconclusive. Researchers have indicated that intrinsic needs, such as professional development, work-life balance, leadership, and corporate social responsibility are important to Millennials, but there is very little empirical evidence to support how Millennials' loyalty to an organization is impacted when these needs are satisfied (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015; Hoffman, 2018; Morrel & Abston, 2018). This study is needed because it may not only help leaders identify

critical intrinsic needs that are important to retaining Millennials, but it also may confirm or disprove what other researchers are saying about how intrinsic needs effects retention.

Problem Statement

In 2015, Millennials supplanted previous generations in the workforce as the largest generational cohort in the U.S Labor Force (Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi, 2017). By 2025, 75% of the U.S. Labor workforce will be composed of Millennials as Generation X managers leave the workforce (Meola, 2016). The influx of Millennials in the workforce has led to leaders of organizations encountering a serious challenge in terms of how to retain and motivate Millennials who on average change jobs every two years (Diskienė et al., 2017). Millennials are producing turnover rates higher than any other generation before their time and it is costing organizations major revenue in the public and private sector (Meola, 2016). The gap in the literature that was explored by this study was the identification of critical intrinsic needs within the workplace and if satisfying those needs could have a positive influence on Millennial employees' organizational commitment. The general problem is that Millennials are exhibiting low organizational commitment resulting in high turnover rates which disrupts the labor force while also contributing to negative perceptions of Millennials. The more specific problem is that some leaders of organizations appear to not know which intrinsic needs are perceived to be the most critical to increasing organizational commitment amongst Millennial employees.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. Millennials in America have been in the workforce for almost two decades and they continue to exhibit low organizational commitment by continuing to change jobs frequently. The frequent job-changing of this generational cohort could indicate that workplace needs are not being satisfied or that employers do not understand what Millennials desire in workplace.

Although there is a vast amount of research on Millennials and their generational characteristics, most of the findings are contradicting at times. The workplace needs that researchers do agree on are meaningful work, flexible schedules, frequent feedback from leadership and career development. Although numerous researchers have identified these needs, there are very few studies that investigate how Millennials' perceive their organizational commitment after these needs are incorporated into the organizational culture. In addition to identifying critical needs, this study maybe be able to provide valuable insight on how Millennials feel about their place of employment when they have meaningful work, flexible schedules, frequent feedback from leadership and the opportunity for career development. This study may serve as a starting point for organizational leaders that are attempting to develop effective retention strategies.

Research Questions

What are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment?

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework describes why a study is important and relevant and further describes how the research design appropriately and rigorously answer the research question of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The conceptual framework for this study consisted of two concepts which were intrinsic needs and employee commitment. The first concept consisted of one component which was identifying critical intrinsic needs that are specific to the Millennial generational cohort. The first component was important because numerous researchers have indicated that Millennials exhibit different workplace needs, values and attitudes when compared to previous generational cohorts (Diskiene et al., 2017; Hoffman, 2018; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). This component aligned with the generational cohort theory. The generational cohort theory is based off the premise that growing up during a certain timeframe and in a specific environment systematically and predictably shapes the attitudes, values, and behaviors of members of a generational cohort (Fishman, 2016).

The next concept of the framework was employee commitment. Employee commitment can be further broken down into three components. The first component was borrowed from the self-determination theory and was satisfying the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Satisfying these three basic psychological needs can lead to not only better job satisfaction, but also better employee wellbeing (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017). The next component of employee commitment was promoting a workplace that not only satisfies the three basic psychological needs but

also the critical needs that were identified in the first concept of this framework. The final component of employee commitment was creating a compensation or reward system that is innovative and meets the needs of the Millennial generation. This component is especially important because many organizations still offer basic compensation/reward plans, which are pay, health benefits, cash bonuses, and retirement options.

The conceptual framework for this study was largely based on understanding Millennials and what appears to be a lack of organizational commitment. For that reason, this qualitative study was guided by a hermeneutic phenomenology approach which is an approach that is utilized to build a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon by interpreting data and uncovering its meaning, rather than providing an accurate analysis of participant's descriptions (Hein & Austin, 2001). The conceptual framework for this study was based off the need to understand Millennials, which was closely aligned with the research question which sought to understand the lived experiences of Millennials in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment. In the following chapter, detailed information on the conceptual framework will be presented.

Nature of the Study

This research was qualitative in nature and it was guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Phenomenology seeks to understand phenomena by relying on the truth to manifest itself to consciousness by the individual who experiences the phenomena (Moran, 2007). The phenomenon of interest is the extremely low organizational commitment that Millennials appear to exhibit. Utilizing a phenomenological approach for this study provided valuable insight on how Millennials

feel organizational commitment relates to them and their needs within the workplace. Researchers using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach seek to build a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon by interpreting data and uncovering its meaning, rather than providing an accurate analysis of participant's descriptions (Hein & Austin, 2001).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. Although grounded theory could have been used as a research design, there is already a tremendous amount of literature published on organizational commitment, generational cohort theory and self-determination theory. By focusing specifically on Millennials, the results of this study could add to already published theories on organizational commitment by exploring critical needs within the workplace that need to be satisfied in order to retain the Millennials.

Millennials for this study were defined as individuals born between 1982-2000. The sampling method used for this study was purposive sampling. Local Facebook groups were used to recruit potential participants. Participants selected to participate in the study were offered a \$10 gift card upon completion of the semistructured interview. The participants in this study were Millennials with at least five years of work experience, employed in the private sector in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma region.

To collect data for this study, I utilized semistructured interviews that was guided by an interview protocol. Data collected from interviews were analyzed by utilizing open coding to assist in developing categories and themes. Data collected from participants were analyzed individually and then analyzed as a whole in order to help provide a more accurate representation of the phenomenon based on the patterns observed.

Definitions

Employee retention: The ability of an organization to keep valued human capital who contribute to organizational success for as long as the relationship is mutually favorable (Micahel, Prince, & Chacko, 2016).

Employee turnover: “The ratio of organization’s employees who are leaving from the organization to the extant number of employees in the organization during the described period of time” (Devi & Krishna, 2016 p.50)

Flexible compensation: Compensation based on the needs or lifestyle of an employee.

Generational cohort: A specific timeframe in which a group of people are born and their values and beliefs are shaped by the historic events that occurred during their formative years (Fishman, 2016).

Human capital: The knowledge, skills, and abilities that an individual has based on their education and experience (Greer, Lusch, & Hitt, 2017).

Job satisfaction: The general feeling that an employee feels toward their job (Kong, Wang, Fu, 2015).

Millennials: Individuals born between 1982 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)

Organizational commitment: The employee's psychological state with respect to his/her relationship with the organization (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017)

Assumptions

In research, assumptions are conditions that the researcher believes to be true but does not have the evidence to support (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). The assumptions used in this study were: Participants will be open and honest about their age and work history. This assumption was especially important because I did not require participants to provide proof of their place of employment in order to adequately safeguard sensitive information. The second assumption was that Millennials will be open about what effected their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The third assumption was that older Millennials needs and motivation may be different from younger Millennials due to added responsibilities at work and in life. The third assumption was especially important because I recognized that although members are of the same generational cohort, needs can be different due to other factors in life. The fourth assumption was that all Millennials were impacted the same by the advancements in technology since 1982.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of a study identifies a group in which the research might be applicable (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016). The scope of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study included working Millennials with at least five years of work experience. For the purpose of this study, Millennials were

individuals born between January 1, 1982 and December 31, 2000. This study focused on Millennials who changed organizations voluntarily or elected to stay with their organization over the last five years. Delimitations are boundaries that the researcher deliberately imposes in order to limit the scope of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study was delimited by not studying participants who were involuntarily let go by previous organizations within the last five years, temporary employees, or contract workers with definitive or expiring contracts. The reason being for not including these participants was that their situations do not reflect an organizational commitment issue.

Limitations

Limitations in studies are weaknesses in the research design that are acknowledged and documented during the research process. (Burkholder et al., 2016). A key limitation to this study was the small sample size that accompanies the use of qualitative research designs. In order to reduce the chances of data saturation occurring early in the process, the researcher conducted a pilot study to ensure interview questions were constructed in a manner that enables participants to respond to questions that describe their unique experiences. Another potential limitation of this study was data only being collected from individuals in the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma region. Although Millennials were born during the same timeframe it does not mean they were not influenced by the local culture during their formative years. Millennials who live in Oklahoma City could have completely different needs than Millennials who live in New York City. There were no pre-identified researcher biases that influenced the outcomes of the study. In order to mitigate my biases, I utilized an interview protocol that asked

general questions about the phenomenon being studied and I avoided sensitive questions. I also conducted member checks so that I ensured that I accurately depicted participants' responses.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

Understanding Millennials is critical because “by 2025 75% of the workforce will be composed of the Millennials” (Meola, 2016, p. 295). If leaders cannot understand Millennials they may have a hard time not only retaining Millennials but also attracting them. Understanding the needs of Millennials may provide leaders of organizations with the opportunity to reduce lost revenue that was incurred due to turnover, may improve organizational succession planning, and reduce poor customer service by sustaining a properly manned workforce. Focusing specifically on the critical needs of Millennials may allow organizations to develop strategies and flexible compensation packages that satisfies the needs of Millennial workers, therefore, potentially increasing organizational commitment.

Significance to Theory

This study is significant because the researcher is attempting to explore if organizations can play a more proactive role in increasing organizational commitment by understanding and acting on the intrinsic needs of Millennials in the workforce. When discussing organizational commitment, research typically

focuses on employees' commitment to organizations and not organizations' commitment to employees. This research is relevant because the generational cohort theory suggests that each generation is different (Fishman, 2016). Identifying critical intrinsic needs may be important as research has found that intrinsic motivation in the workplace is a vital issue for retaining Millennials (Mishra & Mishra, 2017).

Significance to Social Change

Not understanding the intrinsic needs of Millennials may possibly contribute to the high turnover rates that negatively impact organizations in a variety of ways to include lost revenue, frustrated workforces, and divisiveness due to a lack of understanding of different generations. This study may contribute to social change by providing leaders of organizations with a better understanding of the Millennial generational cohort. The findings may have a direct impact on social change by allowing leaders to develop strategies and promote work environments that better suit the Millennial generation and future generations. This may help organizations of all sizes save money while also promoting a productive workforce.

Summary and Transition

Americans will always have the need to work in order to sustain their lifestyle and the Millennial generation is no different. Organizations will always strive to prosper within their respective operations and one of the best ways to accomplish this is by hiring and retaining top talent. To accomplish retaining top talent, leaders of organizations and frontline supervisors must understand what the Millennial generation is looking for in the organizations that employ them. This generation has been in the workforce for almost 20

years and the low organizational commitment trend appears to continue to exist. The high turnover rates may illustrate that Millennials want or need more from their organizations in order to employ them for the long-term which could be beneficial for both the employee and the organization. Over the last two decades there has been a vast amount of research on Millennials entering the workforce and organizational commitment. This hermeneutic phenomenological study was different from previous research because it focused on the identification of intrinsic needs within the workplace and examined how those needs effect organizational commitment. Chapter 2 of this study will provide an in-depth synthesis of topics related to the phenomena and previous research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Researchers estimate that by 2025, Millennials will represent approximately 75% of the workforce as Generation X employees on all levels began to retire (Meola, 2016). The presence of Millennials within the workforce represents a unique challenge for many leaders of organizations because Millennials exhibit what appears to be a lack of organizational commitment. The Millennial generation cohort has been in the workforce for almost 20 years and their trend of changing jobs frequently continues. The job-hopping trend is an expensive trend that cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year (Adkins, 2016). In addition to lost revenue, Millennial turnover leads to lost skills and abilities which can cause hardships on other employees, customers, and the organization itself. Although there has been a vast amount of research on Millennials, researchers cannot pinpoint exactly why Millennials tend to change jobs on average every two years (Diskiene, Stankeviciene, & Jurgaityte, 2017). Some researchers believe that Millennials have completely different work values (Naim & Lenka, 2018), while others believe they have the same workplace needs as previous generations (Krell, 2017). The general problem is that Millennials are exhibiting low organizational commitment resulting in high turnover rates which disrupts the labor force while also contributing to negative perceptions of Millennials. The more specific problem is that some leaders of organizations appear to not know which intrinsic needs are perceived to be the most critical to increasing organizational commitment amongst Millennial employees.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the

workplace and organizational commitment. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a conceptual framework that utilized parts of the self-determination theory and the generational cohort theory was used. The identified needs may then be used to assist with the development of flexible compensation packages, human resource management strategies and policies that may increase organizational commitment. This literature review was different from many other literature reviews on Millennials and organizational commitment due to the fact that it examined both Millennials and their workplace behaviors and the roles of organizations in organizational commitment from a talent management perspective. Chapter two will consist of the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, conceptual framework, and the literature review.

Literature Search Strategy

The following topics were included in the literature review: generational cohorts, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Millennials' characteristics, technology and Millennials, human resource management, leadership, talent management, employee turnover, compensation, professional development, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, employee retention, employee motivation, self-determination theory and previous used theories to address Millennials and low organizational commitment. These topics were specifically chosen in order to provide a holistic view of the relationship between employers and employees.

The literature found from these topics came from Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, the Pew Research Center, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In order to locate relevant literature on the topics mentioned above, the following keywords were used within the different databases and search engines: generational cohorts, organizational commitment, human resource management, self-determination theory, employee turnover, leadership, Millennials and employee motivation.

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon of interest for this hermeneutic phenomenological study is the low organizational commitment that Millennials appear to exhibit. The conceptual framework for this study utilized two theories to address the phenomenon of interest. The generational cohort theory by Strauss and Howe and the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan. The generational cohort theory was chosen because a vast amount of research has indicated that different generations may have different values. A major belief of this study is that leaders must learn more about their Millennial employees and this includes what they need and value in the workplace. The self-determination theory was chosen because Edward Deci and Richard Ryan through their research have shown the value of appealing to intrinsic motivation and the impact it can have on job satisfaction. This conceptual framework section presents detailed information on generational theories, self-determination theory, and the elements that form the conceptual framework.

Generational Theories

In America, research on generational cohorts date back to at least the early- to mid-1900s. A generation or generational cohort can be defined as those individuals within the same birth years that have experienced the same historical events during their formative years (Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). These events contribute to generational characteristics such as values, attitudes, lifestyles and priorities (Fishman, 2016). These generational characteristics are frequently referred to as heterogeneity traits (Bucuta, 2015). Ruldoph and Zacher (2018) noted that generational differences research typically implies growing up during a certain timeframe and specific environment systematically and predictably shapes the attitudes, values, and behaviors of members of a generational cohort.

There are generally two generational theories that researchers use when discussing generational differences: the generational cohort theory by Strauss and Howe (1991) and the theory of generations by Karl Mannheim. The generational cohort theory is built on the idea that social cycles reoccur every four generations and each of these generations represents a cohort (Fisher & Crabtree, 2009). According to Strauss and Howe (1991), a new cycle occurs every two decades or so. At the beginning of each cycle, individuals change how they feel about themselves, their culture, their nation, and the future (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

The theory of generations was created by Karl Mannheim, a sociologist in the 1950s to describe the impact of generational change on American culture (Ting & Run, 2015). Mannheim believed that generations were not created

biologically, but rather by historical and social processes (Milkman, 2017). The unique characteristics (values, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and social change) that each generation maintains is a process that often takes years to complete. This process is achieved by either a significant historical event with the power to produce immediate change or change can occur gradually as a natural phenomenon associated with time (Bucuta, 2015). A good example of immediate shift in culture would be the “Me Too” moment that America is currently experiencing. An example of gradual change would be the advancements in technology over the last 30 years and its impact on the way we conduct everyday tasks within the workplace. The generational cohort theory and the theory of generations both focus on the impact of social change on generational cohorts. The biggest difference between the two generational theories is the generational cohort theory is based off of four reoccurring generational cycles and the theory of generations is not.

The age range in generational cohorts varies from source to source which contributed to Wang and Peng (2015) taking a difference approach to describing generational cohorts. Wang and Peng suggested treating generational cohorts as a subjective, continuous social identity instead of by age range. Utilizing the subjective and continuous social identity approach would allow the individual to identify with whatever generation they feel more comfortable with. Utilizing the subjective and continuous social identity approach also makes sense on an individual level as many individuals are influenced directly by agents such as parents, religion, and other customs that play a significant role in development during an individual’s formative years. A person from a

newer generation could very well choose to sustain the values and beliefs of their parents, environment or social economic status instead of identifying with a newer generation.

