

## The Leadership Expectations of Millennials

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### Summary

- Research questions:** Do Millennials expect motivational support as the most important leadership quality from their leaders in the workplace? Is there a significant gap from the motivational support that they expect and what they are actually receiving?
- Methods:** Empirical study using the shortened Leadership Tasks Survey with 19 questions to be answered twice (first for expectations and secondly for reality) to survey 68 Millennials (born 1990-1995) in the United States and Germany about: their expected leadership styles and what they actually experience in the workplace.
- Results:** The analysis shows that the Millennials surveyed do not rank any dimension higher than the other. Therefore, they do not rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality.  
However, it can be statistically proven that there is a gap in the motivational support expected and what they are actually receiving in the workplace.
- Structure of the article:** Introduction, Literature Review, Research Questions & Methods, Empirical Results, Summary, Conclusions, About the Author, Bibliography

## Introduction

The goal of the study is to survey Millennials to determine the expected leadership styles of their leaders in the workplace and to see if their highest expected leadership style is Motivational Support. Also, to see if there is a statistically significant gap from what they are expecting to what they are actually experiencing in Motivational Support.

Motivational support as a leadership task is becoming increasingly important for Millennials who are becoming the main generation in the workforce and moving away from traditional models of motivational needs. Motivational support consists of: affiliation, acknowledgement, growth, purpose, performance and coaching (Desjardins, 2019).

Studies have shown that Millennials in the workplace have the desire: to work in groups or teams, have relationships with their coworkers and managers, need constant recognition and feedback, desire to grow professionally, feel that they need an individual sense of purpose in their workplace and are having a personal impact at work. They have the desire to set high-achieving goals and have a desire for performance and achievement and prefer a work environment where they can be mentored and coached (Howe & Strauss, 2007; Alsop, 2008, p.214; Tapscott, 2009, p.176; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Mencl & Lester, 2014; Deloitte, 2016).

Therefore, the objective is to study Millennials and assess leadership dimensions on the You-level, between a leader and his followers (Desjardins & Baker, 2013) in order to provide value to managers of Millennials to see the leadership dimension they are most expecting in the workplace. With the assumption that Millennials need motivational support, this thesis will examine if there is a significant gap between expectations of motivational support and reality.

The significance is to be able to provide guidance to managers of Millennials to see if they are exhibiting leadership qualities that Millennials can relate to and are expecting in the workplace. Since Millennials are becoming the largest generation in America's workforce today (Ernst Young, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2020), the goal is that discovering the leadership expectations of Millennials will help build relationships and to retain qualified Millennial talent while also creating a harmonious work environment among all generations employed.

## Literature Review

### Who are Millennials?

The generation born between 1980 and 2000 are referred to as: Millennials, Generation Y, Gen Me, Gen Next or N-Gen, as in Internet Generation (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000, p.3; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Alsop, 2008; Tapscott, 2009). The author herein refers to them as Millennials.

In America in the 1980's to 1990's, child issues rose to the top of the nation's political agenda and child safety and family values were impressed by politics and the media (Howe & Strauss, 2007). Books and magazines were made for kids, there were songs and movies for kids, TV and radio programming for kids, web sites for kids— anything and everything for kids—so there was a large shift in culture that became very child focused (Howe & Strauss, 2000, p.35).

Educators spoke of standards, cooperative learning, and “no child left behind.” District budgets became test score dependent. American public education shifted from learning to performance. Frequency of feedback increased as teachers wanted to ensure students could correctly answer test questions. Millennials have become accustomed to this high frequency of feedback and if they don't receive it, then they may think something is wrong. This need for feedback has stereotyped Millennials as “needy” or “high maintenance” but it should be viewed that they are trying to do a good job (Lyons, 2004; Mencl & Lester, 2014; [Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

Millennials are seen as the trophy kids of their parents, who are commonly referred to as “helicopter parents” because they hover like helicopters, ready to swoop in at a moment's notice (Alsop, p.54) to help resolve any problems. Since birth, Millennials were indulged and made to feel special by parents, coaches, and teachers. If they are seen as expecting a lot, it is because they weren't ever denied anything (Alsop, 2008, p.27). Their parents tended to plan their activities at an early age, so they are accustomed to a structured lifestyle and tend to need supervision and acknowledgement when making decisions (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010).

