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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Millennial Employees in Contact Centers: Leadership Style Preferences Contribution to
Job Satisfaction

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by
Dana C. Martin, Jr.

April 2022

Dedication

The long and arduous process of completing this doctorate could not have been done without the support of my family and friends. I dedicate this work to my family, specifically my wife, Charlya Martin, who encouraged me to take this journey. Your strength and perseverance through the last few challenging years continues to serve as an inspiration.

Acknowledgments

The journey of doctoral studies can be long and difficult if not for those who assisted throughout.

I want to first thank my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Richard Dool, who guided me to make my own decisions and provided opportunities for me to grow in how to think academically.

I would like to acknowledge my committee members, Dr. Kipi Fleming and Dr. Shawn Anderson. I was thrilled when they accepted the invitation to be a part of my journey. Both professors challenged my thought and theory analysis, helping me learn to be a better communicator of ideas through writing.

I would also like to thank Dr. Dana McMichael for her continued influence and guidance through the program.

I acknowledge Nicole Wood and Julie Beacom for all their help in attempting to gain participants and clearing the way for research within SatInc (pseudonym).

All the participants have my gratitude as there is no research if there are no subjects. I appreciate the time and effort, especially for the interviews.

In addition, I would like to thank my family for giving up so much time and experiences with me all the days I held up in my office instead of being with them. My wife, Charlya, thank you for being supportive, caring, and understanding through this process. Madison and Zane, time cannot be replaced, but I am looking forward to making up for some of it. Pollyanne, Sarah, Rose, Sam, Wanda, Elly, and many more, you have my gratitude.

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Abstract

Millennials account for the largest generational cohort in the workforce. Their propensity for turnover is costly to organizations, not just monetary impact, but skill development and sustainability as well. This study attempted to understand if leadership and the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees contribute to job satisfaction. This mixed-methods sequential explanatory study examined how leadership and the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees, from the perspectives of Millennial employees and those who manage them, contribute to job satisfaction. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was used as the survey tool for the qualitative study (see Appendix A). A questionnaire was sent via email to collect interview responses from Millennial employees and supervisors of Millennials. The sample used for the study consisted of Millennial employees and supervisors of Millennials within Texas and SatInc, a satellite internet company. The JSS tool and its results were used, as well as the raw data to further analyze trends and correlations between job characteristics and job satisfaction. Inductive and deductive coding was used in the qualitative portion of the study. The supervisory factor was the most impactful characteristic of job satisfaction. It is imperative that organizations understand the high level of impact that direct management and their leadership style can have on Millennial employees and their job satisfaction.

Keywords: Millennials, job satisfaction, leadership style, supervisor, adaptive leadership, Job Satisfaction Survey, Millennial employees, organizational culture, mixed-methods sequential explanatory study

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Millennials, people born between the early 1980s and the year 2000 (Credo et al., 2016), make up the largest segment of the United States workforce, and more are entering the workforce every year (Gallup, 2016). Unlike previous generational cohorts, such as the Baby Boomers or Generation X, Millennial employees are demonized in the media for being selfish, self-centered, and narcissistic (Credo et al., 2016). They prefer instant gratification through rewards or incentives and want to ensure work/life balance (Jauhar et al., 2017). The current research presents a different view of Millennial employees as not being statistically different than the previous two cohorts concerning work rule compliance, terminations, and willingness to work overtime (Becton et al., 2014).

Data suggest that Millennials move between organizations at a higher rate than other generational cohorts (Gallup, 2016). Millennials have a propensity to switch jobs more often than members of previous generational cohorts (Jauhar et al., 2017). Job satisfaction (Ayala et al., 2017; Zito et al., 2018) is important to all employees; however, Millennials tend to seek organizations and jobs based on a different set of characteristics than previous generational cohorts (Civelek et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2017). As the cost of interviewing, hiring, and training new employees continues to rise (Taylor, 2017), investing in Millennial employees through onboarding and training only to have them leave the organization can tax organizational resources.

Identification of the Problem

Retaining Millennial employees is an issue that affects organizations throughout the entire United States. Specifically, this problem is occurring now in the central Texas area containing what is known as the Brazos Valley. SatInc (pseudonym) is a satellite internet

company that owns several broadband internet satellites and is currently attempting to be the first company to provide satellite-based broadband internet to the entire world. College Station, Texas houses a contact center responsible for assisting with government Wi-Fi contracts, business-class internet, and in-flight Wi-Fi passenger care. The contact center agents have job duties consisting of answering inbound calls, chats, and emails from customers. The agents are expected to assist with billing and account issues, provide technical support, and answer any questions about SatInc's services.

SatInc's employees consist of Millennials, Generation Xers, and Baby Boomers. Education level varies from high school diplomas to college degrees in various disciplines. These employees vary in time in service from new hire to 5 years. SatInc employs people who have a high level of customer service skills; general knowledge of Wi-Fi, networking, and PCs; and a high capacity to learn.

SatInc has experienced a high turnover rate in the contact center, with most employees belonging to the Millennial cohort. SatInc recently found 42% of its workforce turnover in the last 2 years, 87% of those were Millennial employees. SatInc has since restructured its interview process, training department, and issued surveys to the employees to stop the turnover and increase retention. Turnover rates have not changed.

Results from a study in 2013 concluded that there was no statistical difference between the Millennial cohort and the previous two generational cohorts concerning ethical ideology, teamwork, ethical violations, and servant leadership (VanMeter et al., 2013). The authors also concluded that Millennial employees valued different styles of leadership than the previous two generational cohorts. Results from the surveys that SatInc distributed revealed interesting results consistent with current research on the Millennial cohort.

Scope of the Problem

The results from current research reflect the same concern as the survey at SatInc where Millennial employees have low job satisfaction. The focus of the conversation reveals that Millennial employees leave organizations more frequently than those employees from other cohorts (Ertas, 2015). Millennial employees have slightly different priorities than the previous cohorts, affecting job satisfaction. Some of these differences are social impact and corporate responsibility, according to Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), who found that Millennials are affected and influenced by world issues, communication, information, economics, and socialization differently than previous cohorts.