From a research perspective, the biggest problem that treating generational cohorts as a subjective and continuous identity would cause, is this method would be difficult to categorize individuals in the research process without actually communicating with them to see with what generation they identify with. The subjective and continuous identity approach would also make it hard to generalize the findings of studies that utilize generational cohorts as a basis for the study. Although research may label individuals based on the year they are born and the events that happened during their formative years, leaders should realize that each individual is different, regardless of what generation they belong too.

Self-Determination Theory

The self-determination theory is a well-known theory that is typically used by researchers to address employee motivation and performance. Research has indicated that when employees are motivated, they experience increased personal and job satisfaction (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Increased job satisfaction is often linked to higher organizational commitment, which could lower employee turnover rates (Rose & Raja, 2016; Zito et al., 2018). Deci and Ryan are thought to be the originators of the theory.

Since the inception of self-determination theory, many researchers have used the theory and defined it in a number of ways. Deci, Olafsen and Ryan

defined the theory as a human motivation theory that states an employee's well-being and performance is affected by the type of motivation they have for job related activities (Deci et al., 2017). Thibault-Laundry, Egan, Crevuer-Braud, Manganelli and Forest (2018) expanded on the theory with their definition and defined it as a psychological theory of human motivation that suggest that certain elements are necessary for a person to want to engage in and activity, and influence and individual's feelings toward that activity as well as the time and energy the individual invest in it. Sipe (2018) defined self-determination theory as a human-centered motivation theory that focuses on elements that either foster or hinder the assimilative and growth-oriented processes in people. Although these researchers defined self-determination theory differently, all of the definitions focused on psychological elements that either drive or hinder human motivation. The foundation of SDT is based on three basic psychological needs and two different types of motivation (autonomous and controlled).

Autonomous motivation. Autonomous motivation refers to incentives or rewards that influences a person's behavior not because of needs or future benefits, but simply because the person enjoys the activity or behavior (Wang & Hou, 2015). The individual performing the activity is doing so with freewill, volition and not because of any external demands, which makes it autonomous (Deci et al. 2017). Autonomous motivation is mostly used to describe intrinsic motivation and internalized motivation (Deci et al., 2017).

Autonomous motivation can contribute to a variety of positive organizational and individual outcomes (Manganelli et al., 2018). Most people work in order to sustain their

way of life and not because they enjoy it. This does not mean one cannot find enjoyment or satisfaction in the work he or she does. Deci et al. (2017) suggested helping employees see the purpose and the value in their work in addition to letting them take complete ownership of their work. Providing clear feedback and support also contributes to the employee becoming more autonomously motivated (Deci et al., 2017).

Controlled motivation. Controlled motivation refers to motivation that is driven by a reward or power dynamics (Deci et al., 2017). Controlled motivation typically describes extrinsic motivation, which includes external regulation and introjected regulation (Güntert, Strubel, Kals & Wehner, 2016). Many factors contribute to controlled motivation within the workplace to include abiding by rules and regulations, certain forms of compensation, avoidance of punishment, and the feeling of obligation. Controlled motivation is necessary in some occupations such as the military and law enforcement where stringent rules and regulations are vital to the success of the mission. Although controlled motivation may be necessary, leaders should still monitor how this form of motivation is impacting job satisfaction.

Different forms of extrinsic motivation. The self-determination theory suggests that people experience different types motivation (Manganelli et al., 2018). These different types of motivations are categorized as either autonomous or controlled. Typically, when discussing the types of motivation in the workplace, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dominates the discussion. SDT

further breaks down extrinsic motivation into four different types of motivation, which are external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation. These extrinsic types of motivation are then described as either more autonomous or less autonomous. Less autonomous types of motivation are typically labeled as controlled motivation (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017)

External regulation, which is less autonomous can be described as doing an activity to satisfy an external need or to earn a reward that is solely based on performance or a behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). An example of external regulation is working a job that you do not want to work, but you are doing it just to pay bills. Introjected regulation is more autonomous than external regulation, but it is still considered more of a controlled form of motivation. Introjected regulation can be described as performing an action or behavior in order to maintain self-value, to avoid guilt, or to avoid letting someone down (Deci et al., 2017). An example of this would be going to work sick, just to avoid letting your coworkers or boss down.

A more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is identified motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Identified motivation can be described as consciously valuing a behavior and accepting it as one's own because it satisfies a personal goal or benefits the individual (Deci et al., 2017). A good example of identified motivation would be an individual consistently arriving early to work and staying late for work because it would help the individual get promoted. Finally, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Integrated regulation occurs when an individual fully adopts identified regulations and those regulations now align

with that individual's other values and needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). An example of this would be an employee who goes to work not to pay bills, not because it is satisfying, but because it aligns with the individual's idea that everybody should have a job, and everybody should work.

Psychological needs. A unique aspect of self-determination theory is not only does it focus on understanding how employees are motivated, but it also focuses on their psychological well-being. SDT looks to understand the psychological aspect of why employees do what they do. Self-determined motivation has been connected with personal development, increased overall functioning, and a better overall health (Güntert et al., 2016). As mentioned previously, Millennials tend to place a high value on personal development. When employees three basic psychological needs are met, behaviors become more autonomous. When the needs are not met (referred to as need frustration), this leads to less motivation and less job satisfaction.

The three psychological needs that Deci and Ryan (2000) identified were competence, autonomy, and relatedness. These three psychological needs are intrinsic in nature. These three psychological needs have the ability to contribute to strong, positive and healthy environments (Thibault-Laundry et al, 2018). Establishing and maintaining a workplace that satisfy these needs could have multiple benefits for both the organization and its employees. Specifically, for employees, meeting these needs would foster an environment that satisfy critical human needs that are essential to not only being motivated at work, but also being

happier at work. Not meeting these needs leads to not only a reduction in productivity, but it also negatively impacts the employee's job satisfaction.

In relation to the self-determination theory, competence refers to an employee's need to feel as if they can master their job or tasks assigned to them (Lion & Burch, 2018.) The competence element of SDT suggests that employees want to not only succeed in their daily tasks, but also master their position. Magganelli et al. (2018) believed that individuals must perceive the work that they do as vital and leads to significant results. Employees want to not only master their position, but they want to stretch their abilities in order to achieve their career goals (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). The need for competence is often noted in scholarly articles as numerous researchers have suggested that Millennials are educationally driven, desire personal development, and seek career growth (Keene & Handrich, 2015; Hoffman, 2018).

The need for relatedness refers to the need to feel a sense of belonging and that you matter to others (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). According to Rayburn, Anderson, and Smith (2018) individuals want to feel connected to a team or group and they want to feel as if people legitimately care about their well-being. The need for relatedness also refers to the desire to have meaningful workplace relationships. Technology has made this need easier than ever to satisfy with tools such as email, texts messages, social media, instant messenger, and video conferencing.

The last psychological need is autonomy, which refers to the need for employees to feel a sense of choice in their daily activities (Thibault-Landry et al., 2018). Rigby and Ryan (2018) described the need for autonomy as the desire to author one's life. Maganelli

et al. (2018) believed that the need for autonomy suggests that employees must have a voice in their daily work and the way the work is performed must align with their values. The more autonomy employees have to do their job, the more they can take ownership in the final product, which coincidentally could lead to increase competence. Scholarly researchers describe the need for autonomy a variety of different ways, but they all reinforce the idea that the individual is in control of their own performance.

The self-determination theory is similar to the goal setting theories in a sense of understanding motivation, but SDT focuses more on the psychological aspect of human behavior. The goal setting theory states setting high goals lead to higher task/job performance and easy goals lead to lower job performance (Latham, Brcic & Steinhauer, 2017). SDT “differentiates the content of goals or outcomes and the regulatory processes through which the outcomes are pursued” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 227). Deci and Ryan believed that innate psychological needs are indeed what plays a vital role in how people go about determining and attaining their goals. The goal setting theory focuses more on performance whereas SDT focuses on how vital psychological needs motivates individuals at work or in their everyday lives. If the psychological needs are satisfied, not only will the employee perform better but they will also be more inclined to stay employed with the organization. If employees’ needs are frustrated it could lead to a lack of productivity and an increased turnover intention.

Criticism of SDT

Like many other theories, self-determination theory faces questions, which are largely due to the impact of rewards on the quality of motivation. SDT does not believe that rewards are bad for motivation, but it does suggest that the type of reward and the environment in which the award is administered can enhance, hinder, or have a neutral impact on the quality of motivation (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). The reward that typically impacts motivation the most is monetary rewards. Pay for performance (PFP) is when employees are paid based on their output at work. Usually this type of pay is driven by some sort of metrics that determine how good or bad an employee is performing. Gehart and Fang (2015) concluded that external rewards such as pay for performance can positively influence workplace motivation.

Self-determination does not condemn pay for performance, but it acknowledges it can negatively impact quality of motivation if improperly administered (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). More specifically, SDT suggest that improper rewards can negatively impact autonomous motivation. Fang and Gerhart (2015) concluded that employees who favor PFP programs feel that they have more autonomy and intrinsic motivation not less. Kuvaas, Buch, Gagne, Dysvik and Forest (2016) conducted a study and found that different variables of pay does indeed impact autonomous and controlled motivation. The same study concluded that “through controlled motivation, annual variable PFP had a negative indirect relation with change in work effort” (Kuvass et al., 2016 p. 675).

The self-determination theory stresses the importance of providing an atmosphere that promotes autonomous motivation for employees’ wellbeing and high-quality

motivation. While pay for performance is not a bad tool, leaders should ensure that rewards are not hindering autonomous motivation and not driving negative behavior in attempt to receive rewards. To enhance autonomous motivation and provide the proper rewards, leaders must learn the needs that promote autonomous behavior while also satisfying the three basic psychological needs.

Researchers typically use the self-determination theory to discuss motivation in the workplace. It was used in this study as a way to not only address motivation but also as a concept to address job satisfaction. Research has shown that when leaders of organizations provide environments that incorporate autonomy, relatedness, and belongingness, employees job performance and satisfaction increase (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). The three psychological needs which are intrinsic in nature in addition to other intrinsic needs that will be identified by this study may help facilitate workplaces that meet the needs of employees and employers.

Elements of the Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon of interest is the extremely low organizational commitment that Millennials appear to exhibit. A review of the literature revealed that some researchers disagree on whether Millennials needs are different from previous generations. For instance, Naim and Lenka (2018) found that Millennials work values, ethics and styles are remarkably different than previous generational cohorts. Meanwhile, Krell (2017) cited a seven-year study that found the needs of Millennial are very similar to those of previous generations. For the topic of

Millennials, there are no key researchers or popular theorist that stood out or made a highly significant contribution to the research on Millennials.

The conceptual framework for this study consists of two concepts which are intrinsic needs and employee commitment. The first concept consists of one component which is identifying critical intrinsic workplace needs that are specific to the Millennial generational cohort. The first component is important because numerous researchers have indicated that Millennials exhibit different workplace needs, values and attitudes when compared to previous generational cohorts (Diskiene, Stankeviciene & Jurgaityte, 2017; Hoffman, 2018; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). This component aligns with the generational cohort theory. The generational cohort theory is based off the premise that growing up during a certain timeframe and in a specific environment systematically and predictably shapes the attitudes, values, and behaviors of members of a generational cohort (Fishman, 2016).

Accepting the fact that Millennials may have different needs due to them being from a different generational cohort, this research strived to identify those critical needs that were vital to improving organizational commitment. More specifically, this study focused on identifying intrinsic needs or motivators. Intrinsic needs were chosen because multiple researchers have indicated that the Millennial generation place high value on things such as work-life balance, feedback, meaningful work and career development (Keene & Handrich, 2015; Mishra & Mishra 2017). If leaders of organizations can identify these intrinsic needs and appeal to these needs, then they may possibly be able to increase job satisfaction. Identifying critical intrinsic needs that may increase job

satisfaction is significant because numerous studies have indicated that higher job satisfaction is often linked to higher organizational commitment (Rose & Raja, 2016).

The next concept of the framework is employee commitment. Employee commitment can be further broken down into three components. The first component is borrowed from the self-determination theory and is satisfying the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence. When these three basic psychological needs are met, employees typically exhibit higher levels of motivation. This is relevant because research has indicated that highly motivated employees typically experience higher job satisfaction (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Higher job satisfaction can be directly related to better work performance, better well-being and higher organizational commitment (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017; Rose & Raja, 2016).

The next component of employee commitment is promoting a workplace that not only satisfies the three basic psychological needs, but also the critical needs that were identified in the first concept of this framework. In order for this component of employee commitment to be successful, leadership in organizations will have to be willing to incorporate Millennials needs into their workplace culture. For example, Millennials are said to be big on work-life balance. A way to achieve this is by allowing telework or flexible schedules. Another example would be Millennials are big on corporate social responsibility (Severson, 2015). Organizations could allot a certain amount of time to volunteer hours each year while still paying the employee. Leaders of organizations do not have to cater to just Millennials, they can incorporate all generational cohorts, but they have to

remember that soon Millennials and Generation Z will soon represent the majority of their workforce.

The final component of employee commitment is creating a compensation or reward system that is innovative and meets the needs of the Millennial generation. This component can be incorporated with the last component by creating a workplace that appeals to the needs of Millennials and rewards them appropriately. This component is especially important because many organizations still offer basic compensation/reward plans, which are pay, health benefits, cash bonuses, and retirement options. This conceptual framework is not suggesting that leadership take a one size fits all approach, instead the framework is suggesting leaders learn from their employees and establish a work culture that appeals to them and compensate or reward them appropriately.

Literature Review

Generational Differences

Generations are different because over time a culture shifts due to certain formative events (Fishman, 2016). In addition, generations are also different because of how they grow-up in the environment that they are in (Civelek, çemberci, Aşçi, & Öz, 2017). The change in environment and shift in culture, causes changes in perceptions, new ways to accomplish everyday tasks and knowledge to explain the past. This change often leads to inaccurate information about managing multiple generations in the workplace, which could contribute to divisiveness, lack of production, and stereotyping within the organization. Leaders that do not understand generational differences are likely to characterize workplace conflicts as generational issues and blame negative behavior as

being because of one's age (Keene & Handrich, 2015). Not addressing generational issues may contribute to generational labels becoming self-fulfilling prophecies in which people attribute inappropriate work behavior to age (Maxfield, 2015).

Not all researchers believe that generational differences even exist in the workplace. Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early and Shepard (2017) conducted a study utilizing three hierarchical multiple regressions and found that the different generations exhibited roughly the same amount of work ethic. While conducting research on Millennials and leadership preferences, Valenti (2019) also concluded that the Millennial generation is not so different from previous generations.

Baby Boomers. As stated previously, different sources defined each generation differently. Zabel et al. (2017) stated Baby Boomers are individuals who were born between 1946 - 1964. The U.S. Census Bureau defined Baby Boomers as individuals born between 1944 - 1964 and they represent 75.4 million members of the population. Baby Boomers got their name due to the increase birthrate after World War II (Badley, Canizares, Perruccio, Hogg-Johnson, & Gignac, 2015). Baby Boomers were the first generation to take advantage of greater educational and employment opportunities and they also had better access to health and welfare services compared to previous generations. According to Ting and Run (2015), the defining moments of this generation were the civil rights movement, assassination of JFK, the women movement, the Cold War and the Vietnam War.

Generation X. The generation after Baby Boomers is known as Generation X and they are individuals born between 1961 - 1981 (Fishman, 2016). The Pew Research Center and the U.S. Census Bureau (2015) defined Generation X as individuals born between 1965 - 1980. Ting and Run (2015) defined this generation as individuals born between 1966 - 1979. Events that defined this generation included new feminism, spread of AIDS, the Challenger incident and the energy crisis (Ting & Run, 2015). This generation witnessed the transformation of gender roles and family structures in society (Civelek et al., 2017). Generation Xers were born in a time where America was in steady decline as a global power and the economy was struggling due to a stagnant job market and corporate downsizing (Kolarova, Fediova & Rasticova, 2016). They were influenced by computers, the downscaling of corporate America, the fall of Soviet Union and media such as MTV (Glazer, Mahoney, & Randall, 2019). Generation Xers typically prefer teamwork and are driven by a sense of belonging (Kolarova et al., 2016). Generation Xers core values include skepticism, fun, and informality (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015).