Millennials have experienced traumatic events during their development, they have experienced: the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Hurricane Katrina, Columbine and other school shootings. They have been exposed to educational, economic, social, and political contexts that are unique from previous generations and have been shaped by political and economic turmoil

(Alsop, 2008, p.5; Twenge et al., 2010; Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Growing up in the shadow of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, they were old enough to understand the significance of these events. Most Millennials came of age and entered the workforce facing the height of an economic recession. These events have sharpened their views and contributed to intense political involvement which shapes America's environment today (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Millennials have placed a strong importance on autonomy and work-life balance, (Zemke et al., 2000, p.143-4; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Alsop, 2008, p.5; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). The work-life balance values come from societal shifts toward being family-focused. Millennials observed, and often experienced, the sacrifices their parents made to achieve corporate success; many of them spent long days in childcare or aftercare programs while their parents put in long hours in corporate jobs that lacked flexibility. They do not want to repeat the laborious work structure that they saw their parents go through (Howe & Strauss, 2007; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

Millennials have had access to information from an early age and are accustomed to accessing things very quickly. They are extremely tech-savvy and are teaching and coaching their parents on the usefulness of the internet. Their fearlessness about technology has allowed them to find unique solutions to problems through careful internet searching (Zemke et al., 2000, p.129; Lyons, 2004; Society For Human Research Management, 2009; Salhuddin, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010).

Millennials have been raised to be confident and optimistic. They have a desire to be socially responsible and for personally making a difference in the world. They are ambitious and hopeful for their futures; believing if they work hard and set goals, then they can achieve anything (Alsop, 2008, p.10; Salahuddin, 2010; Ashlock & Atay, 2019, p.29). Their culture comes with new focus on upbeat messages on building confidence, becoming more team-oriented, social minded and embracing diversity (Howe & Strauss, 2007; Twenge et al., 2010).

### **Generational Differences in the Workplace**

A generational group, or cohort, are individuals born around the same time with prominent social and historical events that bind their development. They share historical or social life experiences, birth years, age location and significant life events, the effects of

which are relatively stable over the course of their lives (Schaie, 1965; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

There have been numerous studies on generational differences in the workplace and although work values may shift slightly with maturity, they are overwhelmingly influenced by generation (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Arsenault, 2004; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Salahuddin, 2010; Lyons et al., 2012; Edge, 2014; Lyons et al., 2015). Much of the stress in cross-generational relationships arises when people of different ages expect others to behave in ways their peer personalities won't allow. The illusion of generational sameness cast from members of the same generation needs to be dispelled. In doing so, it will promote more reciprocal understanding and respect among unlike generations. Generational differences are an issue in diversity and an unharmonious work environment can directly affect the overall success of the organization (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p.12; Arsenault, 2004; Salahuddin, 2010).

People learn to communicate based on generational backgrounds. However, communication has changed over time. Millennials have been connected with technology almost as long or as they have been alive and expect to be able to communicate with others anytime and anywhere. They relish in the social interaction received through activities such as instant messaging, blogging, texting and e-mails. Members of other generations may view all of this communication as a waste of time (Cekada, 2012). Being able to understand these differences and similarities, managers can develop policies that aid communication and increase satisfaction, commitment, retention and improve the knowledge transfer within organizations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Social, cultural and political factors help shape individual values and work ethics (Cekada, 2012). When we communicate with employees across generations, we communicate across eras of different and significant life-changing events and different factors influence them in contrasting ways (Douville, 2001). Professionals must understand these influences and determine ways to best manage and train a multigenerational workforce whose members have different values, learning styles and expectations (Cekada, 2012).

Organizations should focus on generational differences in order to make organizations more successful, and to increase productivity, satisfaction and employee retention (Salahuddin, 2010). Generational conflict is more likely to arise from errors of attribution and perception, than from valid differences. Therefore,

effective communication is critical in dealing with generational conflict (Tolbize, 2008).

Finding the right leadership style for the situation will balance the organizational culture and different generations and produce an environment that creates workplace balance. As the needs differ from various generations, it is important to find balance in the workplace; allowing multiple generations to connect, interact, and communicate effectively with their manager of a different generation (Gorham, 2013, p.31).