SatInc's survey results stated that management and engagement were the two most important factors in job satisfaction. Compensation, time off, work/life balance, and benefits all factored into job satisfaction but ranked lower than responses regarding management and engagement. Millennials have different expectations concerning the management–employee relationship than previous cohorts (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Higher job satisfaction leads to higher employee retention (Wen et al., 2018). Millennials have a propensity to switch jobs more often than members of previous generational cohorts. Retaining contributing millennial employees is imperative for organizations to protect this monetary and human capital investment. Millennials tend to look at work/life balance (Ayala et al., 2017; Buonocore et al., 2015), organizational culture (Cohen et al., 2017; Regan, 2017; Thompson, 2016), and leadership culture (Naim & Lenka, 2017; Pinelli et al., 2018) differently than previous generational cohorts.

Organizations like SatInc need to understand how leadership styles can lead to higher job satisfaction and retention in Millennials at central Texas contact centers. Determining the most appropriate leadership style to motivate employees is critical to the success of any organization. Understanding, learning, and executing a leadership style appropriate for the climate of Millennial employees can create a framework for growth and retention (Pinelli et al., 2018). The problem in this study is to understand how the leadership and preferred leadership style of Millennial employees, from the perspectives of Millennial employees and those who manage them, contribute to job satisfaction. Organizations must be flexible in their approach to learning to lead Millennials in a way that they want to be led. Leadership culture (Naim & Lenka, 2017) can lead to higher job satisfaction and Millennial employee retention.

Theoretical Framework

Job satisfaction is a concept all organizations must understand to remain competitive and increase sustainability. One theory that was examined and served as the theoretical framework for the study was Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory. Herzberg theorized that motivators, elements that contributed positively to job attitudes, were separate from hygiene, elements which contributed to dissatisfaction (Whitsett & Winslow, 1967). Herzberg's theory attempts to deconstruct the various factors of job satisfaction and put them into two categories, motivator and hygiene.

While extrinsic motivators can increase job satisfaction and can improve job performance (Barnett, 2019), factors, such as difficult working conditions, are considered hygiene factors that can move an employee to sever their employment. Herzberg placed importance on understanding how factors like working conditions could be managed to the point that the employee would stay with the organization. However, as working conditions are a hygiene factor, productivity may

still suffer, and ultimately the organization must address the factors that cause low productivity or employee turnover.

The motivation and hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory can assist in categorizing the various intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affecting a job or organization. Sachau (2007) concluded that there is not a linear relationship between motivators or hygiene as it pertains to job satisfaction or happiness. Herzberg opens the door to further research to better understand how these motivators affect an employee's long-term happiness. An example of hygiene might be a monetary raise that would not bring the same level of job satisfaction as recognition or increased responsibility, which are motivating factors.

The second theory is self-determination theory (SDT), which is critical to understanding how intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors influence job satisfaction. It is important to understand leadership as an extrinsic motivator or as hygiene of the various theories. In researching respectful leadership as a motivating factor, Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) discovered that employees treated with a high level of respect display higher job satisfaction. Equally, disrespectful leadership can act as a motivation for job dissatisfaction (Decker & Van Quaquebeke, 2015).

Job satisfaction contributes to job retention for Millennials or any generational cohort (Ivanović & Ivančević, 2019). Millennials value work/life balance more than previous generational cohorts (Mihelič & Aleksic, 2017). Intrinsic motivators for job satisfaction are also different for Millennials. These include organizational culture, organizational values, and social responsibility. These motivators are not categorically motivator or hygiene factors. There is a fluidity to these factors that, dependent upon the situation, leader, or subordinate, can be either a motivator or hygiene.

Sachau's (2007) conclusions lead to an understanding that if there is not a linear relationship between hygiene and motivators, perhaps there is not a linear relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Certain factors, such as leadership, are more fluid in that they are not exclusively motivators or hygiene. For example, in the case of employee–leader relationships, an employee may work hard at their leader’s direction (extrinsic motivation) but may also work hard to impress or make their leader proud (intrinsic motivation).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods sequential explanatory study was to examine how leadership and preferred leadership style of Millennial employees, from the perspectives of Millennial employees and those who manage them, contribute to job satisfaction. The results will provide insight for organizations in the Brazos Valley region of Texas to understand better how Millennial employees prefer to be led and the importance of leadership style as it pertains to job satisfaction. Once completed, the research may provide an understanding as to what leadership style Millennials prefer and if it leads to job satisfaction.

Research Questions

- Q1.** What leadership style does the Millennial cohort prefer?
- Q2.** Does a specific leadership style lead to employee job satisfaction?
- Q3.** What is the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of those who manage them?

Definition of Key Terms

Adaptive leadership. In adaptive leadership style, a leader is flexible and able to adapt their leadership style to change. These leaders have the capacity to individualize their leadership style based on the subordinate (Northouse, 2016).

Authentic leadership. In authentic leadership style, a leader is self aware and transparent. Authentic leaders lead by way of relationship building and ethical decision making (Pinelli et al., 2018).

Authoritative leadership. Authoritative leadership forcefully tries to motivate employees and can be perceived as abusive and demotivating (Hou, 2017).

Ethical leadership. Ethical leadership style is founded on the principles of ethical decision making. Ethical leaders uphold values and beliefs that reflect honesty, truthfulness, and integrity (Moon & Jung, 2018).

Generational cohort. A generational cohort is the description of a group of individuals who experienced the same events in time at approximately the same age. This term comes from generational cohort theory, which states that there are normally four separate generations with their characteristics at any given time. This process continually cycles where a cohort will expire as a new cohort emerges (Fisher & Crabtree, 2009).

Millennial. The Millennial cohort is the generation following Generation X. Millennials were born between 1981 and 2000 (Debevec et al., 2013).

Servant leadership. Servant leadership reflects the leader as a servant to the developmental needs of a subordinate. It is the goal of the servant leader to build up their employees to positively affect their personal and professional development through a heightened level of altruism (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016).

Transformational leadership. In transformational leadership, leaders influence subordinates to effect change for their greater good and that of the organization (Hentrich et al., 2017; Jauhar et al., 2017).