Millennials. The definition for Millennials varies depending on the source that is used to define the generation. The Pew Research Center defined Millennials as individuals born between 1981-1996. Fishman (2016) defined Millennials as individuals born from 1982 - 2000. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) also defined Millennials as individuals born between the years of 1982 - 2000. In 2015, The U.S. Census Bureau stated that Millennials represent more than a quarter of the population with 83.1 million members (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). In the first quarter of 2015, the Pew Research Center stated that Millennials had surpassed previous generations in the U.S. labor force

(Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi, 2017). The formative events of this generation are school violence, terrorist acts, personal computers, internet, and social media (Ting & Run, 2015). According to Bolser and Gosciej (2015), Millennials core values are realism, confidence, extreme fun, and being social.

Millennials' Characteristics

Naim and Lenka (2018) believed that Millennials' work values, ethics, and working styles are remarkably different than previous generations. Naim and Lenka (2018) found that Millennials are goal-oriented with a strong sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities. Keene and Handrich (2015) found that Millennials tend to value personal development and work-life balance over money and status. Mishra and Mishra (2017) investigated Millennials and found they work to live instead of live to work, which is the opposite of previous generations. Hoffman (2018) indicated that Millennials need to find meaning to their work, want to learn and grow, and that they are education driven. Diskiene, Stankeviciene, and Jurgaityte (2017) found that Millennials are family-centric, achievement-oriented and that they crave attention. Not only that, but they are technologically savvy, which contributes to the generation being socially connected individuals. Cordeiro and de Albuquerque (2017) also agreed that Millennials attitudes have been influenced by the digital environment, which explains why they are sometimes referred to as the Net Generation. Millennials are often described as activist who want to work for organizations that exhibit social responsibility. According to Severson (2015), a 2013 *Cone*

Communications Social Impact Study revealed that 78% of Millennial workers considers an organization's reputation for social responsibility when choosing where to work.

The problem with many of these descriptions for Millennials is there is not a lot of empirical evidence to support that Millennials are drastically different from any other generation. Many of the characteristics and workplace preferences that are used to describe Millennials can also be seen in members of previous generational cohorts and vice versa. Although Millennials are technology savvy, members of previous generations have done a good job at learning how to adapt to most of the advancements in technology. Many people, regardless of when they are born want to develop professionally and want to accomplish meaningful work.

Other researchers have highlighted what are perceived to be negative traits of the Millennial generation. Johnson and Ng (2015) indicated that Millennials have high self-esteem scores that were almost reaching narcissistic levels, which contributed to inflated self-views, self-liking, and self-satisfaction compared with previous generations. These characteristics are believed to lead to unrealistic expectations at work, a high need for praise and low organizational commitment (Johnson & Ng, 2015). Other negative characteristics that Millennials are said to have with very little empirical data to support these claims are laziness, defensiveness, neediness, no respect for authority and unwillingness to commit fully to work (Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi, 2017).

Although some researchers believe that Millennials have different workplace values, not all agree. Zaharee, Lipkie, Mehlman and Neylong (2018) referenced a 2017 study that "found that about the same percentage of Millennials (25%), Gen Xers (21%)

and Baby Boomers (23%) want to make a positive impact on their company” (p.52). Krell (2017) expanded on a seven-year study that found the needs of Millennials are very similar to those of previous generations within the workforce. Although Millennials are accused of being frequent job hoppers, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey and found that Millennials are just as likely to stay employed with their organization as Gen Xers were when they were younger adults (Fry, 2017). Comparing a 22-year-old college graduate to a 45-year-old with a family to support could bring very different perspectives when discussing organizational commitment.

Krell (2017) noted that while the Millennial generation is often said to be narcissist, other generations did not have the technology such as blogs and social media to broadcast their life. A 2018 Statista study showed that out of the 214 million Facebook users in the United States, 58.3 million were between the ages of 25-34 compared to 35.4 million for the ages of 45 - 54. This is a good representation of previous generations adapting to technology just like their Millennial counterparts. Although many researchers want to focus on generational differences, they should keep in mind that the majority of Millennials have either Gen Xers or Baby Boomers for parents. This generational connection at the very least should mean that most Gen Xers and Baby Boomers in the workplace should have a significant amount of experience in dealing with the Millennial generation.

Millennials Workplace Preferences

Professional development. A common theme that was observed when reviewing literature for Millennial employment needs is not only compensation, but also professional development (Hoffman,2018; Keene and Handrich, 2015; Zaharee et.al). Naim and Lenka (2018) used literature reviews to conduct a study and found that competency development is vital to increasing affective commitment. Zaharee et.al (2018) reference a 2017 study that concluded that after compensation, professional development was the most important motivator for Millennials. The same study also found that 71% of the participants would likely leave their organization within the next 24 months if they did not have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. One could ask are Millennials looking for professional development for personal satisfaction or are Millennials looking for professional development in order to make a higher salary to complement their education while also paying off school loans.

Leadership and feedback. Leaders, managers, and supervisors are responsible for a variety of activities that ensure employees are carrying out the goals and objectives of an organization. They are also responsible for enforcing certain HR polices and developing internal talent. With Baby Boomers retiring, many Gen Xers are fulfilling managerial roles along with older Millennials. This can sometimes lead to different perspectives on issues such as work ethic, leadership style, and authority in the workplace. If not properly handled, different perspectives can cause conflict, a frustrated workforce, and prevent organizations from reaching their goals (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015). Leadership plays an important role in retaining talent. Lee, Mullins and Young (2016) conducted a study using in-person surveys and regressions models to analyze data, found

that Millennials' job satisfaction and retention rates are significantly related to leadership style.

Omillion-Hodges and Sugg (2018) conducted a quantitative study using surveys and found that Millennials are seeking leaders that are dedicated, open-minded, culturally sensitive, relationally focused, approachable and ethical. Valenti (2019) conducted a survey and found that Millennials place high emphasis on leaders who provide coaching, show empathy, share information as well as allow workers to participate in decision-making process and enforce fairness. Bolser and Gosciej (2015) concluded that Millennials like to receive feedback, be coached, and be given the opportunity to develop into future leaders. Glazer et al. (2019) investigated Millennials and found that managers should provide clear performance expectations, reward good performance, and provide guidance and as much transparency as possible. Morrell and Abston (2018) concluded that praise and recognition by leadership may be more incentivizing than increases in pay for Millennials. Providing feedback and clear paths to develop are not only tools for retaining Millennials, they are also simple rewards that could serve to be very beneficial to some individuals within the workforce.

Work-life balance. A review of the literature indicated that work-life balance appears to be a major factor in job satisfaction for the Millennial generation. Work-life balance can be defined as a flexible work environment that engages workers and boosts organizational performance (Harrison, Mercier, Pika & Chopra, 2017). Examples of work-life balance benefits includes flexible hours,

telework, onsite daycares and fitness centers, parental leave, free vacations, life coaching and nap rooms. Morrel and Abston (2018) concluded through their research that compared to Baby Boomers and Gen Xers, Millennials place more value on leisure-time, and value working overtime less than the previous generations. Millennials are likely to become dissatisfied with their job and the organization if their work schedules interfere with their life outside of work.

Technology and Millennials

While not all researchers believe that the Millennial generation has different work values, it is obvious that the work environment has changed drastically over the last three decades due to the advancements in technology. The advancements in technology allows organizations to operate differently than they have in the past and this may impact how different generations interact within the workplace. Lee et al. (2016) believed that previous generations may find it hard to train Millennials due to the fact that Millennials tend to be the most educated and tech savvy group in the organization. While previous generations may be accustomed to face-to-face meetings and phone calls, Millennials are typically accustomed to emails, texts, webinars and online applications instead of traditional, lectured-based presentations. The fast pace that Millennials are accustomed to due to the advancements in technology may cause discord in the office amongst employees who are not so educated or tech savvy (Lee et al., 2016).

Technology has made it easier for employees to communicate not only to other coworkers, but also future employers. The internet and social media have made it easier than ever to apply for a job in just a matter of minutes. Individuals can create profiles on

platforms such as LinkedIn, Zip Recruiter, Career Builder, and Monster, which allows them to interact with recruiters and organizations looking to add talent. Mobile devices, personal computers and the internet allows employees to visit just about any organization's webpage in which they can see if the organization is currently hiring. Technology has changed how we go about our day-to-day business. Leaders of organizations may blame turnover on Millennials being different from other generations but Koppel et al. (2017) believed Millennial job hopping is a response to the many new opportunities available today's workforce.

Change in the Economy

Although there is a vast amount of research on Millennials and turnover, very little of that research addresses the state of the U.S. economy when Millennials began entering the workforce. Millennials began entering the workforce in the early to mid 2000s. Shortly after, 9/11 occurred and in 2007 the United States entered a recession which led to events such as the bailouts (automobile and banking) and high unemployment rates. In addition to those events, technology was rapidly advancing which eventually led to advanced automation products and the growth of online commerce. The growth of automation products and online commerce continues to impact many organizations to the point in which these organizations reduce staff and sometimes even close down the business. These factors amongst other factors contributed to a new economic landscape that impacted not only Millennials but all generations in the workforce. Many employment opportunities have disappeared because of technology, but many employment opportunities have also arisen due to the advancements in technology.

Researchers have well documented that Millennials not only have different work habits, but also, they display different life choices. Millennials are straying away from many of the historic patterns that previous generations followed and are buying homes and vehicles at a later age and also getting married at a later age (Berride, 2014). Perhaps the biggest economical issue impacting Millennials would be their education and school loan debt. With Millennials being the most educated generation, they are also the generation with the highest school loan debt. In addition to having more school loan debt, Millennials are underpaid compared to previous generational cohorts. Research has indicated that compared to similar age cohorts of previous generations, full-time Millennials are paid less than Baby Boomers and Gen Xers (Boone, 2019). According to Boone (2019), Gen Xers and Baby Boomers households made incomes of 11% and 14% more once the inflation-adjusted earnings of full-time workers were compared. The rising school cost and the necessity of having a degree will continue to impact Millennials motives in the workplace.

Employee Turnover

Much of the academic literature on the Millennial generation is contradicting at times, but one thing that researchers agree on is that Millennials are job hopping at an extremely high pace and the result is higher turnover rates. Employee turnover is inevitable, regardless if it is voluntary or involuntary it can have a significant impact on daily operations of an organization (Thomas, Brown, & Thomas, 2017). High turnover contributes to increases in cost in resources, recruiting, and time when replacing vacant positions (Cloutier et al., 2015). Employee turnover can be described as the ratio of an

organization's employees who leave the organization compared to the number of employees who stayed with the organization during certain period of time (Devi & Krishna, 2016).

The intention to leave an organization is typically referred to in academic literature as turnover intention (Thomas et al., 2017). Low, Ong and Tan (2017) defined turnover intention as the cognitive process of thinking about terminating employment with an organization, planning on leaving or simply the desire to leave an organization and find employment elsewhere. Turnover intention can be just as damaging as turnover if employees are more focused on leaving the organization than producing quality work. Turnover intention can contribute to absenteeism, low quality work, and resentment in the workforce if other employees are tasked with picking up the slack.

Research on turnover began at the beginning of the 20th century and it still remains a dominant discussion in today's academic literature. Early research on turnover examined the cost of turnover and attempted to determine who was responsible for managing turnover (Sarkar, 2018). The research also focused on setting up independent departments to oversee employee turnover and retention (Sarkar, 2018). Modern era research on turnover focuses on factors such as job opportunity, integration, pay, the employee's fit with the organization, and job satisfaction (Sarkar, 2018).

Published research on employee turnover does not provide an exact amount on how much it cost an organization when it loses an employee.

Researchers have estimated that the U.S. economy loses \$30.5 billion annually due to Millennial turnover (Adkins, 2016). According to Nolan (2015), an employee leaving an organization can cost as much as 250% of that employee's salary. Ertas (2015) believed that losing an employee in the private sector could cost an organization an estimated 50% to 200% of the employee's salary. These estimates can greatly increase when the individual leaving is a top organizational performer (Becton, Carr, Mossholder, & Walker, 2017). When turnover occurs, not only will an organization lose revenue, but it will also lose the opportunity to develop future leadership, which can contribute to poor succession planning. Losing high profile employees can be even more devastating when that individual represents the face of the organization. Losing high profile employees could cause a trickledown effect and cause other employees to search for other employment opportunities and faithful customers to leave for a new brand.

Diskiene, Stankeviciene, and Jurgaityte (2017), found that organizations are having a hard time attracting and retaining Millennials, who on average change jobs every two years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) reported that individuals between the ages of 55 - 64 had an average tenure of 10.1 years with their current organization while workers ages 25 - 34 had an average of 2.8 years. Researchers should note that as employees age, their priorities change which may also impact their future goals or employment desires. Naturally, one might expect a 45-year-old employee to be more stable than a 21-year-old college student who just graduated.

Research results on the main causes of turnover for Millennials are inconsistent. Hoffman (2018) believed the number one cause of Millennial turnover is the organization's

atmosphere within the workplace. A survey including 16,500 participants (employees of all ages) conducted by executive job board Ladders found that the most common reason for turnover was boredom and long hours (Fisher, 2018). Soundarapandiyan and Ganesh (2015) concluded that pay plays an integral role and if high performers are not paid the salary they feel they deserve then they will most likely leave the organization. Although there is an abundance of research on turnover, no research can pinpoint exactly why people quit their jobs. This is due to a variety of factors that determine whether an employee chooses to stay with an organization or chooses to leave. What organizations can do is create exit surveys for employees leaving the organization in an attempt to learn why employees are leaving. This may prove to be beneficial if employees are leaving at an unusual high rate.

Other factors that contribute to turnover include pay, education, industry, occupation, relational variables and the individual's perception of the quality of working life (Zito et al., 2018; U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). An individual's preference to work in the public or private sector may also influence turnover intentions. An individual's skillset and expertise may also play a role in the desire to stay with an organization (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi & Cocoran, 2017). When discussing turnover, regardless of the generation being researched, leaders should learn the trends of different industries and occupations. A prime example of this would be the expansion of the service industries and the demand

for highly skilled employees, which contributes to higher turnover rates (Soundarpandiyan & Ganesh, 2015).

A wage and salary report published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in January 2018, showed that workers in the public sector had a median tenure of 6.8 years compared to the private sector which had a median of 3.8 years. Also, employees who worked in major occupations had an average tenure of 5 years while employees who worked in service occupations had an average tenure of 1.9 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). A global study cited by Keene and Handrich (2015) indicated that 58% of Millennials expect to stay with an organization for three years or less. That same study also revealed that 25% of Millennials think that staying with an organization for just seven months shows that you are committed to that organization (Keene & Handrich, 2015). Researchers and leaders of organizations should note that not all turnover is due to low organizational commitment.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been defined numerous ways in academic literature. Agarwal and Sajid (2017) defined organizational commitment as an employee's psychological state with regard to how he views his relationship with the organization. According to Walden, Jung and Westerman (2017), organizational commitment is defined as the extent to which the employee and the employer feel that the relationship is worth spending time to maintain and promote. Guay, Choi, Oh, Mitchell, Mount and Shin (2016) described organizational commitment as "a strong belief in an organization and an acceptance of its goals and values, the willingness to give

considerable effort to the organization, and a strong desire to remain a member of the organization” (p.3).

Although the definitions slightly differ, each definition focuses on how the employee is psychologically connected to the organization. Out of the three descriptions utilized, only Walden et al., (2017) described organizational commitment as a mutual condition between the employer and the employee. Guay et.al, (2016) definition of organizational commitment included employees accepting an organization’s goals and values. Most organizations have a goal to operate as effectively as possible, which can sometimes mean reducing its human capital and investing in technology that can not only do the job but do it at higher quality. In many industries, technology has allowed organizations to rely less on human capital and more on technology in order to be more effective while also increasing profits. Examples include retail chains where cashiers are being replaced by automated checkouts and the postal service where postal workers who are being replaced by automated sorting machines. In industries or organizations where employees can be replaced by technology, it is easier to understand organizational commitment as a mutual condition between the employer and the employee.

In reviewing of the literature on organizational commitment, it was observed that many sources did not highlight the differences between attitudinal and behavioral commitment. Attitudinal commitment centers around the process by which employees think about their relationship with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2001). This is relevant because if employees feel their job is not safe

then they have very little reason to be committed to the organization. Behavioral commitment is the actual process by which employees become connected to an organization and how they manage internal process. (Meyer & Allen, 2001).