### **Millennials in the Workplace**

Millennials have now surpassed Baby Boomers as the U.S.'s largest living adult generation (Pew Research Center, 2020), and by 2025, 75% of the global workforce will be comprised of Millennials (Ernst Young, 2015). In the coming years, more than 75 million older workers will retire, and they will be replaced by a comparable number of young people entering the workforce. Organizations need a clear understanding of the work values of the new generation and how they may differ from the values of previous generations (Twenge et al., 2010). These insights will greatly facilitate the ability to tap into their abilities and talents (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

This is the first generation in the workplace to be digital natives (Glass, 2007). They are using web-based communication tools to create a collaborative workplace. They have a unique ability to harness technology and multitask, quickly and efficiently moving from one project to the next (Alsop, 2008, p.135; Tapscott, 2009, p.182; Cekada, 2012). Because Millennials are used to fast-pasted, ever-changing, information-sharing environments, they want a workplace that can keep up with these needs (Alsop, 2008, p.161; Cekada, 2012).

Managing Millennials means providing a flexible schedule. They are looking for a perfect work-life balance. They are choosing to "making a life" over "making a living." Because they watched their parents work countless hours only to lose their jobs to downsizing, they expect more reasonable schedules in order to find opportunities beyond worklife (Twenge, 2006, p.406; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Alsop, 2008, p.167; Tapscott, 2009, p.160; Society For Human Research Management, 2009; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010 Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

In order to effectively lead this generation, they must be given clear directions and managerial support but at the same time freedom and flexibility to do the work their own way. They are used to having teachers and parents

program their lives so are also seeking clear directions from their managers (Alsop, 2008, p.124; Tapscott, 2009, p.179).

Millennials place a lot of value on feedback and constant recognition. They have had consistent attention from their parents and teachers and continue to need this as a way to build their confidence and increase feelings of security in the workplace. They are also seeking frequent and ongoing positive reinforcement from their supervisors rather than rely solely on annual performance reviews and would like daily communication with their direct supervisor (Alsop, 2008, p.107; Tapscott, 2009; Society for Human Research Management, 2009; Mencil & Lester, 2014).

Another very important aspect for Millennials in the workplace, is to find an environment where they can grow from skill development, career advancement (Mencil & Lester, 2014), and fast-track leadership programs (Glass, 2007). Millennials want to feel as though they have a purpose at work and need to understand their direct contributions to the organizational whole (Twenge, 2006, p.415; Gallup, 2019).

It is important for Millennials to work for companies where there is collaborative action and decision-making, where they feel a part of a team and that their input is appreciated and opinions matter (Glass, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Society For Human Research Management, 2009; Salahuddin, 2010) Millennials are more inclined to accept change in an organization when they feel included in decision-making (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

They are also seeking a strong connection with their bosses. They don't react well to authoritarian leadership but want their boss to act as a coach and mentor (Gallup, 2016). Studies are showing that Millennials are leaving the workplace because there is a disconnect between themselves and the work environment and that they will not tolerate the old styles of management. They want to feel motivated by the mission of the organization. They want to feel like they personally have a purpose, contribution and connection to the organization and people (Twenge, 2006, p.415; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007; Bateman, 2014; Gallup, 2019).

Companies have a vested interest in trying to slow the mobility rate of Millennials. They need Millennials to fill positions left vacant by retiring Boomers. Millennials have a great deal to bring to the organizations within which they operate so companies that want to compete for top talent must adapt to the

Millennial generation (Alsop, 2008, p.39; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

### **Leadership and Leadership Theories**

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2010, p.2).

Leaders significantly increase people's belief in their own ability to make a difference. They move from being in control to giving the control to others. They become their coach by helping others learn new skills, develop existing talents, and provide the institutional supports required for ongoing growth and change. Leaders envision an exciting future and are able to create a clear vision to their followers about that future. They inspire commitment and enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The end goal of a leader is to turn his followers into leaders (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2009).

Millennial intrinsic work motivators are overwhelmingly showcased in their desire towards autonomy, continual development and the need for strong workplace relationships. These motivating factors help influence employee drive and increase commitment (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). Winning companies in the corporate world will choose to embrace the Millennials' collaborative ways (Tapscott, 2009, p.150).

As core values, work values and ethics characterize what a generational cohort wants in a leadership style, it can be shown that Millennials respect a leadership style that is transformational and participative (Salahuddin, 2010).

Transformational leadership was introduced by Bass (1990) as describing superior leadership performance occurring when leaders elevate and advance the interest of their employees. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to move beyond self-interest and work for the collective good. They elicit a result far exceeding any expectations.

Transformational leadership fits well with the expectations of Millennials. Managers who can adopt a leadership style rooted in the individual consideration, and one that promotes relationships and meeting individual needs, are the managers who will most successfully attract, motivate, and retain their Millennial employees (Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

Participative leadership is considered joint decision making between a leader and his follower. This is

beneficial because it increases the quality of the decisions, there are more options because more people are bringing suggestions to the table. It can also increase the motivation and job satisfaction of the follower. Participative leaders lead by encouraging team members to discover new opportunities and challenges on deal with oncoming challenges by sharing knowledge with the team and finding ways to get through the problems together (Somech, 2005).