Summary

Generational cohorts categorize individuals based on their age and the societal impacts they have experienced. The Millennial cohort experienced the Great Recession and has grown up in a world linked together by the internet, information, and social media. These influences shaped the cohort differently from previous generational cohorts. Millennials tend to have a propensity for leaving jobs in favor of opportunities that provide them with greater work/life balance. They also continue to look for vocations where they can have an impact on the greater good of society.

Leading Millennials can be challenging, as the increased likelihood of their departure can prevent leaders from investing in them professionally and personally. Although some researchers have concluded there is not much difference between each generational cohort; other contradictory research suggests that retaining these employees requires different strategies than those for other generations. The way to influence Millennials to stay in their jobs and develop careers may be linked to the styles they prefer their leaders to employ. Leadership style can have a large impact on Millennial employees and their job satisfaction.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Literature defining and researching leadership styles is plentiful, but literature concerning Millennials and preferred leadership styles is limited. It is imperative to define Millennials and examine the availability of research that can help explain their behaviors and influences. It is also important to define a few leadership styles consistent with current research and how this may affect the ability to lead Millennials. Research analysis concerning how management leadership style relates to job satisfaction also appears to be lacking. Millennials' requirements for job satisfaction are mostly similar to those of other generational cohorts; however, researchers have found a few differences in the way Millennials prioritize these requirements.

Job satisfaction is critical to maintaining talent and developing long-term contributing employees. Research identifying the Millennial cohort and their characteristics has been ongoing over the last decade is important as Millennials account for most of the workforce. Several leadership styles are identified in the literature as more common forms of the current leadership. Organizational culture describes the climate of the organization. All the concepts mentioned contribute to the level of job satisfaction for Millennials.

Theoretical Framework – Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is critical to employee retention. Millennials attribute their desire to stay with an organization to job satisfaction more than any other generational cohort (Ivanović & Ivančević, 2019). Various factors from Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory can be attributed to the likelihood of job satisfaction for a Millennial employee. Work/life balance is a hygiene factor as it relates to working conditions. Millennials value an organization where work/life balance is an important part of organizational culture (Mihelič & Aleksic, 2017). These concepts

contribute to job satisfaction but also contribute to attracting Millennial talent during the job hunting process.

Herzberg's theory can be applied to all generational cohorts as a lens to better understand what motivates an employee. Organizations do not have to completely change their leadership approach, but they do need to be sensitive to the fact that Millennial employees have slightly different priorities. Saeed et al. (2018) determined that job security, salary, accountability, and working conditions may affect Millennials' job satisfaction to retention. Organizations that do not consider where Millennial workers align in Herzberg's theory of motivation do so to their detriment (Saeed et al., 2018).

Srivastava and Banerjee (2016) identified a relationship between Millennial employees' values and beliefs, and motivations. They go on to assert that this discovery is aligned with SDT. Ryan and Deci (2000) theorized that psychological needs and growth tendencies are the basis for self-motivation and self-regulation. Much of the SDT-guided research has also looked at environmental factors that can impede or diminish self-motivation, social functioning, and personal well being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). There is also an organizational cultural aspect to Millennial employees and the understanding of SDT.

Organizations understanding the motivators of employees that fall within the lens of SDT may see employees increase performance confidence and well being. This is even true when the employees have the same level of ability and competency (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation refers to activity performance for the sake of activity (i.e., experiencing intrinsic interest, satisfaction, pleasure, and delight in an activity; Eliwa, 2021). As SDT attempts to explain intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, it falls short by assuming that different factors fall into either the intrinsic or extrinsic category and are siloed. Herzberg's motivator and hygiene

categorizations also attempt to force factors into two categories. Herzberg's theory does seem to demonstrate that something like the type of leadership style a supervisor may use could imbue intrinsic factors or remain extrinsic depending on the specified leadership style.

Another aspect of job satisfaction as it pertains to organizational culture is that Millennials desire to work for an organization with high social responsibility, which is a motivation factor. Access to information via the Internet has made Millennials more attuned to the state of society, climate, and other global impact concepts. Corporate social responsibility is a hygiene factor as a reflection of company policy. Social responsibility is the ability of organizations to increase sustainability while producing social benefits. An organization with high corporate social responsibility provides Millennial employees with an opportunity for high job satisfaction (Lee & Chen, 2018).

Turnover intention differs from retention intention. Retention intention is more than just remaining with an employer; it is the intent to assimilate into and become a part of an organization (Yao & Huang, 2018). The roles of training and human resource departments are vital for Millennial employees to feel valued as contributors to an organization. Consistent coaching, mentoring, and training all contribute to retaining Millennial talent (Bhatti et al., 2019). Understanding how these concepts are intertwined and even interdependent is critical to the Millennial job satisfaction experience.

Millennials are apprehensive about investing in an organization if their values are not aligned. This is where influencers such as organizational culture play a large part in the satisfaction of Millennial employees. Millennial employees may react differently to previously proven leadership styles; thus, organization management or leadership must lead Millennials differently than previous cohorts. Job satisfaction is directly influenced by management and

leadership style. An employee who is considered to have high management satisfaction is more likely to have high job satisfaction (Bhatti et al., 2019; Shanahan & Hopkins, 2019).

Managers are a critical part of an employee's commitment to an organization and its vision. Leadership style has an impact on job satisfaction. It is critical to understand how this hygiene factor relates to supervision. An employee is willing to stay at an organization, even if they are dissatisfied with the organization or its culture, if there is a high level of satisfaction with their manager (Shanahan & Hopkins, 2019). In a situation such as this, a Millennial employee forgoes their well being out of loyalty to their leader. Organizations need to understand why a leader like this would receive such loyalty from an employee. Leadership styles that focus on risk taking, participation, and team building will overcome organizational failings focused on conformity and job security (Davis & Cates, 2018).

Another aspect of job satisfaction concerns leadership styles that are not conducive to the growth and development of employees. As referenced above, leadership can be either a motivator or hygiene factor depending on whether the motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. This is a supervisory hygiene factor as leadership behaviors such as self-seeking, inappreciative, and negativity create toxicity within the employees. Job satisfaction decreases and toxicity can spread through the organization based on the behaviors of the leader (Bakkal et al., 2019).