Behavioral commitment presents organizations with the opportunity to not only build a relationship with the employee but also the opportunity to sustain that relationship.

Knowing the difference between the two types could provide insight on how to develop strategies that increase organizational commitment.

The three components of organization commitment are normative commitment, affective commitment, and continuance commitment (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017).

Normative commitment is when an employee feels obligated to stay with the organization (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). Continuance commitment is when an employee feels the need to stay with an organization because if they were to leave the organization the loss would be greater than just staying with the organization (Khan, Jehan, Shaheen, & Ali, 2018).

Affective commitment represents the emotional attachment that employees have to the organization (Khan et al., 2018). In addition to those three dimensions, Lizote, Verdinelli and do Nascimento (2017) included a fourth dimension which is called the instrumental dimension. This dimension is the evaluation of the costs associated with the dismissal of the employee, as well as the calculation of profits and lost revenue involved in the exchange between the employee and the company. In order to understand the commitment that an employee may have, managers must attempt to develop positive working relationships with their employees. The more managers are able to learn about

their employees, the more they will be able to develop insight on the intentions of their employees.

Understanding organizational commitment is critical to any organization that wants to achieve a competitive advantage for the foreseeable future.

Organizational commitment is a fundamental element to achieve better performance in the private sector and greater efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector (Lizote et al., 2017). Research has proven that higher organizational commitment directly correlates with various individual and organizational outcomes such as increased job performance, better job satisfaction, enhanced motivation, increased organizational citizenship, reduce absenteeism and voluntary turnover (Khan et al., 2018). According to Smithkra and Suwannadet (2018), committed employees are more likely to work hard and stay with the organization because they believe in the goals and values of the organization. The more satisfied the employee is, the more likely that employee is to stay employed with the organization (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). In fact, a study conducted by Rose and Raja (2016) found that human resource practices and job satisfaction can directly influence organizational commitment.

Although Millennials are typically criticized for their low organizational commitment, Pereria, Malik and Sharma (2016) found that Gen Xers are more likely than Baby Boomers to exhibit low organizational commitment when they are not satisfied with their job. This could indicated that newer generations are more likely to leave an organization when they are not happy or it could also

indicated that older generations are so far into their career that it would not be beneficial to leave the organization even if they are not satisfied with their job. Another factor to consider are the changes in the workforce. As America has evolved, so has the workforce which has brought more opportunities. Also consider federal regulations that exist now that did not exist back when Baby Boomers and Gen Xers were the main generational cohorts in the workforce. These regulations have for the most part evened the playing field allowing women and minorities to apply for jobs that were not available to them in the past. Just because an employee leaves does not mean they have low organizational commitment; it could simply be just a better opportunity.

Understanding organizational commitment is important because organizations in all sectors have acknowledged that retaining skilled human capital is vital to achieving successful business objectives (Covella et al., 2017). Retaining Millennials represents a unique challenge for leaders of organizations because Millennials appear to be less committed to their organizations than previous generations. The lack of commitment contributes to a variety of factors that may negatively impact an organization's daily operations such as poor succession planning, low motivation, inadequate work performance, absenteeism and turnover.

Employee Retention

Millennials low organization commitment is contributing to high turnover rates which is making employee retention a hot topic for leaders of organizations. Employee retention is defined as the ability of an organization to keep valued human capital who contribute to organizational success for as long as the relationship is mutually favorable

(Micahel, Prince, & Chacko, 2016). Employee retention is vital if organizations want to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. Cloutier et al. (2015) suggested that successful employee retention strategies can lead to an organization's stability, growth and increased revenue. Organizations' retention strategies are enhanced when organizations embrace certain proactive management practices that encompass employee engagement, empowerment, career development opportunities, competitive salaries and benefits (Bhattacharyya, 2015). Other important retention factors include organizational culture, communication and flexible work schedules (Mishra & Mishra, 2017).

Addressing retention strategies is important for any organization and it should always be a part of any organization's strategic plan. High performers who leave the organization not only take their knowledge and skills, but they also may take trade secrets that can benefit the competition. When replacing talent, it often takes time to get the new employee up to speed which could negatively impact customer service and other aspects of work-related activities. Bhattacharyya (2015), noted that often times when top talent leaves the organization, they sometimes take other employees with them causing even more of an issue for brand management. Talent management begins before employees are hired and all the way up to employees' last days. An important part of talent management is finding employees who fit what the organization is looking for and also realizing that over time employees' needs change. In order satisfy those needs overtime, organizations must constantly engage their employees to develop strategies that

work for the employee and the organization. According to Lee et al. (2016), employee retention is directly influenced by job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined in a variety of ways in scholarly sources. Agarwai and Sajid (2017) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable feeling that an employee experiences from the fulfillment of important job values. Catherine, Muthuveloo, and Teoh (2018) defined job satisfaction as the emotional response from an employee that stems from the perceived fulfillment of significant job values. Kong et al. (2015) used a simpler definition and defined it as the general attitude that an employee feels toward their job. All of these definitions focus on how the individual feels about their job and the organization that they work for.

Understanding job satisfaction is important because studies have shown that it has a direct effect on organizational commitment (Rose & Raja, 2016; Zito et al., 2018). Job satisfaction has consequences at both the organizational and individual level (Zito et al., 2018). At the organizational level, job satisfaction impacts intention to change jobs, absenteeism, group performance, quality of products and services, customer satisfaction, and the propensity to implement organizational citizenship behaviors ((Zito et al., 2018). At the individual level job satisfaction/ dissatisfaction can influences life satisfaction and health (Zito et al., 2018). Millennials are often criticized because of their lack of organizational commitment, but they are not the only generation to leave their organization in search of something better. A study conducted by Riza, Ganzch, and Liu (2018) showed that the more employees aged, the less satisfied they become with their

organization and their job, which causes them to transition to another organization in order to achieve job satisfaction.

Employee Motivation

Research has shown that Millennials have considerably different attitudes in regard to work when compared to other generations, which contributes to the need of different organizational compensation and benefits practices in order to keep them motivated (Morrell & Abston, 2018). Employee motivation is closely related to employee engagement and employee retention (Mishra & Mishra, 2017). Motivation can come from within or it can come from external factors. Internal motivation is typically referred to as intrinsic motivation. External motivation is referred to as extrinsic motivation. Key figures in the discussion of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are Richard Ryan and Edward Deci. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), people are motivated by different factors with highly varied experiences and consequences.

Intrinsic motivation can be described as doing an activity because the activity in itself is satisfying to the individual. (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Humans display intrinsic motivational tendencies frequently, and research has shown that the maintenance and enhancement of these behaviors requires supportive conditions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Activities that provide a reward and are pleasant in nature are typically intrinsically motivated (Mishra & Mishra, 2017). Motivation that is influenced by an employee's needs, values and interest will lead to a higher quality of personal satisfaction and motivation (Rigby & Ryan

2018). Employees can be more intrinsically motivated for certain aspects of their work-related activities than others. When this occurs, it can still lead to individuals displaying high-quality performance and wellness (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). Understanding intrinsic motivation allows managers to develop environments that support natural tendencies, which not only benefit the employee but the organization as well.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome. Link (2017) suggested that external motivation is instrumental in nature because although the activity is not performed out of interest it is needed to produce a desired outcome. Extrinsic motivation is not a bad desire or behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It can either enhance or hinder intrinsic motivation depending on the situation and environment (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). Millennial motivation was an important topic for researchers in 2018 with more than 2600 articles being published on Google Scholar (Morrel & Abston, 2018).

Employee Engagement

In the academic literature reviewed on Millennials and organizational commitment employee engagement was frequently mentioned. Employee engagement can be defined as the extent to which employees are emotionally connected and displaying behaviors consistent with good job performance (Morrell & Abston 2018). Employees who are engaged are not only excited and enthusiastic about the work that they do but they are also strongly committed to the organization's mission (Carrillo, Castellano & Keune, 2017). Although employee engagement is typically a positive factor in reducing turnover many employees are not engaged (Morrel & Abston, 2018; Carillo, Castellano & Keune, 2017).

Human Resource Management

When reviewing the literature on Millennials and the high turnover rates, very few authors discussed or acknowledge the role of human resource management in addressing the issue. Most literature differed the responsibility of retaining talent to leadership and supervisors. However, Barcan (2018) found that human resource management plays a vital role in enhancing communication amongst leaders and employees and it also facilitates organizational development. Human resource management should play a vital role in addressing turnover issues. Devi and Krishna (2016) conducted a study with a sample size of 250 participants and found that ineffective HR practices have a significant impact on employee turnover rates. Singhvi and Sharma (2018) also conducted a study and found that there is a significant relation of “employee’s performance with HRM practice including recruitment & selection, training a development, performance appraisal, career development, compensation, rewards, and employee performance” (p. 84). Rose and Raja (2016) concluded that human resource practices play a vital role in job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Talent Management

Talent management is a human resource management function that represents an organization’s ability to recruit, hire, develop, and retain valuable employees (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). According to Hoffman (2018), talent management is especially important when dealing with Millennials because most Millennials start to look for a new job before they have been with an organization

for three years, 24% of them are only with the organization for six months before they start looking elsewhere, and 30% of them start looking for a new position between 12 and 18 months. Every employee, regardless of what generational cohort they belong to has a value to the organization that they are employed with. This value represents talent and is often referred to as human capital. Human capital is defined as the knowledge, skills, and abilities that an individual has based on their education and experience (Greer, Lusch & Hitt, 2017). Human capital is the only differentiator that helps organizations survive, sustain and attain a competitive advantage (Greer et al., 2017; Sarkar, 2018).

Organizations that are proactive and committed to their success clearly recognize that the most vital and valuable resource of competitive advantage is its employees (Sarkar, 2018). With Baby Boomers retiring, Millennials exhibiting low organizational commitment and competition for scarce skills, the attraction and retention of quality human capital has emerged as one of the biggest challenges in talent management (Michael, Prince & Chacko, 2016). Hoffman (2018) suggested that the most important talent management strategy for retention is communication with all employees.

Employment Compensation/Rewards

Organizations may offer a variety of incentives, rewards, and benefits to employees. Scholarly literature has suggested that key incentives/benefits for Millennials include compensation, career development, feedback, meaningful work, and good work-life balance (Zaharee et. al, 2018; Keene & Handrich, 2015; Mishra & Mishra, 2017).

Organizations vary on what they offer and often times larger organizations can offer more benefits than smaller organizations. Yet large and small organizations continue to

struggle with turnover regardless of size or sector. Numerous researchers have clearly identified the rewards Millennials prefer, but little research has been done to show the impact of these rewards and compensation packages on Millennials' loyalty to organizations when these rewards are implemented. The lack of empirical data could suggest that although Millennials do place a high value on elements such as meaningful work, they still value a high degree of preference for materialistic rewards (McGinnis-Johnson & Ng, 2016).

Compensation. Scholarly research on compensation began between 1900 and 1930 Sarkar (2018). In the early 1900s, compensation was dictated by supervisors in the workforce and by the individual's productivity (Sarkar, 2018). Compensation was heavily used as a motivational tool to increase work performance with little regard to how it impacted employee turnover (Sarkar, 2018). Fast forward to today, and now employees have more power than ever to negotiate their compensation based on factors such as transparency of pay practices, increased education, and government regulation (minimum wage laws). The emergence of job search technology has made the process of job-hopping extremely easy. Compensation is a major factor in whether an employee chooses to stay with an organization or leave that organization. Petrucelli (2017) found that most organizations in the corporate world have yet to catch up to Millennials' budding demands, which contributes to many organizations struggling to retain their top talent.

According to Michael et al. (2016) compensation “is the human resource management function that deals with every type of reward individual’s receive in exchange for performing organizational tasks, with a desired outcome of an employee who is attracted to work, satisfied, and motivated to do a good job for the employer” (p.36). Organizations in all sectors recognize the role that compensation plays in attracting and retaining employees. According to Sarkar (2018) organizations should understand that employees are not only their biggest expense, but also their biggest investment. An employee’s willingness to stay employed with an organization is largely dependent upon the compensation package the employee receives (Michael et al., 2016). A study cited by Hoffman (2018) indicated that 89% of Millennials said they would stay with their current employer for 10 or more years if there was opportunity for career progression and regular increases in compensation. Morrell and Abston (2019) investigated Millennials and how they are compensated and suggested that organizations increase opportunities for leisure time to improve work-life balance and also provide a better mix of pay and benefits that is customized to meet the needs of employees. Although there are a variety of ways to compensate employees, financial rewards have proven to be one of the biggest motivators for Millennials and other generations within the workforce (Zaharee et al., 2018).

When discussing compensation most individuals typically think of pay, but compensation can be disbursed in a variety of ways to include salary, time-off, bonuses, profit-sharing, retirement plans and other rewards that show employees they are a valuable component of the organization. Pay typically dominates the discussion on

compensation but benefits such as health, dental and vision are just as important with the rising cost of healthcare. Lee (2018) found that the more employees understand their healthcare and retirement benefits the better the morale and employee retention. Pay is obviously important, but employees who desire more than just a pay check need compensation or rewards that fits their needs. If organizations overlook this vital factor, then they could mistakenly contribute to employee dissatisfaction. Numerous studies have documented ways to reward Millennials in the workplace, but it appears not many organizations adopt these strategies based on the literature reviewed for Millennials and organizational commitment (Mishra & Mishra 2017, Keen & Handrich, 2015).

Employee turnover has impacted organizations in all sectors and all sizes. Although higher monetary compensation has been linked to higher retention rates the Millennial generation appears to want more than just a high salary. Numerous scholarly articles have recommended that organizations provide Millennials personal development opportunities, career advancement opportunities, good work-life balance, and meaning to their work (Hoffman, 2018; Keene & Handrich, 2015). Petrucelli (2017) suggested developing a college student loan assistance program and believed it would not only benefit the employee but the organization as well. For organizations who don't have the revenue to inflate their employees' salary they should attempt to develop compensation packages that will satisfy the needs of their employees and their lifestyles. As Michael et al. (2016) noted, effective compensation packages are vital to keeping key

employees around and retaining high performing human capital that are essential to maintaining a business that consistently thrives in any market. Giving employees a voice in the design of compensation packages may contribute to job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover (Michael et al., 2016).

Previously Used Methodologies and Theories

There are numerous theories and studies that have been used to attempt to address Millennials and their lack of organizational commitment. Different researchers have utilized different research designs to attempt to better understand the relationship of generational differences and organizational commitment. A common theory that is used to attempt to explore talent management is the social exchange theory.

Glazer et al. (2019) conducted a recent exploratory study utilizing 156 surveys via social media. The quantitative study utilized the perceived organizational support and social exchange theories to research the role of employee development in organizational commitment. The study focused solely on Millennials and Gen Xers. The study found when compared to Gen Xers, Millennials continuance commitment were lower, but there were no differences in normative or affective commitment. In addition, the study also concluded that Gen Xers when provided with employee developmental opportunities, they display more affective and normative commitment than Millennials.

Mishra and Mishra (2017) conducted a qualitative study that researched the impact of intrinsic motivational factors on employee retention, in regard to Millennial employees. The research design for this study was a single case study that included the interview of 50 participants. Researchers did not directly identify what theory(s) they

used to guide their study, but they did briefly discuss the self-determination theory, Maslow's self-actualization, Herzberg's motivation factors and McGregor's Theory Y motivation. Table 1 shows intrinsic motivational factors that were explored.

Table 1
Common Intrinsic Motivational Factors

Job Enrichment	Curiosity	Choice	Learning Facility	Work-life balance
Job Involvement	Control	Competence	Autonomy	Engagement
Empowerment	Competition	Progress	Responsibility	Recognition
Creativity	Co-operation	Happiness	Open culture	Opportunities
Challenging Work	Talent Management	Knowledge Management	Open communication	Leadership Opportunities

Note. Common intrinsic motivational factors that were explored during interviews with Millennial employees (Mishra & Mishra, 2017).

The study concluded that these intrinsic motivational factors influence employee retention. However, the study did not quantify the findings and suggested that future research be conducted on a large sample size to draw a holistic conclusion on the relationship of these factors and employee retention. Looking at the factors listed, it is fair to ask whether these factors are truly intrinsic in nature. In its simplest form, intrinsic motivation can be described as motivation driven from within and not by external rewards. When using factors such as open communication, talent management, control, and learning facility it is hard to label these factors as intrinsic.