Collaboration, is achieving something *with* other people, experiencing power through other people, not by ordering a group of followers to do your bidding. Collaboration is how Millennials get things done (Tapscott, 2009, p.163). Millennials are family-centric and team-oriented, (Gavitorra, 2012) so they agree that that goals can be reached more efficiently through collaboration. Multiple opinions, experiences, and knowledge are perceived to lead to more successful results and improve efficiency, especially when it concerns innovations (Grotkamp, Schaumann & Riehm, 2012).

### **Leadership Task Model**

The Leadership Task Model has been developed to provide leaders with a results-oriented set of leadership behaviors derived from scientific theory and practical effectiveness. The Me-Level is based upon the leader's ability to lead himself. The We-Level which covers the whole organization and shows the leader's ability to act in a way that reflect the organization's core values. The You-Level describes the interactions the leaders need to perform with others in order to achieve the goals of the corporation (Desjardins, 2012; Desjardins & Baker, 2013; Desjardins, 2019).

The influence of a leader is linked directly to how well the subordinate is motivated, positively influenced and developed and capable of accomplishing tasks (Yukl, 2010). Motivational support is becoming increasingly more important for managers of Millennials because their motivational drivers are shifting from past generations. Motivational Support is a foundational part of leadership productivity as it directly relates to the effort put into the work tasks (Desjardins, 2019).

Motivational Support consists of:

*Affiliation:* establishing, maintaining or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person. (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). It is important to note whether a follower has a high or low level of affiliation, because high levels could be more conducive to working in

teams and low levels could be more conducive to individual work (Desjardins, 2019).

*Acknowledgement:* used in the terms such as esteem and ego. Receiving praise and positive information enhances our self-concept (Desjardins, 2019). People are motivated to adopt and maintain an identity to the extent that it can provide feelings of self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging, efficacy, and meaning (Vignoles et al., 2006). A leader should take the time to create relationships with his followers. If there is a constant source of acknowledgement from the leader, the follower will always feel secure (Desjardins, 2019).

*Growth:* Growth refers to the motivation to learn new things and increase competency levels. There can be a high determination level for satisfying curiosity, knowing and explaining the unknown. (Maslow, 1954, p.48). Human beings have the need to develop themselves to the highest possible levels. It can be seen as advancement and developing oneself to adapt and fit into new environments (Desjardins, 2019). Growth mindset is the belief that intelligence can be nurtured through learning and effort (Ng, 2018).

*Purpose (Sense):* Also called self-actualization (Maslow, 1954, p.46). The search for meaning is the search for certain basic truths or essential experiences in life. When people experienced meaning they will likely have achieved a sense of coherence, integrity, and congruence within the self (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). It is the leader's job to increase the follower's motivation by pointing out the specific purpose of their work and how it leads to the overall growth of the entire project and company itself. The goal of the leader is to provide a specific purpose to the follower in terms of work goals (Desjardins, 2019).

*Performance(Achievement):* Performance motivation refers to the human desire to achieve goals, even if there is no specific value or benefit (Desjardins, 2019). A human's core purpose is related to accomplishing goals that reflect one's core values (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The attainment of a specific, high goal is usually instrumental in leading to outcomes that are important to an individual (Locke & Latham, 1990, p.5).

*Coaching:* Coaching is about consulting and supporting employees by listening to them and enabling them to manage their own tasks. It is a series of conversations that help a person perform closer to their potential, understand their roles or tasks, help them complete those tasks successfully and develop them for the next tasks. A coach should be able to do this while still enabling a sense of fulfillment at work (Downey, 2003, p.99). The goal of coaching is to promote: behavioral

change, self-awareness, learning and career success that enables the overall performance of the organization (Joo, 2005; Grant, 2012).

## Research Questions & Methods

There have been many studies done on who Millennials are in the workplace, and how they are different from other generations. Studies are starting to show their differences in job changing and why they don't feel connected. There is a gap in research specifically for expected leadership qualities and actual leadership (in terms of motivational support). By addressing this gap, it could help employers retain qualified Millennial workers who have been unsatisfied in their current work environment.

Q1: What do Millennials rank as their highest expected leadership dimension from their leader in the workplace (based on the shortened Leadership Tasks Survey)?