Millennial Cohort and Characteristics

Millennials are the generational cohort preceded by Generation X and Baby Boomers. They were born between 1981 and 2000 (Debevec et al., 2013). These individuals account for the largest segment of the U.S. workforce, and more are entering the workforce every year (Gallup, 2016). With such a surge of people falling into this cohort entering the workforce, it behooves organizations to understand how to motivate and retain these employees.

Retaining millennial employees is not enough. Millennials, just like any other generational cohort, must have their needs met, so that job satisfaction remains high (Saeed et al., 2018). Cultivating the growth and development of millennial employees creates sustainability in the talent pool within the organization. Leaders are also subject to being evaluated on Baird's leadership style and whether or not how they lead is identified as either a motivator or a hygiene factor (Hur, 2018).

Millennials are often accused of being narcissistic, self-centered, and self-absorbed (Credo et al., 2016). They have a propensity for instant gratification and see work/life balance as more important than compensation (Jauhar et al., 2017). Large-scale research from Becton et al. (2014) presented a different view of Millennial employees: they do not differ statistically in work rule compliance, terminations, and readiness to work overtime from the Generation X or Baby Boomer cohorts. Despite a negative perception of millennial employees, the data does not support this evaluation.

Another word often used to describe Millennials is entitled. If Millennials feel a sense of entitlement, it may be a result of society marketing toward this demographic in a way that instills a sense of entitlement (Keener, 2020). Keener (2020) stated that in a situation such as attending a university, the recruitment process attempts to influence the Millennial by instilling a sense of specialness. Keener's (2020) study also suggests that Millennial college students are more likely to exhibit narcissistic characteristics.

Millennials grew up when information was readily available, unlike any time in our history. The internet connected this cohort to the rest of the world and the information concerning world events with more expediency and efficiency. There was no longer a need to spend hours researching in libraries, sorting through microfiches, or using print encyclopedias to

gain knowledge. This type of social connectivity created more awareness in Millennials of the many issues facing the many cultures and people of the world. Social media became a focal point for Millennials, and organizations began to create policies shaping social media use professionally and personally (Holland et al., 2016). Social and ethical responsibility became a more critical part of their lives than those of other cohorts through exposure to these issues. Their motivation became more intrinsic (Henstra & McGowan, 2016) as they desired to seek ways to serve a greater calling than to work in a factory or sit in a cubicle.

In addition to the Millennials' desire for a more socially significant vocation, there is also evidence suggesting that ethical decision making is important to them when considering working for an organization or staying with them. They are less likely to subscribe to the traditional hierarchy of management or executive leadership (Civelek et al., 2017). Millennials are more impressed by an organization with a track record of sound ethical decision making (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). The same can be said for Millennials and their trust in those in management. The more ethical the management or executive team, the more trusting the Millennials are of the organization (Civelek et al., 2017).

Another aspect of Millennials and characteristics that impact organizations are their workplace values. Millennials grew up more technologically advanced than the preceding cohorts of Generation X and Baby Boomers. This also provides insight as to why Millennials value diversity and creativity more in the work environment (Lawton & De Aquino, 2015) in addition to ethical management. While I was performing this literature review, there were several instances where social justice and social responsibilities were front and center in all facets of news outlets and social media. The sharing of these experiences and the viewing of or protests and violence cumulated in a unique experience that the majority of the U.S. workforce

experienced together. Tolerance and inclusion are among the characteristics which Millennials possess and look for in organizations (Regan, 2017).

Finally, Millennials tend to gravitate toward opportunities where mentorship is present. Millennials desire to be influential in their communities and within their organizations. This is especially true regarding mentoring, as they desire opportunities for continuous learning and mentor relationships (Naim & Lenka, 2017). These opportunities are seen as authentic when they are intentional, ethical, and mutually beneficial to the mentor, the mentee, and the organization.

Leadership Styles

Lacroix and Verdorfer (2017) emphasized the servant leadership concept and challenged the expectations of the results of servant leadership. Specifically, the authors argued that servant leadership might not have a dramatic impact on productivity. The authors deduced that people are sometimes reluctant to follow someone who appears to lack self-interest. Lacroix and Verdorfer (2017) noted that leaders demonstrating this leadership style might divert their followers from developing a desire to pursue a path to servant leadership themselves.

Millennial workers are increasing in numbers and organizations have the opportunity to keep Millennials satisfied in their job. Millennials are leading cross generational alliances regarding information sharing and communication (Balda & Mora, 2011). Servant leadership has the dynamics and characteristics to improve Millennial engagement as a leadership construct that Millennial employees may receive positively. Balda and Mora (2011) asserted that service leadership is a relational style of leadership similar to servant leadership. One of the significant differences is that the intent of service leadership is to engage in work that has meaning, value, and balance.

Servant leadership may be the type of leadership that Millennials prefer based on the servant leader's desire to grow and develop employees (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). According to Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016), the dimensions of servant leadership all cater to what Millennial employees expect from their leaders. They list these dimensions as an altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Millennials also need close supervision in feedback, support, and relationships, which is contradictory to what close supervision meant in the past as micromanaging. If Millennials do not receive this level of engagement, they are more likely to leave an organization (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016).

More research on servant leadership and Millennials suggests that organizations can achieve improved and open delegation, community involvement, and team focus on productivity results (Balda & Mora, 2011). Research suggests there is an increased propensity for Millennials to value the servant attitude and to give nature of the servant leader (Balda & Mora, 2011). It is suggested that Millennials may seek out opportunities for extrinsic rewards such as position and title (Balda & Mora, 2011), but the presence of servant leadership may increase their desire for more intrinsic rewards such as altruism (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Adaptive leadership theory is a leadership paradigm in which leaders adjust to their surroundings as they change. Adaptive leadership, according to Northouse (2016), is defined as how leaders assist others in doing the work they need to do to adapt to the difficulties they confront. Adaptive leadership is concerned with how people evolve and adapt to changing situations in general. Adaptive leadership theory is still a rather new concept, but there is a drive to help leaders learn how to motivate and move their followers in an ever changing environment.

Changing leadership style in response to one specific generational cohort can be viewed as inauthentic, which goes against the premise of authentic leadership. Pinelli et al. (2018) suggested there is no data to support the concept of changing leadership style to benefit one specific cohort. The authors stated that authentic leadership is a leadership style whose tactics can change within its scope.