Agrawal and Sajid (2017) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between personality traits and organizational commitment of Gen X and Millennial

employees in the private sector. The study consisted of 160 participants, 80 were Gen Xers and 80 were Millennials. For a research design, Agrawal and Sajid utilized the Personality Factor Questionnaires by Cattell (1943) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire created by Allen and Meyer in 1990. Comparing Gen Xers and Millennials responses, cross-sectional differences in personality and organizational commitment were examined. The results found that Gen Xers and Millennials personality and organizational commitment were significantly different. The study also concluded that personality traits influence organizational commitment for Gen Xers but has no influence on Millennials' organizational commitment. Factors that contribute to increased organizational commitment included working environments, organizational culture, reward systems, and career development (Agrawal and Sajid, 2017). This study was especially unique because it focused on personality traits instead of only on differences assumed to be due to generational differences like most published literature on the topic.

The social exchange theory is a common theory that is utilized to attempt to better understand the relationship between an employee and the organization. According to Low et al. (2017) the social exchange theory argues that employees perceive enjoyable working conditions as a gift from the organization, therefore the employees will respond by increasing effort, even if the effort is not rewarded. Guay et al. (2016) suggested that the social exchange theory centered interdependent relationships that are formed between an organization and its employees, whereby each party's behavior impacts the other actions. Literature on Millennials has suggested that Millennials like feedback from leadership and that

they like to have positive working relationships with their leadership (Valenti 2019; Bolser & Gosciej, 2015).

Technology advancements in the workplace has made it easier than ever for coworkers to communicate and establish relationships inside and outside of the workplace. Millennials are technologically savvy which contributes to the generation being socially connected individuals and making it easier to establish working relationships. The social exchange theory states that all social relationships in the workplace are created, maintained, or severed based on exchange of mutual benefit (Naim & Lain, 2018). Technology has presented all generations with the ability to establish social relationships within the workplace. If these social relationships are to be created and sustained it will be up to the employees and the leaders of organizations to make sure that they are mutually beneficial.

Numerous studies have utilized the social exchange theory to address talent management, organizational commitment and retention issues (Benson, Brown, Glennie, O'Donnell, & O'Keefe, 2018; Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Moin, 2018). Moin (2018) conducted a study utilizing a survey that found that leaders affective display has a direct impact on follower's affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. Moin (2018) suggested that leaders utilize deep acting to improve an employee's commitment to the organization. Festing and Schäfer (2014) proposed that when the war on talent prevails, leaders should focus on training, development, career advancement and highly engaging talent management policies for Generation X and Millennials. Benson et al. (2018) compared Gen Xers to Baby Boomers and found that

Gen Xers are more likely to exchange high career development satisfaction for higher levels of organizational commitment. They did not include Millennials in this study, which begs the question of which exchanges between Millennial employees and leaders of organizations need to occur in order to positively impact organizational commitment?

Summary and Conclusions

The literature on the Millennial generational cohort proved to be quite contradicting at times. Numerous researchers have described Millennials in different ways, yet there appears to be a lack of empirical evidence supporting these claims or labels. What the literature did make clear is that Millennials prefer meaningful work, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, employee engagement and they like plenty of feedback. Although Millennials prefer these characteristics at the organization they are employed with, compensation is still an important factor. These preferences have been documented for years but Millennials are continuing to exhibit low organizational commitment. Although numerous researchers have made these preferences clear, not much research has been done on organizations who have been incorporating these work-related preferences into their organizational strategies. The results of this study may be able to add to and fill gaps in literature by providing valuable insight on how appealing to intrinsic needs such as opportunities for professional development supportive work environments impacts organizational commitment.

Scholars, researchers, and members of previous generational cohorts will continue to debate just how different Millennials are compared to other generations, but that will not change the organizational commitment issues that continue to plague today's workforce. Generational cohorts will continue to enter and exit the workforce and leaders of organizations will have to learn about these generational members. Leaders will have to create strategies and policies that support a multigenerational workforce. This literature review covered a variety of topics and was presented in a way to provide a holistic approach to understanding the relationship between organizations and employees. Most studies have focused solely on the actions and intentions of the Millennial generation. This literature review made it a point to also focus on organizations and the strategies that they utilize to keep talent. Topics covered were generational descriptions, advancements in technology impacting the workforce, changes to the economy, organizational commitment, employee turnover and retention, job satisfaction, employee motivation and engagement and finally employee compensation. The literature review also briefly discussed other research studies and methodologies that were used to address Millennials and turnover. The following chapter will present readers with detailed information on the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology and issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. Millennials in America have been in the workforce for almost two decades and they continue to exhibit low organizational commitment by continuing to frequently change job. The lack of organizational commitment of this generational cohort could indicate that workplace needs are not being satisfied or that employers do not understand what Millennials desire in workplace.

Although there is an abundance of research on Millennials' workplace needs, most of the findings from these studies contradict each other and it remains unclear if Millennials' work values are different than previous generations. This study did not compare generations, instead research was conducted in order to provide insight on how Millennials perceive organizational commitment and if or how their organizational commitment was impacted when intrinsic needs were satisfied/dissatisfied. This chapter includes the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The phenomenon of interest for this research is the extremely low organizational commitment that the Millennial generation appear to exhibit. The central concepts of this study were Millennials, organizational commitment and intrinsic needs. For this study, Millennials were individuals born between the

years of 1982 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Organizational commitment is defined as the employee's psychological state with respect to their relationship with the organization. Intrinsic needs (also known as intrinsic motivators) is defined as doing an activity because the activity is rewarding in itself (Deci et al., 2017).

The research being conducted for this study utilized a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach. A qualitative inquiry was chosen over a quantitative inquiry because the research was exploratory in nature with the goal of using the information eventually for a larger study. The research was guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research allows researchers to explore how people make sense of experiences and transform those experiences into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning (Patton, 2015). Researchers using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach seek to build a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by interpreting data and uncovering its meaning, rather than providing an accurate analysis of participant's descriptions (Hein & Austin, 2001). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach differs from other phenomenological approaches by acknowledging that researchers cannot place aside their assumptions or experiences, instead they must make them known (Hein & Austin, 2001). When conducting hermeneutic phenomenological studies researchers do not employ bracketing, instead researchers consider their experiences throughout the research (Hein & Austin, 2001).

Grounded theory is a qualitative approached that is used to develop theories through the collection and analysis of data (Burkholder et al., 2016). Grounded theory was not a viable option for this research design because the purpose of this study was not

to create a new theory or further develop the self-determination theory or the generational cohort theory. Instead, this study focused on how Millennials were experiencing organizational commitment within the workforce. Choosing the hermeneutic phenomenological approach allowed for better understanding of the essences to the shared experiences of this phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Research questions are direct extensions of the research problem and they signify the purpose of the research being conducted (Burkholder et al., 2016). Research questions also establish boundaries for research studies (Burkholder et al., 2016). The research question for this study was what are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment?

Role of the Researcher

For this research, I served as the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis stages of the study. Traditional phenomenology requires researchers to use bracketing in order to ensure that the “researcher sets aside his or her presuppositions, biases, and other knowledge of the phenomenon obtained from personal and scholarly sources” (Hien & Austin, 2001, p.3). However, hermeneutic phenomenology requires researchers to acknowledge their assumptions, perspectives and personal experiences (Hein & Austin, 2001). Through the lived experiences of myself and the participants, I was better able to better understand the essence of the phenomenon.

The research conducted centered around Millennials employed in the private sector and I am employed by an organization in the public sector. I have

no subordinates and I did not allow any participant to participate who may have indirectly reported to me. I utilized skype audio and email to collect data from participants.

Although it is imperative in hermeneutic phenomenological research that the researcher make his experiences explicit, I did not allow my personal views or biases to influence the outcome of the study. I thoroughly document my experience as a Millennial and job-hopper utilizing a reflexivity memo throughout the entirety of the study. Researcher reflexivity allows researchers to systematically assess their identity, positionality, and subjectivities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Lastly, I was responsible for ensuring that participants' information was safeguarded. This was accomplished by assigning participants identifiers after they had been selected to participate in the study. Utilizing numbers allowed myself to reference participants by their identifier instead of using personal identifying information.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population for this study was working Millennials. Millennials for this study was defined as individuals born between 1982 - 2000. Work experience was defined as employment either on a full time or part-time basis. Volunteering or unpaid internships did not count as work experience. The sampling method for this study was purposive sampling. The specific type of purposive sampling was snowball sampling. Snowball sampling or chain sampling is when the researcher begins with a few relevant and information-rich interviews and then ask the interviewees for additional relevant contacts, individuals who can provide different and or confirming perspectives (Patton, 2015). The

specific strategy was chosen because it allowed me the opportunity to select information rich sources that have experienced the phenomenon and fit the criteria of the research.

The criteria for which participant selection is based was as follows. Participants must have been born between January 1, 1982 and December 31, 2000. Participants must have been employed full-time continuously the last five years with a break of no more than 30 days. For the purpose of this study, full-time was considered working 30 or more hours per-week. Participants must currently be employed in the private sector. Lastly, the participant must have resided in the Oklahoma City, OK region. Participants eligibility for the study was verified by having the participant complete a short nonintrusive demographic questionnaire that determines if they met the criteria of the study.

I established a pool of 26 individuals in order to have a good sample size. In order to recruit potential participants, I utilized local Facebook groups (which cannot be identified in order to protect participants' identities) and also asked participants if they knew somebody who met the criteria and would be willing to participate in the study. I utilized my Facebook account to reach out to participants by posting a recruiting electronic message (as seen in appendix six). Participants who indicated that they were willing to participate I sent them an informed consent form and a research invitation. The invitation included a brief background on myself, purpose of the research, criteria to participate in the study and a deadline to respond to the invitation.

Recipients of the message who responded back “I consent” were considered potential participants. Potential participants were asked to verify that they met the criteria for the study by completing a demographic questionnaire that was sent to their personal email. Once responses from demographic questionnaires were completed, I then set up interview times based on the participant’s availability. Interviews were conducted until data saturation occurred at the 15th participant. Data saturation occurs when no new information on the phenomenon reveals itself in the data collection process.

Instrumentation

For this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research study, I served as the primary data collection instrument. In addition, I utilized reflexivity memos, an interview protocol with semi-structured interview questions, audio recordings from the structured interviews, and MAXQDA to assist in transcribing and analyzing data. Hermeneutic phenomenological research requires the researcher to make his experiences in relation to the phenomenon known explicitly (Hein & Austin, 2001). I documented my experiences explicitly, by utilizing a reflexivity memo to document my assumptions, biases and personal views of the phenomenon (Hien & Austin, 2001). Using memos played a vital role in helping myself sustain reflexivity throughout the entirety of the research process and ensured that my biases were not influencing the study.

Most qualitative research requires direct responses from participants in order to provide accurate descriptions of the phenomenon from the participants’ perspective (Burkholder et al., 2016). In order to get direct responses from participants, I used semi-structured interviews in order to capture the participants’ lived experiences in relation to

the phenomenon being studied. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to utilize a script but also ask probing questions when the need arose to learn more about the phenomenon being study. Interview questions used on the interview protocol were developed by utilizing peer-reviewed scholarly resources on key concepts guiding the research. In order to ensure that participants' voices were accurately depicted, the interview session were recorded, then transcribed and analyzed using Microsoft Word and MAXQDA qualitative software. The MAXQDA software was installed on a MacBook Air laptop. An attachable microphone was connected to the MacBook Air when interviews are being conducted in order to assist with more accurate transcribing. The instrumentation for this study was tested in the pilot study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate researcher-developed instruments and test the quality of the research design to improve upon the study design prior to the actual study being conducted (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). For this study, I conducted a pilot study in order to ensure the proposed research design and instrumentation being utilize was feasible and constructed in a manner that was designed to answer the research question. The pilot study followed the same protocol as the study, except only two participants were selected to participate in the study.

In order to recruit potential participants, I utilized local Facebook groups (which cannot be identified in order to protect participants' identities) and also asked participants if they knew somebody who met the criteria and would be

willing to participate in the study. I utilized my Facebook account to reach out to participants by posting a recruiting electronic message (see Appendix 6).

Participants who indicated that they were willing to participate I sent them an informed consent form and a research invitation. The invitation included a brief background on myself, purpose of the research, criteria to participate in the study and a deadline to respond to the invitation.

Recipients of the message who responded back “I consent” were considered potential participants. Potential participants were asked to verify that they met the criteria for the study by completing a demographic questionnaire that was sent to their personal email. Once responses from demographic questionnaires were completed, I then set up interview times based on the participant’s availability. All data for the pilot study was conducted via skype audio and email.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

In order to recruit potential participants, I utilized local Facebook groups (which cannot be identified in order to protect participants’ identities) and also asked participants if they knew somebody who met the criteria and would be willing to participate in the study. I utilized my Facebook account to reach out to participants by posting a recruiting electronic message (as seen in appendix six). Participants who indicated that they were willing to participate I sent them an informed consent form and a research invitation. The invitation included a brief background on myself, purpose of the research, criteria to participate in the study and a deadline to respond to the invitation.

Recipients of the message who responded back “I consent” were considered potential participants. Potential participants were asked to verify that they met the criteria for the study by completing a demographic questionnaire that was sent to their personal email. Once responses from demographic questionnaires were completed, I then set up interview times based on the participant’s availability. All data for the pilot study was conducted via skype audio and email.

I served as the primary data collection instrument for the entirety of this study. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with participants selected to participate in the study. I took notes during interviews to document any thoughts that arose during the interview. Utilizing reflexivity memos and interview notes helps the researcher create audit trails during the research process (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019).

The interview method was selected as the best form of data collection for this study because interviews allow the researcher to solicit the perspectives of the individuals he or she wishes to study (Saldana, Leavy, & Beretvas, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were conducted until data saturation occurred with the 15th participant. The data collection process lasted 15 to 27 minutes. I conducted all interviews over a 14-day period. Data were recorded using a MacBook Air preloaded with Microsoft Word and MAXQDA qualitative research software and a microphone to assist with transcribing.

Semistructured interviews were scheduled based on the participants availability. I used Skype audio and email to collect data from participants. Once the participant and the researcher agree on a time and date, I scheduled the interview. Some interviews were conducted immediately after the participant the participant reviewed the informed consent form and research invitation.

Prior to the start of the actual interview, the participant was assigned an identifier that started with a P and was followed by a number. An example would be P1, P2, and P3. I then created a secured electronic folder for the participant after receiving the informed consent form and the demographic data form. The electronic folder consisted of the participant's identifier, demographic questionnaire, invitation email, signed informed consent form, interview protocol and all data collected from the participant. Participants' folders are stored on a secured MacBook Air and are password protected. The purpose of the identifier is to help protect the participant personal information and it was used for data organization purposes. After the participant identifier was assigned and the folder was created then the data collection process started.

At the end of each interview, I conducted a debriefing with the participant using a script from the interview protocol. The same script was utilized for each participant. The debriefing script provided participants with my information in order to answer any questions the participant may later have, as well as provide the participant with the opportunity to request a copy of the transcript of the interview. The script also informed participants that the researcher may have questions after the interview has been transcribed and if this occurs the researcher would reach out via email. The follow-up

plan if recruitment results in too few participants was to expand the radius of the study and include not only participants from the Oklahoma City, OK, region but other parts of Oklahoma as well.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis helps researchers reveal to others through fresh insights what has been observed and discovered about the human condition in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Saldana et al., 2011). When conducting research, researchers should strive to collect and analyze data as thoroughly as possible. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants utilizing an interview protocol. In addition to semi-structured interviews, I utilized reflexivity memos and field notes to accurately collect data and document other pertinent information that may impact the study. Data were collected until data saturation occurred with the 15th participant. There was one research question and all interview questions were developed to collect data for that research question. Interviews were conducted based on individual participants' availability and all data were collected via the semi-structured interview protocol in order to preserve the trustworthiness of the study.

The data analysis plan for this study consisted of three parts: (a) transcribe and review the data, (b) data analysis, and (c) synthesizing and reporting on the findings. I verified that all the pertinent information such as demographic sheet, informed consent form, and contact information. After the participant identifier was assigned and the secure folder was created then the data collection was started using a semistructured interview.