H1-0: Millennials do not rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality.

H1-1: Millennials rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality.

Q2: Is there a gap between expected and observed motivational support by Millennials from their leaders?

H2-0: There is no significant gap between motivational support expectations and reality.

H2-1: There is a significant gap between motivational support expectations and reality.

In order to gather the data, the author sent a quantitative survey for questions pertaining to the expectations and then observations of a leader. The survey consisted of 19 questions from the Short Leadership Tasks Survey (Desjardins, 2020). The questions are measured on a Likert scale from 1-7 (1 = never, 2= almost never, 3=sometimes, 4= in half of the cases, 5= frequently, 6= almost always, and 7 = always).

The same 19 questions were asked twice. First, based on the expectations from your leader/supervisor in the workplace and secondly, based on what you have actually observed and experienced from them in the workplace. The target group of survey participants were professional Millennials (with at least one year of professional work experience), born between 1990 and 1995. The author posted the survey to be taken anonymously online via Survey Monkey on social media sites to be answered by professionals in the United States and Germany.

## Empirical results

### Background Statistics

There was a total of 68 Millennial respondents. The first question determined birth year, participants selected a year from 1990-1995. The majority, 23.5%, of the participants that took the survey were born in 1995 (22.3% for 1994, 16.4% for 1993, 14.9% for 1992, 14.9% for 1990 and 8.9% for 1991).

The second question determined work experience, participants selected from 0-1, 2-3, 3-4 or 5+ years working. The majority, 45.5%, of participants have been working for more than 5 years (22% for 2-3 years, 17.6% for 0-1 years and 14.7% for 4-5 years).

The author analyzed the data with IBM's SPSS software, version 27, and used coding in SPSS to mark the Dimension and Subtask. The survey results were entered for the first part, Expectations and for the second part, Reality.

### Expectations and Reality

To analyze the data from the survey, the author used descriptive statistics for all subtask variables in the expectations survey shown in Table 1. The mean values were generally scored high with all subtasks scoring above  $M=4.50$  and 16 out of 19 tasks having a mean value over  $M=5.00$ . The Standard Deviation (SD) ranged between Workload Optimization ( $SD=1.07$ ) and Acknowledgement ( $SD=1.54$ ) indicating the low variability of responses.

The subtasks with the three highest means were: Motivational Support: Growth ( $M=6.06$ ), Goal Achievement: Interaction ( $M=6.01$ ) and Resource Management: Meeting Optimization ( $M=6.00$ ). The subtasks with the three lowest means were: Motivational Support: Affiliation ( $M=4.32$ ), Motivational Support: Coaching ( $M=4.59$ ) and Resource Management: Follower Productivity ( $M=4.78$ ).

The three items with the highest standard deviation showing high variability of responses were:

Motivational Support: Acknowledgement ( $SD=1.54$ ), Motivational Support: Coaching ( $SD=1.45$ ) and Motivational Support: Affiliation ( $SD=1.44$ ). The three

items with the lowest standard deviation showing less variability of responses were: Resource Management: Workload Optimization ( $SD=1.08$ ), Goal Achievement: Interaction ( $SD=1.09$ ) and Resource Management: Meeting Optimization ( $SD=1.16$ ).

The items with the highest mean and lowest standard deviation show the highest expected leadership quality that was most agreed between respondents. These two are: Goal Achievement: Interaction ( $M=6.01$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ) and Resource Management: Meeting Optimization ( $M=6.00$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ).

To analyze Q1, the author took all subtasks and generating a mean score for each dimension: goal achievement, resource management, motivational support and empowerment, and performed a one sample t-test to test the hypothesis, the results are shown in Table 2.

The significance for all four dimensions is  $p=.000$ , meaning it can be assessed that the mean values do not differentiate from the mean value of the overall sample can be interpreted. But as all four confidence intervals are overlapping so it cannot be proven that one dimension is scored higher than any other. Based on the data, there is no statistical difference between the mean values, and no value ranks first. Therefore, the data cannot support the assumptions, that Millennials expect Motivational Support the most over the other dimension.

Therefore, the differences cannot support the assumptions that Motivational Support is ranked the highest, nor any other area ranked the highest and the null hypothesis H1-0: *Millennials do not rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality* is supported while H1-1: *Millennials rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality* is rejected.