Lyubovnikova et al. (2017) designed their research to identify the relationship between authentic leadership and self-regulation theory. The authors provide a representation of authentic leadership, sustaining the facilitation of increased productivity from their followers. They also point out that authentic leaders can be influential as role models in the organization. If authentic leadership and self-regulation are related, then task related processes are directly shaped by authentic leadership.

Authentic leaders have a higher sense of self-awareness, which allows them to keep emotions in check during times of change within the organization (Pinelli et al., 2018). This type of authenticity is the focus of the authors' argument; if a leader changes the leadership style, then they are not authentic. Preliminary research suggests authentic leaders foster a meaningful environment and culture for their followers and that followers associate authentic leaders with positive actions, morals, and attitudes (Caza & Jackson, 2016).

Moral reasoning alone does not predict whether leaders regard themselves as true leaders. Rather, low Machiavellianism interacts with moral reasoning to promote more authentic leadership conduct (Sendjaya et al., 2014). Some researchers bring attention to the opinion that authenticity does not always imply good ethics; however, although they acknowledge the potential for Machiavellian inclinations on the part of leaders, they state that training programs can be designed to focus on moral ability.

The concept of true leadership is not without risk and danger. Caza and Jackson (2016) doubted that authenticity, as a leadership style, is helpful in all ways and at all times. If followers are not authentic, they may exploit leader authenticity to their advantage in a negative way, which is an example of when authenticity may not be suitable. An authentic leader would be useless if followers were not inspired by authenticity.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which the leader motivates followers to perform at a high level while simultaneously developing their leadership potential (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leader invests in their staff and grooms them to be future leaders. Increased contribution, communication, responsibility and accountability, experimentation and innovation, and interpersonal interactions are all good effects of transformational leadership (Tabassi et al., 2017).

Transformational leaders apply the “4 Is”: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration of followers, and intellectual stimulation (Mitra, 2013). The transformational leader combines numerous different leadership styles into one person. To have the intended impact on followers and employees, transformational leadership requires charisma, sincerity, and adaptability.

Transformational leadership is identified as a leadership style to which Millennials may respond (Dula & Tang, 2021). Dula and Tang (2021) asserted that managers with transformational leadership could create opportunities for the organization through the constant commitment to engagement, inspiration, and motivation they give to employees. Millennial employees whose values are aligned with this leadership style tend to be more satisfied in their jobs and loyal to the organization.

Transformational leadership can improve team conditions and team performance. Tabassi et al. (2017) found that team condition has a direct impact on team performance. The authors also state that transformational leadership is a factor in team condition and team performance. They defined six attributes of team condition: contribution, communication, responsibility and accountability, experimentation and creativity, conflict and competition, and interpersonal relationships.

Transformational leadership has the potential to improve the mental and cognitive health of employees by decreasing their stressors (Hentrich et al., 2017). Millennials tend to prefer a transformational leadership style (Jauhar et al., 2017). Hentrich et al. (2017) found a correlation between transformational leadership and employee health, but the evidence may support the lightened workload created by this type of leadership as the main factor. Separating transformational leadership into four subdimensions—inspirational motivation, idealized influence (attributed and behavior), intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Hentrich et al., 2017)—aligned the research proving the correlation between transformational leadership and employee health.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the way that an organization does things. This can range from how mundane day-to-day tasks are performed, how meetings are conducted, how leaders lead, and even how the organization conducts business with customers. Organizational culture has also been identified as the personality or soul of the organization. These concepts, which make up organizational culture, affect employee behaviors (Yee et al., 2018).

Organizational culture also imbues employees with organizational ideologies (Davis & Cates, 2018) based on organizational values sought after by Millennials, if there is value

alignment. Millennials prioritize values such as ethics, social responsibility, and work/life balance more than previous generational cohorts (Mihelič & Aleksic, 2017). The environment created by this type of culture is conducive to job satisfaction.

Organizational beliefs that are aligned with Millennial values are the pathway to job satisfaction. The culture creates certain behaviors which Millennials may find appealing, such as the importance of learning and continuing training. When these values are made known to employees, there is a higher propensity for job satisfaction (Chatterjee et al., 2018). But organizational culture cannot stand alone as a sole motivator. A relationship exists between the value and beliefs of the employee and motivation (Srivastava & Banerjee, 2016).

Organizational identification is how an employee feels they belong to or are a part of the organization (Ruan & Chen, 2021). This can lead to the employees feeling they are investing in the success of the organization by voicing opinions and solutions to issues that affect the organization. Ruan and Chen (2021) stated that organizational identity is a predictor of employee voice. It is also important for organizations not to force their culture upon employees. Karapancheva (2020) claimed that organizational culture must be less dependent on coercive forms of conformity and allow for a certain degree of individualizing of the organization's culture.

The way leaders within the organization manage, coach, and develop a part of an organization's culture as well. Bhatt (2020) argued that understanding differences in generational cohorts could help organizations facilitate job satisfaction. Along with gender and tenure, generational differences contribute to how organizational culture is perceived. Understanding these differences and perceptions assists leaders in directing and developing their employees.

Job satisfaction is directly linked to organizational culture. Different cultures, such as hierarchical or adhocracy, can yield different impacts on job satisfaction levels (Kim, 2020). Job satisfaction is directly linked to organizational culture. Organizational culture is important to job satisfaction, but it is also important when seeking a job. Cultural fit is critical when seeking employment (Usman, 2019); however, as the culture in an organization may change, the culture fit may change as well. Organizations seeking to increase job satisfaction need to evaluate their culture and seek improvement to attract and maintain Millennial talent.

Organizational culture may play a role in the Millennial attrition rate. Gallup (2016) reported that 21% of Millennials surveyed had changed jobs at least once in the previous year. This is three times more than any other generational cohort surveyed. Organizational culture could play a part in retention and organizational loyalty. According to Arredondo-Trapero et al. (2017), Millennial employees who acquire more seniority have a greater sense of organizational loyalty than those that do not. There is statistical significance in how organizational culture affects organizational loyalty.