Data were transcribed using Microsoft Word and MAXQDA version 2018 software that was installed on a secured MacBook Air. Data transcribing occurred within 72 hours of the interview for the data to remain fresh on the researcher's mind. Once data were transcribed, I reviewed the entire transcript to ensure there were no discrepancies with the transcription. If there were discrepancies, I contacted the participant to resolve the discrepancy in the data.

Qualitative data analysis is the systematic process of creating order, structure and meaning to the masses of data collected (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). The systematic process includes generating categories; identifying themes and coding the data (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). After I reviewed field notes and the transcripts for discrepancies, I then analyzed the data. I used utilized MAXQDA software version 2018 to organize and develop codes. Codes are words or phrases that “symbolically assigns a summative, salient essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 3). Codes were then utilized to develop categories and themes that helped to understand the essence of the phenomenon being studied. I utilized open coding and went line by line to identify codes, which were then assigned to categories and then converted to themes. During the coding process, I utilized memos to provide insight on the coding process. Each participant's transcript was analyzed and coded separately. Once all transcripts were coded, I then began to look for patterns to assist me with developing categories and themes. In order to account for researcher bias, I conducted member checks.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the researcher's ability to accurately capture the participant's viewpoint of the topic or phenomenon being study (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). In order to ensure credibility for this study, I utilized reflexivity memos and member checks. Reflexivity memos allowed me to monitor my subjective perspectives and biases in order stay open and honest during the research process. I also used member checks as a tool to enhance credibility. Member checks involved me providing participants with a summary of the researcher's interpretation of the interview.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to how applicable or transferable are the findings of a study to a broader context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In order to achieve transferability for this study, I thoroughly outlined the purposeful sampling strategy. The researcher also incorporated thick descriptions to describe the study's setting and the data collection process.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to how researchers go about collecting their research. It focuses on the process of the research and making sure it was logical, traceable and thoroughly documented (Patton, 2016). To accomplish dependability, I utilized audit trails. I provided in-depth explanations of how data were collected and analyzed as well as I maintained all field notes

and transcripts. Using audit trails allows future researchers to replicate my actions if they are to repeat this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to “establishing that the researcher’s findings and interpretations are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions have been reached” (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019 p. 204). To achieve confirmability, I utilized reflexivity memos to thoroughly document my thoughts, perceptions, biases and objectivities. Using reflexivity memos allowed me to ensure my biases did not manipulate my interpretation of the data. I also relied heavily on audit trails and made sure all methodological, conceptual, theoretical and analytic choices were clearly documented throughout the entirety of the research.

Ethical Procedures

For this qualitative study, I conducted research in a manner which minimized potential harm to participants involved in the study. All participants were treated with the most utmost respect and they were informed that they could choose to stop participating in the research study at any point and time. I followed all steps that were required by Walden University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the research committee.

I utilized informed consent forms, safeguarded participants’ personal information by storing them in encrypted files, and work with Institutional Review Board to ensure that all data collected and stored was done so in an ethical manner. All participants information was stored separately, labeled by the appropriate participant identifier and stored for five years. The informed consent forms clearly articulated the following areas:

research description, risks and benefits, data storage to protect confidentiality, how results will be used, and the participant's rights. I ensured anonymity of information collected from research participants by using participant identifiers instead of the participants' personal information. The study did not require participants to provide the name of organizations that they were employed with in the past or their current place of employment. I reviewed all data and made sure that data collected could not be traced back to participants. I did not encounter any conflict of interest during this research study. All data were collected via Skype audio and email. All interviews were conducted separately. No ethical issues arose during the research process.

Summary

Chapter 3 presented readers with in-depth information on the methodology of this proposed study. The presentation of the methodology was accomplished by identifying the purpose of the study and the rationale for choosing the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to address the phenomenon being studied. Chapter three went into further detail and provided insight on participant selection, how data would be collected, the qualitative software that would be used and how data would be analyzed. To ensure other researchers will be able to use the data collected for future studies or replicate the study, chapter three also addressed issues of trustworthiness. However, one of the most important sections in chapter three was how the participants and the data they provided for the study

would be safeguarded to ensure their privacy. The following chapter will build off of chapter three and incorporate data from the actual study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. The oldest Millennials began entering the workforce in the mid- to late-1990s to the early 2000s. Since their inception into the workforce they have displayed very little loyalty to the organizations that employ them. The frequent job-hopping of this generational cohort could indicate that workplace needs are not being satisfied or that employers do not understand what Millennials desire in workplace. This study consisted of one research question: What are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment? The gap in the literature that was explored by this study was the identification of critical intrinsic needs within the workplace and if satisfying those needs could have a positive influence on Millennial employees' organizational commitment. Chapter 4 will consist of the results of the pilot study, research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results, and conclude with a summary.

Pilot Study

Upon approval of Walden University's IRB (IRB approval number 01-08-20-0574725), a pilot study was conducted with the primary goal of testing the interview questions on the interview protocol that was made by myself, the researcher. The pilot study was designed to replicate the same procedures that

would be utilized in the actual study. An electronic message was posted on Facebook and LinkedIn inviting members to participate in the study. Within the first 24 hours, multiple potential participants responded via Facebook Messenger and indicated they would be willing to participate. Every potential participant received an informed consent form via email and was asked to review the form and reply to the email with “I consent” if they agreed to participate. Of the seven individuals who replied, two replied with “I consent” and were readily available to complete the demographic data form and participate in the study. Both participants declined to meet me at a local library to conduct the interview.

Both participants responded to the questions very well and responded to the questions very similar. Upon completion of the interview I asked the participants to give me their honest opinion about the recruiting process and the interview questions. The first participant thought the idea of meeting at a library was pretty “questionable” and stated she definitely would have not participated if that was the only way to participate in the study. This participant also thought that the questions were straight forward and thought that having the informed consent form with the interview questions prior to the interview helped prep her for the interview. The second participant in the pilot study also agreed that meeting in the library was not worth it and that it could potentially be unsafe, especially in Oklahoma City, OK. This participant also agreed that questions were straight forward and “written in a good manner.”

There were no deviations from the IRB self-ethics checklist. The only deviation from the proposal was I was not able to interview participants based on their number of years in the workforce or by how many times they changed jobs. This was due to the

unreliability of participants in terms of responding to emails to set up interview times. Also, some participants volunteered to participate in interviews immediately after reading the questions on the informed consent form. Data collected in the pilot study were not used in the actual study.

Research Setting

A total of 15 participants participated in the research the study. No participants agreed to meet in person and all data collected was done via Skype audio and email. Multiple participants wanted to ensure that the study was not a scam prior to participating. These participants were encouraged to read the informed consent form thoroughly and I also assured these participants that the study was 100% voluntary and that they could choose to not participate at any time in the process. I encouraged participants to ask any questions they may have about the study. I told participants that they do not have to name any employers or provide me with any of their personal information. Ultimately, 15 participants decided to move forward with the interview process.

Interviews were scheduled based on the availability of participants. Participants were informed prior to scheduling the interview that an audio recorder would be used to record the interview solely for the purpose of transcribing and analyzing data. All interviews were conducted in a quiet location so that what was being said could only be heard by the participant and myself. The entire data collection process lasted from 15-27 minutes for all interviews conducted.

Demographics

A total of 15 participants volunteered to participate in the study. Out of the 15 participants, 12 had a degree of some type. There were 11 females out of the 15 participants. Out of the 15 participants, only 2 had 5 or more jobs in the past 5 years. The oldest participant for this study was born in 1982. The youngest participant was born in 1997. Of the 15 participants, only 8 of them changed jobs 1-2 times in the last 5 years. Only 4 out of the 15 participants had graduate degrees. Of the 15 participants, 8 had undergraduate degrees. Out of the 15 participants, 6 worked in the healthcare industry. For more information, please see Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Data

Participant	Gender	Birth Year	Jobs in the past 5 years	Current Industry	Education level
P1	M	1982	1-2	IT	Graduate
P2	F	1988	1-2	Healthcare	Undergraduate
P3	F	1988	5+	Healthcare	Undergraduate
P4	M	1985	3-4	IT	Undergraduate
P5	F	1995	3-4	Aviation	HS
P6	F	1993	1-2	Healthcare	Graduate
P7	M	1997	3-4	Retail	HS
P8	F	1991	3-4	Healthcare	Undergraduate
P9	F	1986	1-2	Healthcare	Undergraduate
P10	F	1989	1-2	Security	Undergraduate
P11	M	1994	1-2	IT	Undergraduate
P12	F	1993	3-4	Retail	Graduate
P13	F	1982	1-2	Healthcare	Graduate
P14	F	1983	1-2	Customer Service	Undergraduate
P15	F	1991	5	Food Service	HS

Data Collection

I posted an electronic message (please see Appendix A) on local Facebook groups four times, reaching more than 5,000 members in the local Oklahoma City, OK region. Over a period of 14 days, 26 individuals indicated that they were willing to participate in the study. All 26 participants were recruited via

Facebook. After seeing the initial response rate to the posting on Facebook, I chose not to use other social media platforms that were previously indicated in chapter three (Xing, Opportunity, and Twitter). Utilizing Facebook allowed an extra way to communicate with participants, as mostly all of the participants indicated that they were willing to participate in the study via Facebook Messenger. I also chose to use local Facebook groups so that I could increase the chances of the participant actually being a local resident. A total of 15 participants participated in the study. The other 11 who did not participate in the study was because they did not respond to the informed consent form or they did not meet the criteria to participate in the study.

All data were collected in my home office or my mobile office to ensure complete privacy. Data were collected via email and Skype audio. Email allowed me to ask follow-up questions to interviews and clarify any questions I had on transcripts. In some cases, email responses were of higher quality than Skype audio. Prior to starting all interviews, I requested that participants participate in the interview somewhere quiet and private so that we could maintain privacy and to help with audio recording purposes. All data were collected over a 14-day period. There was an eight-day gap in data collection between the 14th and 15th participant due to a late response from Participant 15.

After completing the informed consent form, I sent participants the demographic data form and reminded them that all of the interview questions were on the informed consent form to help them prepare for the interview. Upon receiving an email from the participant with the completed demographic data form and “I consent” email, I created a secure personal file for the participant and assigned the participant an identifier ranging

from P1 to P15. After I received and reviewed the demographic data form from a participant, I asked when he/she would be available for an interview and then scheduled the interview. Multiple participants were readily available to participate in the interview after reviewing the interview questions. This deviated from chapter three, as originally, I had planned to interview participants based on their years of experience in the workforce and how many times they have changed job within the past five years. I quickly learned that this was not feasible because some participants were readily available to participate, others were unreliable in responding to emails and a couple of participants rescheduled interviews to a later time.

I used the interview protocol that was approved by the IRB to collect data. The entire data collection process for each participant ranged from 15 to 27 minutes. Upon completion of the interviews, I provided a debriefing from the interview protocol and made sure all participants had my contact information in case they needed to follow up with me about something. Immediately upon completion of the interviews I sent participants a \$10 Visa gift card electronically.

Data Analysis

The data analysis plan for this study consisted of three parts: (a) transcribing and review of data, (b) data analysis, and (c) synthesizing and reporting of the findings. Using a MacBook Air to replay audio recordings, interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word. The only verbiage that was removed from the transcripts were filler words such as uh, and um only if it did

not impact the meaning of the conversation during the interview. Transcribed data were then imported to MAXQDA to prepare for review and coding.

After all transcripts were reviewed and I verified that no identifying personal information were in the transcripts, I began my initial coding. According to Saldaña (2016), “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/ or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p.3). Utilizing the open-coding method, I went line-by-line and page-by-page of each interview to assign codes to data. I used a combination of words and phrases as codes to capture what I thought was a summative representation of statements made by the participant throughout the interview. For each code that I created, I wrote a brief memo on why I chose to use that code to help assist with consistency throughout the coding process. I developed a total of 22 codes that were assigned to data a total of 235 times.

Out of the 22 codes, “pay, benefits and rewards” was the code that emerged the most with a total of 41 uses. 14 out of 15 participants indicated that pay, rewards, or benefits played an important role in job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When P1 was asked to tell me about a time his loyalty to an organization was at an all-time high, he responded by saying “currently I’m at the all-time high. I am at a corporation that has endless possibilities, unlimited paid time off, great pay, well priced healthcare and good hours.” When P3 was asked to describe what she felt had the most impact on whether she chooses to stay or leave her current organization, she responded “probably benefits and pay.”

The next code that emerged from the data the most was the desire for a “supportive/ team friendly environment,” which was used a total of 25 times. Thirteen out of the 15 participants indicated that a supportive or team environment was important to their loyalty to an organization. A supportive environment includes support from coworkers and teammates. An example of this code being used was when P2 was asked to describe when she was most satisfied with her place of employment and she responded saying “I was most satisfied because I was a recent graduate, and I felt that I had the most support and the best learning experiences while working there.” When P13 was asked the same question, she responded “I would say my current employment. I have worked at our agency for almost 10 years. We are very close and enjoy spending time together, whether it’s talking about work or personal life.”

Upon completion of my initial coding of the data, I began reviewing transcripts and codes again to ensure I felt the data aligned with the assigned codes. In order to assist with consistency in the coding process, I compared the coded transcripts to the coding memos that were written when I created the codes. There were multiple codes that could have been assigned to different codes. In these cases, I reviewed the memo and chose the best fitting code. I then began reviewing the coded transcripts in order to identify patterns and assign categories to the codes.

Table 3

Codes Assigned to Data Collected

Code #	Code Title	Code Frequency
Code 1	Employee compensation	44
Code 2	Family/friendly environment	25
Code 3	Employment treatment	22
Code 4	Opportunity for Professional development	34
Code 5	Flexibility	18
Code 6	Manangement/leadership	18
Code 7	Workplace atmosphere	12
Code 8	Product quality	1
Code 9	Customer service quality`	5
Code 10	Corporate social responsibility	2
Code 11	Being involved in decision making	2
Code 12	Communication	5
Code 13	Competence	1
Code 14	Autonomy	6
Code 15	Unfair practices	4
Code 16	Organizational philosophy	5
Code 17	Organizations' alignment with personal goals	9
Code 18	Employee inclusion	2
Code 19	Trust	5
Code 20	More responsibility	1
Code 21	Recognition	12
Code 22	Competition in the workplace	2

To develop categories, I reviewed the codes and I grouped them based on similarities of codes and significant quotations from participants. A total of eight categories were developed based on the codes that were used. The categories were: Consumer care, two-way communication, self-determination theory components, Management practices, employee connection to the organization, opportunity for advancement and growth, employee compensation and recognition, and workplace environment. Employee compensation and recognition, workplace environment, and opportunity for advancement were the top three categories. There were no discrepancies in the process of assigning codes to categories. Please refer to Table 4 to see which codes are assigned to which categories.

Table 4

Categories from Data Collected

Category	Codes Assigned
Consumer Care	Customer service and quality of product
Two-way communication	Involved indecision making, communication
Self-determination theory	Competence, family friendly environment, autonomy
Management practices	Unfair practices, management/leadership actions
Employee connection to the organization	Organizational philosophy, alignment with personal goals, employee inclusion, trust, corporate social responsibility
Opportunity and Advancement	Professional development, more responsibility
Employer Reward System	Recognition, employee compensation
Workplace Environment	Workplace atmosphere, employee treatment, competition in the workplace, flexibility in schedule, supportive environment

After coding the data and assigning categories I then moved to developing themes. A theme is the outcome of coding and categorization and it identifies what a unit of data is about and or what it means (Saldana, 2016). Themes can provide insight on why something occurred and how participants feel about the phenomenon being studied (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Themes were developed by linking similar concepts together and how those concepts effected participants' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Before developing themes, I reviewed field notes that were collected during interviews, reflexivity memos, previous literature on the topic and the research question in order to ensure that I had a thorough understanding of the data that was collected and what other researchers found on the phenomenon being studied. After reviewing the different sources of data, I then sought to find the essence of the data collected using quotes from participants. Although I did review multiple sources before developing themes, all of the themes identified were derived strictly from the interviews of participants from this study. Please see the identified themes in Table 5.