Table 1  
*Expectations Subtask Statistics*

Dimension	Subtask	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goal Achievement	Goal Definition	68	2	7	5.12	1.38
	Goal Clarification	68	2	7	5.21	1.31
	Interaction	68	2	7	6.01	1.09
	Information	68	1	7	5.82	1.23
	Constructive Feedback	68	3	7	5.82	1.27
	Positive Feedback	68	3	7	5.60	1.24
Resource Management	Follower Productivity	68	1	7	4.78	1.42
	Workload Optimization	68	3	7	5.63	1.08
	Meeting Optimization	68	3	7	6.00	1.16
	Facilitation	68	2	7	5.46	1.32
Motivational Support	Affiliation	68	1	7	4.32	1.44
	Coaching	68	1	7	4.59	1.45
	Acknowledgement	68	1	7	5.51	1.54
	Growth	68	3	7	6.06	1.22
	Purpose/Sense	68	2	7	5.76	1.47
	Achievement/Performance	68	2	7	5.40	1.31
Empowerment	Autonomy	68	2	7	5.37	1.26
	Process Acceptance	68	3	7	5.22	1.38
	Result Acceptance	68	3	7	5.06	1.38

Table 2  
*One Sample T-Test Expectations Dimension Means*

Expectation Dimensional Means	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Goal Achievement	54.690	67	.000	5.59804	5.3937	5.8023
Resource Management	56.445	67	.000	5.46691	5.2736	5.6602
Motivational Support	44.662	67	.000	5.27451	5.0388	5.5102
Empowerment	41.829	67	.000	5.21569	4.9668	5.4646

Table 3 shows the reality subtask statistics. The mean values were generally scored lower than expectations with all subtasks scoring above Resource Management: Facilitation ( $M=3.80$ ) with Empowerment: Result Acceptance ( $M=5.12$ ) being the highest mean. Standard deviation ranged from Empowerment: Result Acceptance ( $SD=1.46$ ) to Resource Management: Facilitation ( $SD=1.81$ ) meaning answers did not vary much between respondents.

The subtasks with the three highest means were: Empowerment: Result Acceptance ( $M=5.12$ ), Empowerment: Process Acceptance ( $M=4.90$ ) and Motivational Support: Achievement ( $M=4.82$ ). The subtasks with the three lowest means were: Resource Management: Follower Productivity ( $M=3.81$ ), Goal

Achievement: Goal Clarification ( $M=3.97$ ) and Motivational Support: Affiliation ( $M=4.01$ ).

The three items with the highest standard deviation showing high variability of responses were: Resource Management: Facilitation ( $SD=1.81$ ), Motivational Support: Purpose ( $SD=1.80$ ) and Goal Achievement: Positive Feedback ( $SD=1.71$ ). The three items with the lowest standard deviation showing less variability of responses were: Empowerment: Result Acceptance ( $SD=1.46$ ), Empowerment: Process Acceptance ( $SD=1.48$ ) and Goal Achievement: Goal Definition ( $SD=1.51$ ).

The items with the highest mean and lowest standard deviation show the highest observed leadership quality that was most agreed between respondents. These two



are: Empowerment: Result Acceptance ( $M=5.12$ ,  $SD=1.46$ ) and Empowerment: Process Acceptance ( $M=4.90$ ,  $SD=1.48$ ).

Table 3  
*Reality Subtask Statistics*

Reality	Dimensional Means	Subtask	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goal Achievement		Goal Definition	68	1	7	4.40	1.51
		Goal Clarification	68	1	7	3.97	1.53
		Interaction	68	1	7	4.90	1.55
		Information	68	1	7	4.47	1.53
		Constructive Feedback	68	1	7	4.24	1.68
		Positive Feedback	68	1	7	4.41	1.71
Resource Management		Follower Productivity	68	1	7	4.16	1.59
		Workload Optimization	68	1	7	4.21	1.65
		Meeting Optimization	68	1	7	4.37	1.70
		Facilitation	68	1	7	3.81	1.81
Motivational Support		Affiliation	68	1	7	4.01	1.54
		Coaching	68	1	7	4.26	1.64
		Acknowledgment	68	1	7	4.69	1.68
		Growth	68	1	7	4.79	1.64
		Purpose/Sense	68	1	7	4.56	1.80
Empowerment		Achievement/Performance	68	1	7	4.82	1.54
		Autonomy	68	1	7	4.60	1.53
		Process Acceptance	68	1	7	4.90	1.48
	Result Acceptance	68	1	7	5.12	1.46	

To analyze Q2, the author first grouped all subgroups for the dimension Motivational Support into Mean for Expectations and Reality: Motivational Support Mean Expectations and Motivational Support Mean Reality and ran a paired sample T-Test for Expectations and Reality (Table 4). This was performed to analyze the data as observations for the two groups are not

independent of each other. The observations are not independent of one another. The author paired the dimension of Motivational Support Expectations versus Reality to compare the differences.