A culture of authenticity appears to be more aligned with Millennial expectations of leadership. Leaders who can change their leadership style to accommodate different employees could negatively influence their Millennial employees. Millennials may view the changing of styles as inauthentic (Pinelli et al., 2018). Changing leadership tactics to facilitate a situation is not the same as changing leadership style to fit an individual. Pinelli et al. (2018) asserted that changing leadership styles can contribute to Millennial employees' perception of a lack of authenticity.

Development of cultural leaders within an organization who understand the importance of the people at the center of their success is critical to the organization's success and

sustainability (Block, 2003). Adhocracy culture is an organizational culture of flexibility and is essential in organizations that regularly encounter rapid change (Dula & Tang, 2021). Dula and Tang (2021) asserted that a culture of training, learning, and equality through standards could be achieved through a mixture of adhocracy culture and transformational leadership.

Organizational culture can create opportunities for increased success by hiring the best cultural fit (Ahmetoglu et al., 2018). An organization will do an employee a disservice by hiring them if they are not culturally aligned. This is not to say that an innovator could not be a part of an organization where the status quo is the norm and would fail to be successful. However, if the innovator is working for an organization more aligned with their needs, then the propensity for even greater success improves (Ahmetoglu et al., 2018).

Organizational socialization is how organizations expose new employees to the organizational norms, values, and beliefs, and facilitate learning and adaptation to the culture with a new employee (Raina & Chauhan, 2016). It is important to understand how organizational socialization can affect an employee's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Raina and Chauhan (2016) asserted that institutionalized socialization, and standardized onboarding tactics to help ease anxiety and uncertainty, have a marginal effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

When new employees are onboarded, there must be both formal and informal knowledge transfer. The formal transfer occurs in organizational led training and knowledge base or other repository dissemination, whereas informal transfer occurs organically through others sharing tribal knowledge. An organization that places emphasis on sharing knowledge informally can facilitate a culture of trust and organizational loyalty (Pietruszka-Ortyl et al., 2021).

Organizational leaders have the challenge of engaging with employees every day. Understanding the employees' needs and fulfilling them is important to job satisfaction, as this literature review has established. A Millennial employee's direct supervisor can influence job satisfaction based on the approach to understanding the Millennial employee's needs. According to Crişan (2016), Millennial employees desire professional freedom and autonomy more than the other two generational cohorts.

Millennial employees' self-identity directly affects well being positively (Xu et al., 2021). Organizations with a culture of investing and developing employees create environments where Millennial employees feel valued. Managers engaged in understanding the needs of a Millennial employee can improve job satisfaction and lower retention by facilitating their career development based on those needs (Xu et al., 2021).

Millennials and Job Satisfaction

Millennials have a higher propensity for job hopping than previous generational cohorts (Ertas, 2015). The initial entry into an organization is usually evaluated based on the organization's culture and social responsibility (Cohen et al., 2017). Influence over societal change and socially responsible organizations are a priority and expectation by Millennial employees (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

For Millennial employees, job satisfaction may be tied to what needs the job seeker is looking for an organization to fill. The Millennial jobseeker is possibly looking to fulfill multiple needs. Organizations may do themselves a disservice by focusing on only one or two needs, such as compensation and time off. However, Millennial job seekers are hoping for an organization to meet a host of needs, such as job security, flexibility in schedule, and promotion opportunities (Pathak & Tripathi, 2010).

Millennial workers are drawn to opportunities where there are newer growth and leadership paradigms. Earning one's keep or paying one's dues are not characteristics of an organization that Millennials will seek out (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The shift in workers' ages places organizations in an almost constant mode of change. Millennials grew up in a time where innovation moves exponentially faster than in previous generational timelines. Millennials will thrive in situations where they are a part of a team that shares the risk of success and failure equally (Bottomley & Willie Burgess, 2018).

Millennials differ from their previous cohorts concerning the level of engagement they expect from their leaders. Generation X and Baby Boomers tend to desire more macro styled management, whereas Millennials desire more interactive management (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). This type of management is closely associated with servant leadership. According to Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016), organizations shifting to forms of servant leadership may create challenges for those entrenched in other leadership paradigms. However, Millennials thrive in situations with sensitivity to their needs and values.

Whereas previous generational cohorts looked to leadership to direct them, Millennials prefer that leaders allow them to be a part of process building, development, and other departmental growth analyses and implementations (Bottomley & Willie Burgess, 2018). Once again, a commitment by leadership is a must to facilitate Millennials' involvement and engagement in decision making. Herzberg's theory is once again a lens that we can look through to bring into focus the motivators of the Millennial employee as it pertains to their leadership needs.

Organizational leadership and immediate management must be ethical in their approach to leadership to increase job satisfaction in Millennial employees (Moon & Jung, 2018).

Mentoring and relationship building (Naim & Lenka, 2017) contribute to the importance of leadership to Millennials' leadership expectations. The Millennial employee has a desire for relationship building with their management, which includes mentoring and growth facilitation. Previous generational cohorts differed in that they did not feel that a personal relationship with leadership was necessary for job satisfaction (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Direct supervisors have the most interaction with Millennial employees from day to day. The amount of influence the supervisor carries can contribute to performance and job satisfaction levels (Hou, 2017). Hou (2017) took this research a step further by stating that an employee's innovative characteristics are also heavily influenced by leadership style, specifically, management that Hou (2017) described as destructive leaders. Destructive leaders tend to lead in an authoritarian style, which can be abusive and demotivating.

Retaining Millennial employees is a priority for many organizations. Recent research points to the work environment as a factor in all generational cohorts' job satisfaction (Wang & Brower, 2019). Among the variables present in the work environment, the direct supervisor holds an increased level of power regarding job satisfaction (Wang & Brower, 2019). Development, rewards, and work/life balance are all critical issues to the Millennial employee regarding job satisfaction (Wen et al., 2018).

Different generational cohorts have different expectations of their leadership and the level of charisma they exude. A recent study determined that Millennial employees are positively influenced by charismatic leaders (Zhao et al., 2021). Zhao et al. (2021) stated that Millennials who have charismatic leaders tend to have more innovative potential and higher productivity. Leadership styles such as authentic leadership and transformational leadership use charisma as a characteristic that may increase their influence over subordinates.