Table 5

Themes that Emerged from the Data

Theme Number	Theme Description
Theme 1	Employee compensation and rewards are vital to increasing organizational commitment for Millennials.
Theme 2	Millennials desire professional development.
Theme 3	Millennials desire a friendly supportive work environment
Theme 4	Millennials desire flexibility in the workplace
Theme 5	Millennials desire appropriate treatment by leadership
Theme 6	Millennials desire recognition

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the researcher's ability to accurately capture the participant's viewpoint of the topic or phenomenon being studied (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019). In order to ensure credibility, I used field-notes, memos, and member checks. During interviews I wrote down any pertinent information that I thought would be important when it came to analyzing the data. After interviews were transcribed and coded, I sent participants an email with the transcript of the interview and a brief summary of the codes that I derived from the transcript. Members were allowed seven days to provide any feedback that they thought was necessary.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to how applicable or transferable the findings of a study are to a broader context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In order to increase transferability, I outlined the purposeful sampling strategy which was snowball sampling. Multiple participants indicated that they knew someone who met the criteria for the study. I requested that they have that individual contact me via email. No one contacted me via email based off the recruitment of other participants who had already completed the study. I incorporated thick descriptions to describe the study settings as much as I could, but since data were collected via email and Skype audio the descriptions were limited for research settings. As much demographic data were collected as

possible on participants in order to provide adequate descriptions without releasing any personal identifying information.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to how researchers go about collecting their research. It focuses on the process of the research and making sure it was logical, traceable and thoroughly documented (Patton, 2016). I used audit trails to document the steps of data collection from beginning to end. In order to ensure data were collected in the same manner with each participant I used the following nine steps: (a) Post a recruiting electronic message on local Facebook groups, (b) upon response from a potential participant I sent an research invitation and an informed consent form, (c) upon receipt of an “I consent” email from the participant I sent a demographic data form to the participant, (d) once I received the demographic data form along with the “ I Consent” email response, I created a secure file (e) scheduled an interview based on the participant’s availability, (f) reviewed and transcribed data, (g) provided participants with a copy of the transcripts and a brief summary of the codes assigned to the study, (h) developed categories and themes, and (i) synthesized the data and findings. During interviews, I used fieldnotes to document any pertinent thoughts I had during the interview. For each code and category that emerged I utilized memos to ensure consistency throughout the coding and categorizing process.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to “establishing that the researcher’s findings and interpretations are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to

demonstrate how conclusion have been reached” (Bloomberg & Volpee, 2019, p. 204). To achieve confirmability, I used reflexivity memos to thoroughly document my thoughts, perceptions, biases and objectivities during the entirety of the research study. I used nine steps to collect data to ensure that every participant was afforded the same opportunity provided data as they deemed necessary. When developing codes, categories and themes I only used data collected directly from participants via interviews. Themes were developed solely off the responses of participants to ensure that interpretations were clearly derived from the data. Important quotes that stood out for each interview also helped formulate themes.

Study Results

The research question for this study was: What are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment? Questions 1-6 on the interview protocol were designed to capture the lived experiences of Millennials intrinsic needs and organizational commitment. For the results of the study, themes were provided first, then I briefly discussed which themes were intrinsic in nature. All themes were derived strictly from the data collect from the 15 participants that were interviewed for the study. From the data collected, six themes emerged.

Theme 1. Millennials Place High Emphasis on Employee Compensation

Out of the 15 participants, 14 indicated that pay, benefits, and rewards were important to increasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants were very direct on the impact of employee compensation on organizational commitment and

job satisfaction. Employee compensation include monetary compensations, bonuses, recognition and health care benefits. Participants were asked “Based off your experience, can you tell me what you feel you need from an organization to increase your organizational commitment?” P6 responded “the opportunity for salary increases and additional benefits for the workplace as well. Such as more paid time off, better health care option and coverage.” P11 responded “benefits are a big deal, retirement and savings plans play a big key factor in whether I want to stay or leave. When P12 was asked the same question, she responded

getting promotions and raises really helped me stay loyal to an organization.

Three of my last five jobs, I was able to get promoted into management within the first year. The other two jobs I had were waitressing part-time positions so I had no interest in being promoted.

P9 responded to the same question

I think the single most important aspect or detail any organization can pay attention to is the work and reward system. If you have an employee that is punctual, very detail and reliable, that person should receive rewards and incentives.

P2 responded “pay and patient-centered care greatly increases my loyalty to an organization. Participants were asked “Thinking about past employer, what benefits, compensation and/or rewards were most successful at increasing your loyalty to an organization?” P13 responded flexible schedule, paid health insurance, and paid sick/vaction time. P1 responded

Compensation, at least 1 raise per year, with a minimal of 3%, since I have been with the company this has been the standard. Benefits, family health care has been kept at a fair price to the employee and they provide a stipend to offset the cost. Rewards, we have yearly bonuses that has been something that goes to the asset column and increases my loyalty, and we also have unlimited PTO.

Participants were asked “Thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to stay or leave the organization?”

P3 responded

probably benefits and pay because the hospital is moving to a different pay system. I can't remember where we were at, but we are going to a paid per service or paid fee for service system. I am pretty sure the benefits are going to change

Theme 2. Millennials Desire Professional Development.

Out of the 15 participants, 11 of them indicated that the opportunity for professional development effects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants were very direct at expressing how important the opportunity for professional development was to their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When P1 was asked “Thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to stay or leave the organization?” He responded by stating

my current employment my main deciding factor regarding staying or going is growth. It used to be money, but you can make more money and still not be satisfied with the job. Which means you will get bored and still began to look for

something else. If I have growth potential, I am able to try a different position or department if I choose and see how I may like that. Having the option of not being stagnant in a position is very important.

Participants were asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you most satisfied with your place of employment?” P14 responded she was the most satisfied with her current organization because they are “dedicated to the growth and development of their associates.” P9 responded “I am currently working on becoming the most satisfied I’ve been in my professional career because I’m undergoing training and moving upwards.” Participants were asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the least satisfied with your place of employment.” P1 responded

When I didn’t feel I had any growth within the corporation. I felt I been with the company for numerous years; however, had no idea what my next move would be. It felt like I was just waking up daily and going to a job just to collect a check, which in the end felt like I was wasting my time.

P9 responded “I was unhappy in my position because I didn’t think I would advance. I felt like I was going in circles and that my hours would always stay the same and I would never get a pay raise.” P4 was asked “Based off your experience, can you tell me what you feel you need the most from an organization to increase your organizational commitment? He responded “For me growth, I don’t like being in the same position, making the same amount year in and year out. That would be the biggest thing for me.”

Theme 3. Millennials Desire a Friendly Supportive Work Environment.

Of the 15 participants, 13 of them indicated that a friendly and supportive work environment was important to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Participants indicated that a friendly supportive environment from coworkers was imperative to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants were asked “Can you tell me about a time when your loyalty to an organization was at an all-time high? P5 replied that “a time when my loyalty to an organization was at an all-time high was when the coworkers and I would like work as a team, and you could tell that the supervisors cared about you.” P13 responded to the same question with “At my current employment I would say, we are a small organization and are more like a family than a business.” When P1 was asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the most satisfied with your place of employment?” He replied “When I found a company that was about their employees and their family. I felt the company was concerned regarding their employees and that issues may arise that are not work related and that is ok.” P3 replied “I was most satisfied because I was a recent graduate, and I felt that I had the most support and best learning experiences while working there. Everyone was willing to teach, and I was very willing to learn.” When P4 was asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the least satisfied with your place of employment?” He replied “When I worked for #####, they don’t care, you know, we just one person, they’ll just cycle in the next person. It sucked the whole time, so it made you not want to work.” P14 responded to the same question by stating “When I worked at #####, the team environment was not welcoming. The employees were rude and judge mental. It takes a certain type of personality and tough skin to be considered

part of the work family.” When P8 was asked “Thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to stay or leave the organization? The most impact on why I stay at my job is my coworkers. They are fun and allow me to become a better me. They encourage my education and to work to become better.”

Theme 4. Millennials Desire Flexibility in the Workplace

Out of the 15 participants, 10 of them indicated that work-place flexibility was important to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When participant’s discussed flexibility they focused on flexibility in work hours and time to attend to personal matters. When P6 was asked “Thinking about past employers, what benefits, compensation and or rewards were most successful at increasing your loyalty to an organization? She responded “My other previous job prior to this one was in college. The thing that kept me there, was the flexibility and schedule to work around my home life, my schooling, and other things that are going on other than work. When P13 was asked “Thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to stay or leave the organization?” She responded the family atmosphere, as well as the flexible schedule and family-oriented workplace.” She then went on to describe her son being born eight weeks earlier and how her employer let her bring the newborn to work along with a swing and pack and play in her office. When P12 was asked “thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to say or leave the organization?” She responded “I think it would depend on how much time an effort I would be putting into

the business. If the business was physically and emotionally draining, I would consider selling the organization.” When P8 was asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the most satisfied with your place of employment?” She replied “I am satisfied with my current job it allows me to continue my education and to have a schedule that better fits my family needs. Management at my current job understands my scheduling needs and work with me.” P8 was asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you least satisfied with your place of employment?” She replied

I would say with unnamed organization. We were extremely understaffed and when asking for management help on scheduling need, they said it would change and promised me I would get the schedule I needed but when a new schedule came out their promises never kept. This made me extremely upset because I loved working for the company but just couldn't juggle the scheduling any longer.

When P14 was asked “thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the most satisfied with your place of employment?” she replied that she was most satisfied with her current place of employment “because they are dedicated to the growth and development of their associates. They offer benefits that protect and enable their employees to have a strong work-life balance. They have extremely competitive pay and benefits.”

Theme 5. Appropriate Treatment by Leadership Matters.

Of the 15 participants, 8 of them indicated that treatment by leadership effected their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants spoke

directly on the behaviors and actions of leadership. Positive experiences generally lead to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negative experiences generally lead to decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants were asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the most satisfied” P15 replied she was the most satisfied when “management appreciated the employees, they would do things like buy us all pizza or Sonic corn dogs. Management made it seem like if I ever encountered any problems that I could come to them and work it out.”

Participants were asked “Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the least satisfied with your place of employment?” P15 replied “I worked for a property management company for a very short time, the boss acted like nothing I did was good enough, he was flagrantly disrespectful and rude, constantly put down the work you were doing, did not trust any of his employees.” P5 responded to the same question by stating “Um, whenever, like the supervisors didn’t really care. Like if you are actually sick and you call out just cause other people call out and they’re not sick. P13 replied to the same question stating

My first job coming out of graduate school. I interviewed with the agency and it seemed too good to be true and I was right. The co-owner was very abrasive and frequently yelled at and degraded his employees, including the other co-owner.

He was not a nice person to work for.

Participants were asked “Can you tell me about a time when your loyalty to an organization was at an all-time high? P6 responded

Last summer, the CEO of our company picked 40 individuals to go to his country retreat in Jacksonville. He picked who he felt was the top 40 leaders within the company and he chose me, which made me feel really good on the inside. That was about three years in with the company. To me that made me feel like he wanted me there.

When P9 was asked “based off your experience, can you tell me what you feel you need the most from an organization to increase your organizational commitment?” She responded “I think a lot of workplaces tend to overlook bad behavior and that’s when having adequate management comes into play. In short, adequate leadership would increase my commitment to an organization.”

Theme 6. Millennials Desire Recognition for their Hard Work

Out of the 15 participants, 7 of them indicated that employee recognition is important to job satisfaction and organization commitment. Employee recognition was discussed by leadership showing kind gestures or by saying thank you. Participants were asked “Based off your experience, can you tell me what you feel you need the most from an organization to increase your organizational commitment?” P14 responded “recognition for accomplishment and opportunity to grow and be challenged within the enterprise.” Participants were asked thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you least satisfied with your place of employment? P11 responded Really just this past year, being with my staff moving into my sixth year in the same job, we achieved goals, we did everything that we should have been doing

right. Our leadership and then in turn they pile more tasks onto us, and they just basically didn't return the favor by saying you know we're doing a good job.

Participants were asked "Thinking about past employers, what benefits, compensation and/or rewards were most successful at increasing your loyalty to an organization?" P4 responded

Opportunity and recognition. You just want to be recognized for the work that you do. I don't need a pat on the back or anything, but it's always nice when you get that good job and a reward or whatever.

P10 was asked the same question and responded

Back to the training department, there were incentives when we did a good job where you and your team caught tips and stuff like that, but it was just a part of when the higher ups come in and they actually fly out and come see you. It would be like, you did a wonderful job getting all this training done. You know, it's great for me. It's not looking for any monetary awards. It's more like just a thank you. Simple. Yes, he did a good job. Keep up the good work. Yes, it was hard this year, but you guys kept it going. Stuff like that keeps me going.

Intrinsic Nature of the Themes Identified.

Out of the six themes identified, three were intrinsic in nature, two could be either intrinsic or extrinsic, and one was completely extrinsic. The three themes that were intrinsic in nature were the desire for friendly supportive work environment, desire for flexibility in the workplace, and employee treatment by leadership. The two themes that could be either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature were professional development and the

desire for recognition. The theme that was extrinsic in nature was employee compensation. Themes were classified as intrinsic only if the desire or behavior had no external rewards.

Out of the 15 participants for this study, 73% of them indicated the opportunity for professional development effected their organizational commitment. Depending on why individuals seek professional development determines if this theme is intrinsic or extrinsic. If individuals seek professional development because they want to grow as professional, then it is intrinsic in nature. If individuals seek professional development because they want more money or some other reward, then this theme could be extrinsic in nature. Out of the 11 participants, only P14 linked opportunity for professional development to an external reward.

Of the 15 participants, 86% of them indicated that a friendly supportive work environment impacted their organizational commitment. This theme was deemed to be intrinsic in nature because participants indicated that they desired a friendly and supportive work environment for no other reason than it is just what they desired. Participants indicated that when coworkers were friendly and supportive it effected their organizational commitment. When coworkers and leaders were not supportive it negatively impacted organizational commitment. P14 described her dissatisfaction with her former employer and stated that she was least satisfied because “The team environment was not welcoming. The

employees were rude and judgmental. It takes a certain type of personality and tough skin to be considered part of the work family.”

Out of the 15 participants, 66% of them indicated that flexibility in the workplace effected their organizational commitment. Flexibility in the workplace centered around hours worked and the ability to balance other factors in life. This theme was labeled as intrinsic because participants desired flexibility in the workplace for no other reason than it is what they expected out of a place of employment.

Of the 15 participants, 53% of them indicated that appropriate employee treatment by leadership effected their organization commitment. This theme was closely connected to the desire for a friendly supportive work environment. Employee treatment by leadership referred to how leaderships' actions or behaviors effected participants' organizational commitment. When discussing employee treatment by leaders, participants indicated that they expected leaders to act in a caring and professional manner. No participant identified any external reward in seeking that type of behavior from leadership.

Lastly, 46% of the participants indicated that recognition for their hard work effected their organizational commitment. This theme could be classified as intrinsic or extrinsic depending on how individuals want to be recognized. Some participants described recognition as a simple thank you, while others sought recognition through monetary rewards or other incentives.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. Data were collected from 15 participants to better understand the phenomenon being studied. The responses from the participants indicated that professional development, a friendly supportive work environment, flexibility in the workplace, appropriate employee treatment by leadership, and recognition effects job satisfaction and organizational commitment. All five of these factors can be intrinsic in nature, but it depends on the motives or needs of the employee. The number one factor that effected Millennials job satisfaction and organizational commitment was employee compensation, which is extrinsic in nature. In chapter 4, I discussed the pilot study, research setting, demographic, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness and study results. Chapter 5 will include the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications and a conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. The phenomenon of interest was the extremely low organizational commitment that Millennial appeared to exhibit. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I sought to build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied by interpreting data collected from participants. Data were collected by recruiting participants in the Oklahoma City, OK region via electronic messages posted on local Facebook groups. Data were collected from 15 participants using semistructured interviews. After the data were collected, they were then organized into codes and categories. Based off the categories assigned and relevant quotes from participants, themes were identified and labeled either as intrinsic or extrinsic in nature.

The results of the study indicate that Millennials value employee compensation, friendly supportive work environments, opportunity for professional development, flexibility in work, appropriate treatment from leadership, and recognition within the workplace. Out of the six themes identified, five were intrinsic in nature, but the opportunity for professional development and recognition could be either intrinsic or extrinsic depending on motives of employees.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study produced mixed results when compared to the peer-reviewed literature that was found in Chapter 2. The themes that were identified in this study were Millennials place high emphasis on employee compensation, Millennials

desire opportunities for professional development, Millennials desire a friendly supportive work environment, Millennials desire appropriate or fair treatment by leadership, Millennials desire flexibility in workplace, and Millennials desire recognition for their work. Keene and Handrich (2015) found that Millennials tend to value personal development and work-life balance over money and status. The findings of this study indicated that Millennials value compensation just as much, if not more than work-life balance and personal development. Hoffman (2018) cited a study that indicated that 89% of Millennials would stay employed with their employer for 10 or more years if there was opportunity for pay increases and regular increases in compensation. The results of this study confirm the majority of the participants indicated that both employee compensation and professional development was imperative to increasing organizational commitment. Participants who had the opportunity for both professional development and pay incentives indicated that they were satisfied and committed to their organization.