Table 4  
*Paired Samples T-Test Motivational Support Expectations and Motivational Support Reality*

	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Expectation Mean-Reality Mean	.75000	1.43271	.17374	.40321	1.09679	4.317	67	.000

The standard error (*Std. SM*) is a good indicator of the size of difference between sample means that can determine if conditions under which scores collected were stable (Field, 2018, p.592) In Table 10, the data shows at the *Standard Error (Std. EM)* dimensions is a little below 0.00 so the differences between means of most pairs of samples are very close to the population size.

On average, Millennials had more Expectations of Motivational Support ( $M=5.27$ ,  $SD=0.97$ ) than the Reality of what is actually received in the workplace ( $M=4.52$ ,  $SD=1.35$ ). This difference of .750 is significant in this case  $p=.000$ . With the assumption that

$\alpha = 0.05$ , we can conclude that there is a significance between the means of Expectations Motivational Support and Reality Motivational Support. The t-test is highly significant with  $p=.000$  ( $p$  is less than .05). The 95% confidence interval for the average difference of mean is (0.40-1.09)

Therefore, the H2-0: There is no significant gap between motivational support expectations and reality is rejected and we can accept H2-1 There is a significant gap between motivational support expectations and reality is accepted.

## Summary

As the mass exodus of Boomers are retiring, Millennials are comprising the overall generational group most prominent in the workforce today (Pew Research Center, 2020; Ernst & Young, 2015). There have been numerous studies on generational differences in the workplace (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Lyons et al., 2012) and organizations that can understand the underlying motivational differences for these generations will be at an advantage (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). It is important to note the differences in motivational factors and preferred leadership styles of Millennials to better retain talent. Millennials are looking for: a flexible schedule to obtain a perfect work-life balance (Society For Human Research Management, 2009; Thompson & Gregory, 2012), where they have:

*Acknowledgment*: feedback and ongoing reviews from their managers (Thompson & Gregory, 2012), *Affiliation*: collaborative action and decision-making environments (Glass, 2007; Salahuddin, 2010), *Performance*: skill development (Mencl & Lester, 2014), *Growth*: Career advancement and leadership programs (Glass, 2007), *Purpose*: control of their work environments and career paths (Deloitte, 2016) and *Coaching*: An environment where they are mentored

and coached to contribute to corporate policies, strategy, and business performance (Tapscott, 2009, p.167).

The key to Millennial commitment and retention is the relationship with the immediate manager (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Examining motivational support and to see if it is lacking from Millennial expectations could help managers retain talent and understand the Millennials that they are leading.

The author used the LTS short a survey (Desjardins, 2020) which asked questions based on the four dimensions of the You-Level for Millennials to answer, first for their expectations of a leader in the workplace and secondly for the reality of leadership qualities they actually experience. This was to measure the relationship with Millennial participants and their immediate manager to measure if there is a significant gap in their expectations which can lead to demotivation.

The author used a one sample t-test to analyze the expected dimensions of the Millennials and the results of the survey could not statistically prove that Motivational Support was ranked as the highest leadership dimension so H1-0 was accepted: *Millennials do not rank Motivational Support as the highest expected leadership quality*. However, it is important to note the highest ranked means for expectations from the survey.

Motivational Support: Growth ( $M=6.06$ ): Growth was the highest ranked subtask of the Millennials in the survey and falls into the category of Motivational Support. Millennials want to advance their career opportunities but think their leadership skills are not being fully developed and that businesses are not doing enough to bridge the gap to ensure a new generation of business leaders is created (Deloitte, 2016). Empowering Millennials through leadership programs and career advancement opportunities (Lyons et al., 2015) is a great way to specifically reach the goals of Millennials' career desires for a fast pasted, upward moving career advancements.

Goal Achievement: Interaction ( $M=6.01$ ): Engagement and quality time between a leader and subordinate builds trust and also fosters intrinsic motivation factors as acknowledgement, purpose, performance, motivation, growth and autonomy (Desjardins, 2019). Because Millennials are requesting regular face time, and support from their managers, (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Ng et al., 2010) it is important to put in the time to check in with them on a daily basis (Tapscott, 2009, p.167). Extending the effort to make Millennials feel like they have a personalized relationship with their

manger and organization, could make the difference of retaining their loyalty and talent.