Human resource development (HRD) is crucial to an organization's performance and long-term viability. Swanson and Holton (2009) defined HRD as a process of creating and mobilizing skills to enhance individual, team, work procedures, and overall organizational performance. Limited access to training and development materials and instruction can result in loss of Millennial employees and, potentially, loss of sustainability.

Employees interact with many departments in their day-to-day employment. Other parts of the organization can have a positive impact on Millennial employees outside of the direct reporting hierarchy. Human resource management (HRM) is one such department that can work in tandem with leadership to create a work environment that is conducive to the Millennial employee's well being (He et al., 2019). Responsible leadership and HRM are two critical components to improving the lives of Millennial employees (Marescaux et al., 2019). HRM and the leadership team have the opportunity to create training, career pathing, and evaluation tools to help employees feel valued and successful.

Another component of job satisfaction for Millennials is an opportunity for advancement and job enjoyment. A recent study suggested that Millennials, with or without college degrees, are expected to find expedited opportunities to develop and advance their position (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017). This may result from increased socialization based on the conditioning of a society where information is instantaneous. Millennials expect the amount of time and personal investment necessary for promotion to be short. This attitude is unfounded and based on unrealistic self-confidence and unproven skills. Employers also find these expectations unreasonable (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017).

The increase in socialization and the readiness for information may impact the Millennial employee's expectation of having a voice in the organization. Social media has played a

significant role in the exponential socialization effect within the Millennial cohort. Organizations are behind in tapping this online vocal presence to gather employees' valuable input (Holland et al., 2016). The use of this voice primarily serves as an avenue to express job dissatisfaction (Holland et al., 2016). The goal of social media within organizations is to encourage employee engagement and participation in the organization's decision making process (Holland et al., 2016).

Another factor influencing job satisfaction is education. Millennial employees working while enrolled in school have a lower job satisfaction rate (Devi & Jayakani, 2021). They experience increased stress because of the greater attention college coursework demands, which can lead to lower job satisfaction. Devi and Jayakani (2021) discovered that while there appears to be a correlation between higher education and lower job satisfaction, organizations should not seek to discourage employees from seeking a degree; rather, employers can try to understand increased stress levels and learn ways to help their employees manage the workload accordingly.

It is established that job satisfaction contains many variables, some of which work independently of one another, such as in motivator-hygiene theory (Hur, 2018). Pertaining to the leadership variable, authentic leadership indirectly affects followers' job satisfaction concerning work/life balance (Braun & Peus, 2018). Braun and Peus (2018) deduced that this relationship is based on the follower observing and replicating the work/life balance behaviors the leader exhibits.

Summary

Leading teams in the digital age can involve teleconferencing, video conferencing, and telecommuting. Employees no longer need to be in the same building as their management. Millennials are more accepting of attitudes in the workplace concerning this type of technology

than the previous two generational cohorts (Elias et al., 2012). Organizations deploying these technologies should be aware of lower attitudes concerning technology among their Baby Boomers, which correlates with low job satisfaction (Elias et al., 2012). Conversely, Millennial employees have higher job satisfaction when they have a positive attitude toward these technologies (Elias et al., 2012).

Current research attempts to understand generational differences in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to turnover (Costanza et al., 2012). There appears to be little difference in the generational cohorts concerning these three concepts. The evidence appears to contradict the mainstream media narrative concerning the Millennial generational cohort (Credo et al., 2016). However, SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and motivation–hygiene theory (Sachau, 2007) are just two of the many theories in the literature pertaining to job satisfaction. No single facet, characteristic, or tenet within the theories can definitively predict the propensity of a Millennial employee’s job satisfaction.

Chapter 3: Research Method and Design

Millennials are the largest and fastest growing generational cohort in the workforce today. They are the generation following Generation X and are sometimes also known as Generation Y. Generational stereotypes associated with Millennials are that they are entitled and narcissistic (Credo et al., 2016). Mainstream media and popular culture describe Millennials as egocentric and morally flexible. Organizations are seeing an increase in Millennial employment and face the challenge of effectively leading and managing this generational cohort. Approaching Millennials from this bias creates a problem for employers who expect loyalty and a hefty return on their investment.

There is no specific research on the leadership style best suited to influence and motivate Millennials. Millennials do not react to the same intrinsic and extrinsic motivators as previous generational cohorts. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) described this problem stating that there is a concern about how Millennials receive information and communicate. Leaders within organizations are faced with the challenge of changing their leadership styles to make the most impact on their Millennial employees.

Much research has already been done on the topic of Millennials in the workplace. Whether it is motivation (Credo et al., 2016; Ertas, 2015), workplace behaviors (Becton et al., 2014; VanMeter et al., 2013), or performance (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010), there is a real issue with leading Millennials in organizations. Evidence supports a growing need for more thorough research concerning how Millennials prefer to be led to achieve maximum efficiency, productivity, and potential.

Research Design and Methodology

The research methodology consists of a literature review and quantitative and qualitative analysis. There is scholarly literature present analyzing the behaviors and attitudes of Millennials. Survey questions will be derived from the information revealed in the literature review. Survey questions created to focus on the leadership styles of those who lead Millennials and the Millennials themselves will provide data to discover what leadership styles work best for leading Millennials. The goal is to refine the questions to understand leadership styles from the perspective of Millennials and the people who manage them.

The survey questions were sent to Millennial employees and leaders in an organization in the Brazos Valley area. Interviews (Leavy, 2017) were conducted with leaders of Millennials as well as Millennials themselves. Definitions were provided on several mainstream leadership styles such as adaptive, transformational, and situational to help the interviewees understand these styles in advance. The mixed methods approach mimicked the study of Larson et al. (2016), where they used qualitative data to refine the understanding of quantitative research.

Population

The Brazos Valley currently has approximately 15 contact centers within the Millennial cohort. Surveys attempted to engage with 50 Millennial contact center employees in Texas and 50 Millennial employees from SatInc. Focusing the survey on this type of employee provided trustworthiness to the research (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Permission to use SatInc employees as subjects was obtained through the organization's human resources department.