Eleven out of 15 participants indicated the opportunity for professional development was extremely important to organizational commitment. These results confirm what much of the peer-reviewed literature has previously stated in regard to professional development and Millennials in the workplace. Previous research indicated that after compensation, professional development was the most important thing to Millennials in the workforce. (Zaharee et. al, 2018). The results of this study indicated that participants felt that after employee compensation, a supportive workplace and professional development was

extremely important to organizational commitment. Naim and Lenka (2018) also found the same correlation between professional development and Millennials commitment to their place of employment.

The results of this study supported previous peer-reviewed literature on how important a good work-life balance is to Millennials. The results show that 10 out of 15 participants indicated that flexibility in the workplace effects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Although 14 out of the 15 participants discussed the importance of compensation, none discussed the desire to want more opportunities to work overtime to want to make more money. This theme may support Mishra and Mishra (2017) who stated Millennials work to live instead of live to work. Although participants did not mention what they did in their leisure time, multiple participants did indicate the importance of balancing family matters with their place of employment. Participants were more committed to their employers when employers allowed time to attend to personal issues and family matters.

Thirteen out of 15 participants indicated that a friendly supportive work environment effected job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This theme was not supported by literature aimed at Millennials and organizational commitment, but it was supported in the self-determination theory which was a part of this study's conceptual framework. Diskiene et al. (2017) indicated that Millennials are family centric, but that was not referring to Millennials' preferences in the workplace. Participants indicated that they greatly desired a work environment where they could coexist with their coworkers in a friendly and supportive environment. Multiple

participants indicated that they stayed committed to an organization although they did not necessarily enjoy the work that they did, or the organization that they were employed for just because of the friendly supportive work environment. This theme aligns with the relatedness component of the basic psychological needs that the self-determination theory identifies as important to increasing employee motivation. The need for relatedness refers to the need to feel a sense of belonging and that you matter to others (Rigby & Ryan, 2018).

Eight out of 15 participants indicated that appropriate treatment by leadership effected their organizational commitment. This theme confirmed what was supported in the peer-reviewed literature. Participants did not indicate that they wanted a certain style of leader, rather they indicated how they expected to be treated by leadership. This aligned with Omillion-Hodges and Sugg (2018) who found that Millennials are seeking leaders that are dedicated, open-minded, culturally sensitive, relationally focused, approachable and ethical. It also supported previous research that found Millennials values leaders who show empathy and enforce fairness (Valenti, 2019). Multiple participants indicated that when leaders mistreated them, they experienced low job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Participants indicated when leaders made kind gestures or treated employees fair, it increased their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Appropriate treatment by leadership also aligns with the relatedness component of basic psychological needs of the self-determination theory.

Seven out of 15 participants indicated that recognition was important to their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings of this study confirm that Millennials do place emphasis on recognition within the workplace (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015). Participants described recognition in two ways. Some participants described recognition as a form of feedback and others described it as a form of compensation for their hard work. Multiple participants indicated that they were not looking for an incentive for recognition, instead they were just looking for a “thank you, or good job.” Both, “thank you and good job” can be viewed as forms of feedback. This form of recognition aligns with Bolser and Gosciej (2015) and their research, which found that Millennials like to receive feedback. Other participants expected recognition in the form of monetary rewards such as bonuses and pay increases. This form of recognition aligns with Glazer et al. (2019) and their research, which found that Millennials like to be rewarded for their work.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study consisted of two concepts, which were intrinsic needs and employee commitment. The first concept consisted of one component which was identifying critical intrinsic workplace needs that were specific the Millennial generational cohort. This component was based off the generational cohort theory that states generational cohorts have different attitudes, values, and behaviors because they grew up during different times and experienced different environments (Fishman, 2016).

Accepting the fact that Millennials may have different needs in the workplace, this study sought to identify those critical intrinsic needs that were imperative to

increasing organizational commitment. The findings of this study indicated that Millennials value employee compensation, professional development, a friendly supportive work environment, flexibility in workplace, appropriate/fair treatment by leadership, and recognition. Out of the six themes identified, five are intrinsic in nature (professional development, supportive environment, flexibility, treatment by leadership, and recognition). Depending on the motive of employees, professional development and recognition could potentially be extrinsic in nature.

The second concept for the conceptual framework for this study was employee commitment. Employee commitment was further broken down into three components which were satisfying the three basic psychological needs, promoting a workplace that incorporates the critical intrinsic needs identified in the first concept of the conceptual framework, and creating a compensation or reward system that is innovative and meets the needs of the Millennial generation. The three basic psychological needs from the self-determination theory are autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Of the three basic psychological needs from self-determination theory, participants indicated that a friendly supportive work environment (relatedness) was critical to their organizational commitment. A single participant did indicate that achieving competence was important to job satisfaction. Two participants indicated that autonomy in the workplace was important to their job satisfaction.

The findings of this study support promoting a work environment that includes the basic psychological needs and the five critical intrinsic needs that

were identified in the study. Of the six themes that were identified, five were intrinsic in nature. The findings of this study suggest that although money is an important need in organizational commitment for Millennials, there are other needs that leaders can address that are intrinsic in nature to potentially improve Millennials' loyalty and increase job satisfaction.

The third element of employee commitment was creating a compensation or reward system that is innovative and meets the needs of Millennials in the workforce. The findings of this study do not indicate a way of creating and sustaining a compensation or reward system to meet the needs of Millennials in the workforce. The findings do provide clear needs of what Millennials desire as a way to increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings also suggest that leaders might not have to spend a lot of money to increase organizational commitment from Millennials. Appropriate treatment from leadership, flexibility in the workplace, a friendly supportive work environment, and recognition are all needs that could be addressed with little to no money from the organization. Organizations are equipped with different resources and different employees, which means leaders of organizations should find ways to implement these findings in ways that align with organizational needs.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was the small sample size of only 15 participants which impacts the transferability of results to the Millennial generational cohort. The next limitation of this study was that data were collected from individuals in the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma region. Millennials in different regions could have different needs and

lived experiences. Another limitation to this study, was 11 out of the 15 participants were female. I attempted to get more males to participate, but I received no responses. The next limitation of this study was Oklahoma's minimum wage pay is one of the lowest states in the country at \$7.25 per hour. Employee compensation was a key theme and the local wage laws may have contributed to that. Another limitation to this study was it focused solely on Millennials in the private sector. Millennials in other sectors such as non-profit could have different needs. In order to ensure that my biases did not impact the study, I used reflexivity memos throughout the entire study and I also used an interview protocol that asked general questions about the phenomenon being studied. All findings were based solely off data collected from the interview.

Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. 15 participants shared their lived experiences in regard to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Through their experiences, I was able to identify five critical workplace intrinsic needs and one extrinsic need. The findings of this study support previous peer-reviewed literature that found Millennials value organizations that provide opportunities for professional development, flexibility in the workplace, recognition, and employee compensation and benefits (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015; Keene & Handrich, 2015; Morrel & Abston, 2018).

Leaders of organizations obviously recognize that it would not be cost efficient to inflate salaries of their employees just to increase organizational commitment. Even if they did, it probably would not be enough to retain most Millennials for five or more years. Leaders of organizations should look to incorporate a combination of the intrinsic needs identified in the findings. Leaders should take note that not all Millennials are the same, and leaders should not take a one size fits all approach. An example of this would be the desire for recognition. Some participants desired to be recognized with a simple “thank you and good job,” while other participants preferred an incentive. Leaders should solicit the thoughts and ideas of members of their workforce on how to create a work environment that encompasses these needs.

Leadership on all levels should consider conducting a self-assessment on how they interact with their employees. Fifty-three percent of the participants directly stated the way leadership treats them effects their organizational commitment. Leadership should also encourage their employees on all levels to consider how they treat their coworkers. Eighty-six percent of the participants stated that a friendly supportive environment effects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Many organizations will be compromised of different personalities which naturally causes conflict. Multiple participants discussed teams and accomplishing goals. Leaders should look to unify employees by providing goals and showing employees that they are one team to help reduce conflict. If leaders can create and sustain a culture that encourages support in the work environment it could contribute to better employee retainment for Millennials.

When conducting future research on Millennials an organizational commitment, researchers should consider the local job market and how it may impact how participants provide data. A limitation for this study was Oklahoma's minimum wage laws, which is one of the lowest in the country at \$7.25 per hour. Depending on what group of people future researchers want to study, local wage laws may influence how participants respond in regard to how they are compensated. Future researchers may also want to make it a goal to intentionally study a wide variety of career fields. Six out of the 15 participants worked in healthcare and 3 worked in information technology, which represented 60% of my participants. Studying a wide variety of industries may provide more insight on what Millennials desire in the workplace.

All six of the themes that were identified could be beneficial to not only Millennials but also previous and future generations. Future researchers may want to think about conducting a study that not only includes Millennials, but also Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Generation Z. Conducting an inclusive study may provide insight on if other generations value these intrinsic needs and also help to identify if there is a generational gap in the workforce.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. The findings of this study contribute to social change on an

individual and organizational level. The findings of this study contribute to social change on an individual level by helping employees and leaders understand that treating coworkers fairly and supporting them in the work environment can lead to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The finding of this study contributes to social change on an organizational level by helping organizations to understand that job satisfaction and organizational commitment can be increased by changing the workplace environment. These findings may especially help smaller organizations who cannot afford to inflate employees' salaries like bigger organizations may be able to. Instead, organizations could focus on aspects such as creating team environments, providing more flexibility in workplace schedules and practices, and building strong recognition programs to show employees that their hard work is valued. Although 14 out of 15 participants did indicate that employee compensation was important, they also placed emphasis on other critical needs, such as flexibility in the workplace and a friendly supportive environment. The ability to decrease employee turnover, could potentially save an organization from having to close its doors in today's competitive economy.

Applications for Professional Practice

The need to understand what influences whether Millennials choose to stay or leave an organization is important because by 2025 Millennials will represent more than three quarters of the workforce (Meola, 2016). Although Millennials have been in the workforce for almost 20 years, their job-hopping tendencies continue until this day. Millennials' job hopping contributes to more than \$30 billion lost annually (Adkins,

2016). The findings of this study may provide valuable insight to leaders on every level on what Millennials desire in the workplace to increase not only organizational commitment but also job satisfaction. If leaders are able to understand what Millennials desire, then they can create a work environment that encompasses the critical needs of members of their workforce.

The results of this study identified five critical intrinsic themes, which were a friendly supportive work environment, professional development, flexible workplace, appropriate treatment by leadership, and recognition. These findings indicate that leaders of organizations may be able to create work environments that increase organizational commitment without having to invest a lot of money. All of the themes identified were employee focused, which means leaders may be able to increase organizational commitment just by adjusting the culture of their organizations. Leaders and human resources managers may be able to implement policies that seek to develop employees while also providing a friendly environment that encourages employees to work together and support each other.

Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. The gap in the literature that was explored by this study is the identification of critical intrinsic needs within the workplace and if satisfying those needs could have a positive influence on Millennial employees' organizational commitment. Millennials have been in

the workforce for almost 20 years and many leaders continue to struggle to understand why the generations' organizational commitment is so low. The low organizational commitment that Millennials exhibit contribute to billions lost in the U.S. economy and negative stereotypes within the workplace. With globalization on the rise and organizations becoming more competitive than ever, organizations are seeking to understand the Millennial generation and how to retain their top talent. This study provided valuable insight on what Millennials desire in the workplace. This study consisted of collecting data from 15 Millennials employed in the private sector. Through their lived experiences, it was determined that although employee compensation does play a significant role in job satisfaction and organization there are other critical intrinsic needs that are just as important. Amongst those intrinsic needs were the desire for professional development, flexibility in work schedule, friendly supportive work environment, appropriate and fair treatment by leadership, and recognition. A friendly supportive work environment and the opportunity for professional development were the top two intrinsic needs that Millennials desired to increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Message

Electronic Message for Potential Participants

Hello all,

My name is Will Jacobs and I am a PhD candidate at Walden University. I am looking for individuals born between 1982-2000, currently working full-time and have at least five years of work experience to participate in my study on Millennials and organizational commitment. If you would like to participate, please inbox me or directly email me at William.jacobs2@waldenu.edu. Upon completion of the interview you will receive a \$10 dollar Visa gift card.

Appendix B: Research Invitation

Research Invitation

Dear [Insert Name]

My name is William Jacobs and I am a PhD candidate at Walden University majoring in human resources management. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study on Millennials and the effect of intrinsic needs on organizational commitment. Your participation in this study may be vital in providing valuable insight on what Millennials feel they need in the workplace in order to consider staying with employers.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will participate in a one-on-one interview with myself. Upon completion of the interview I will provide you with a \$10-dollar visa gift card. The interview will be recorded using a microphone and a computer. The interview is expected to last at a minimum of 45 minutes depending on how you respond to questions. The interview will be conducted at one of Oklahoma City Public Libraries. If you are not able to meet me at a library, we can discuss other means such as Skype.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You may choose to refuse to participate in the study. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at William.jacobs2@waldenu.edu

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

William Jacobs

Appendix C: Demographic Data Form

Demographic Data Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study! Please complete the survey below and email it to William.jacobs2@waldenu.edu. Please note that the information collected in this questionnaire is completely confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research study.

Demographic Questionnaire

1. My gender is: _____ Female _____ Male
2. The year I was born was: _____
3. The sector I work in is: _____ Private _____ Public _____ Non-Profit
4. How many jobs have you had in the past 5 years: _____ 1-2 _____ 3-4
_____ 5+
5. What industry are you currently employed ?

6. In the last 5 year have you been unemployed for more than 30 days? _____ Yes
_____ No
7. How many hours do you work per week? _____ 20-29 _____ 30+
8. What is your highest level of education completed? _____ High School/GED
_____ Undergraduate degree _____ Graduate Degree or higher _____ NA

Thank you for completing this questionnaire! Your time and participation are very much appreciated and will contribute to a growing knowledge base on experiences surrounding a doctoral dissertation.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hello! My name is William Jacobs, I am human resources management PhD candidate from Walden University. I am here with you today to learn about the potential effects of intrinsic needs on organizational commitment. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. The purpose of this interview is to explore the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in relation to their intrinsic needs in the workplace and organizational commitment. You may stop this interview at any time. There are no right or wrong answers. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions please let me know and we will skip that question. I will be audio recording this interview and also taking notes. Everything you say will remain confidential, meaning that only myself and my research committee will be aware of your answers. Before we start this interview, do you have any questions?

(Start Audio Recording)

[Research Question]

What are the lived experiences of Millennials in the workforce in regard to intrinsic needs and organizational commitment?

[Interview Questions]

1. Can you tell me about a time when your loyalty to an organization was at an all-time high?
2. Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the most satisfied with your place of employment?
 - Can you describe why were you satisfied?
3. Thinking about your employment history as a whole, when were you the least satisfied with your place of employment?
 - Can you describe what was causing this dissatisfaction?
4. Thinking about your current employer, can you describe what you feel has the most impact on whether you choose to stay or leave the organization?

5. You have been working for _____ years. Based off your experience, can you tell me what you feel you need the most from an organization to increase your organizational commitment.
6. Thinking about past employers, what benefits, compensation and/or rewards were most successful at increasing your loyalty to an organization?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end this interview?

(Stop the recorder)

Closing

That concludes this interview. I would like to thank you for taking your time to do this interview with me. I greatly appreciate it. I will transcribe our interview within the next 24-48 hours and send you a copy of the transcript. If I have any questions or find any discrepancy in the data, I will contact you for further clarification. If you see that I transcribed and interpreted something wrong in the transcript, please let me know and I will correct it.

Would you like to receive a brief one to two-page summary of the results of the study once the study has concluded?

Lastly, do you know of anyone else who may meet the criteria for this study and might be willing to participate? If so, please give them my contact information I would greatly appreciate it.

Give \$10-dollar Visa gift certificate