Resource Management: Meeting Optimization ( $M=6.00$ ): Leaders need to be trained to increase meeting efficiency and effectiveness by setting up a goal-oriented agenda, focusing discussions, clearly defining results and efficiently using check lists and time (Desjardins, 2019). Because of their ability to efficiently multitask, (Alsop, 2008, p.135) unproductive use of meeting time could be wasted. Other generations could see this as being impatient (Cekada, 2012) but it is important to take into account the fast-pasted digital world we are living in today. Millennials are requesting clear direction and checklists (Alsop, 2008, p.133) but a flexible working schedule (Society For Human Research Management, 2009; Ng et al. 2010). A manger should keep this in mind when trying to organize work time, including meetings, with a Millennial taking into account if it is an effective use of their time.

The lowest mean scores for expectations were: Motivational Support: Affiliation ( $M=4.32$ ), Motivational Support: Coaching ( $M= 4.59$ ) and Resource Management: Follower Productivity ( $M=4.78$ ). These results contradict the theoretical assumption that Millennials expect Coaching and Affiliation in the workplace. The low scores could be an artificial result based on the misunderstanding of the survey question. Because each category had only one question in the LTS short, the results could be better analyzed with a longer survey and more questions in each category, so the participants fully understand what they are being asked.

For the second hypothesis, the author used a paired sample t-test to test if there was a difference between expectations and reality of motivational support that was statistically significant. The hypotheses: *there is no significant gap between expected motivational support and reality* was rejected as  $p<.05$  and the hypothesis: *there is a significant gap between expected motivational support and reality* was accepted. The test showed significance  $<.05$  proving that Millennials do experience a difference between their expectations of motivational support and what they actually see and observe from their leaders in the workplace. It is significant to note that there is a gap between expectations and reality and Millennial mangers should look into their own leadership behaviors. However, a wider range of participants with a the longer LTS survey could better directly specify the expectations of Millennials in the workplace.

## Conclusions

The author researched the motivation behind Millennials and how they are different than other generations in the workplace. She can see that Millennials expect goal achievement as the most needed leadership behavior (dimension) from their leader. But the specific subtasks most desired are: Growth, Interaction and Meeting Optimization. Review growth as an intrinsic motivational desire to achieve and be challenged, and Interaction is related to affiliation the author's survey relevant to Millennials in the work environment today.

The survey is meant for managers of Millennials to be able to better understand their subordinates in how to better motivate them. This motivation increases work productivity and can lead to work commitment. A manager should take care to specifically see the motivations of his followers and treat each person individually. Recognizing that Millennials are showcasing different motivational needs than previous generations is significant to note as their loyalty, or willingness to stay in a company could be directly linked to the motivational support that they either receive, or don't receive from their direct manager.

In order to retain talented Millennials in the workplace, a leader should note their drives and observe whether they are being met or not as this could lead to Millennials not feeling connected to an organization and a higher turnaround in qualified talent.

Limitations of the study could be drawn from a longer survey and more participants. The author analyzed 68 Millennials born 1990-1995 and the data did not statistically prove, nor did not prove if Motivational Support is the highest expected leadership task. In order to obtain statistically sound results, a more comprehensive survey should be conducted with a more participants involved. The survey was based off the LTS short survey which included 19 questions. A more comprehensive test can be given based on the actual LTS survey. A wider range of participants with a longer LTS survey could better specify the direct expectations of Millennials.

The author's survey included many matrix type questions which could lead to participants checking off answers quickly as they went down the list. Designing the survey with less matrix type questions would take longer, and participants would have to agree to 15-20 minutes of their time compared to 5 minutes (from the author's survey).

The author analyzed on of the leadership dimensions, motivational support and further analysis should be made to see if there are significant gaps between the

other leadership dimensions as well. Studying further the gap between expectations and reality for specific genders, nationalities, age groups should be done as well for specific managers.

### About the Author

Sara Peccianti is from the United States and completed her Bachelor of Arts in English from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. After working as a project manager at a language translation

company, she felt the urge to travel abroad and spent 5 years in Thailand and Taiwan teaching, traveling and developing her own tutoring business. She continued her international experience by completing her MBA in International Leadership and Management with a focus in Organizational Transformation from the Professional School of the University of Applied Sciences in Kempten, Germany. She is currently utilizing her leadership skills to manage her family owned UPS Stores in California, USA.

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