SatInc employs a higher number of Millennials for the contact center than any other generational cohort. Participants for the qualitative study included Millennial employees and leaders of Millennials within SatInc in the Brazos Valley. There are currently 72 contact center

employees at SatInc. The intent was to obtain 50 participants from the Millennial employee group and 5–10 participants from the management group. The interviews were conducted via email or phone or in person and were semistructured (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Millennial employees were interviewed to gain perspective on what leadership style they prefer and creates job satisfaction. Managers of millennials were interviewed to determine their experience in motivating Millennials and creating job satisfaction.

The Millennial participants were a mix of males and females with various educational backgrounds. This study presents the final demographical analysis. The purpose of keeping the other demographics outside of the age group was to allow for further understanding of the differences between gender and educational background.

Data Collection

All research through surveys and interviews was meant to answer the research questions. The questions are designed to guide the surveys and interviews in design and expected outcome:

Q1: What leadership style does the Millennial cohort prefer?

Q2: Does a specific leadership style lead to employee job satisfaction?

Q3. What is the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of those who manage them?

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1985) was used to evaluate the importance of leadership as it pertains to job satisfaction (see Appendix A). The JSS, originally developed by Spector (1985), is commonly used as a tool for work satisfaction measurement. It is a 36 item, 9-dimension scale measuring employees' attitudes about their jobs and aspects of the job.

The JSS assesses nine subscales: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards (appreciation and recognition), operating procedures, coemployees, nature of work itself, and communication, using four statements for each subscale (Spector, 1985). Spector (1985) selected these job dimensions because they were the most meaningful and commonly chosen topics relevant to job satisfaction. Each dimension is measured with four items, and the cumulative score is determined from all items. The ratings are summarized with six options ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The scores for each dimension could range from 4 to 24, with 24 reflecting the highest level of satisfaction. The overall measure of job satisfaction scores could range from 36 to 216, with 216 reflecting the highest level of overall job satisfaction.

The JSS is considered a reliable tool for evaluating job satisfaction. In 1997, Spector stated that the JSS had been used in more than 100 studies and reached over 28,000 participants. Spector also stated the reliability coefficient for all dimensions of the JSS is .91. Salkind (2003) stated that for a survey to be considered reliable, it must have a reliability coefficient between .80 and .90.

An online survey tool, Survey Monkey, was used for conducting the survey and as a completed survey repository for the duration of the study. Survey Monkey allows for questionnaire setup, disbursement via a link in email, and data collection and analysis.

The interview included 10–15 questions approved by the dissertation chair. Collecting data from the interviews consisted of recording the audio and transcribing the interview. Although tools can be used for transcription, they are not as accurate as listening and transcribing on one's own. The transcripts were then ready for coding analysis. Interview questions included characteristics of these leadership styles.

Interview questions for people leaders were as follows:

1. How long have you been a people leader?
2. How would you describe your leadership style?
3. How important do you feel leadership style impacts performance?
4. What is the most appropriate leadership style you feel works best with Millennials?
5. What leadership style do you feel leads Millennials to greater success?
6. What leadership style do you feel has a negative impact on Millennials' success?
7. When providing task or project direction with Millennials, do you provide step-by-step instruction, provide a general direction, or a mixture of both?
8. When your Millennial employee seems to struggle with a task or project, how do you approach them, do you wait for them to approach you, and explain how that may look to foster success.
9. Describe your organizational culture and how it views people leaders?
10. Describe a time when you felt your leadership style was a perfect fit for a Millennial employee.

Questions for the Millennial employee were as follows:

1. How long have you been in the workforce?
2. How would you describe your people leader's leadership style?
3. How important do you feel leadership style impacts performance?
4. What is the most appropriate leadership style you prefer your leaders to possess?
5. What leadership style do you feel leads you to greater success?
6. What leadership style do you feel has a negative impact on your success?

7. When working on a task or project, do you prefer step by step instruction, a general direction, or a mixture of both?
8. When you feel like you are struggling with a task or project, how do you approach your leader, do you wait for them to approach you, and explain how that may look to help you be successful.
9. Describe what organizational culture is to you.
10. Describe your organizational culture.

Coding the data provided an opportunity to gather keywords indicating a specific leadership style and implications for job satisfaction. Keywords for the coding passes were developed based on deductive coding derived from the theoretical framework of job satisfaction and the defining characteristics of several common leadership styles. Some of these keywords have already been identified, such as adaptive, change, ethical, serve, authoritative, authentic, and trust.

Trustworthiness

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) described trustworthiness as containing the following four perspectives: “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (p. 271). The study was carefully planned through a confirmed methodology. The data were collected and analyzed with transparency and honesty so that others could review them and come to the same conclusions or results. This was accomplished by providing the exact demographics of the subjects, the questions asked, the format of surveys, the framework of the interviews, and coding information. Every effort has been made to ensure that the full research document conforms to APA 7 standards, and the writing should be clear, concise, and unassuming.

Data Analysis

The data from the survey were analyzed through Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) to identify and understand patterns in the survey results. These patterns assisted in identifying problems with the theory involved in the problem of practice.

Analyzing the data from the interviews consisted of several coding passes. The first pass on each interview was primarily condensing. I then used a mix of inductive and deductive (Nixon, 2014; Saldana & Omasta, 2018) approaches, or emergent coding, to develop the codes. These passes allowed me to associate keywords with predictive behaviors. Keywords were developed through survey results and through the second of three coding passes. MAXQDA was used as the analysis tool throughout the process.

Researcher Role

The researcher's role is as a people leader in the SatInc organization. Some participants were direct reports, but the majority were from other departmental contact centers in the organization. Objectivity is critical in the interview process, and I had no preconceived bias regarding leadership styles or job satisfaction. The goal of the study was to answer the questions of leadership and job satisfaction in Millennial employees. The interviews did not occur in my office or on the contact center floor. They were conducted outside the department in an unbiased, neutral setting.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by ACU's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). Anonymity was protected, as the only person to have access to the interviews was me, the researcher. The interviewees are named Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on. The interviews

were stored on a recording device and were deleted after transcription. The transcriptions will be saved on my personal computer without any personal identifying information for 3 years.

Participants were informed of the study at a high level. It was discussed that the study was about leadership and job satisfaction so as not to insert bias into their answers. Participants signed a consent form that their interview would be used in the study and then destroyed after the study was completed. No personal identifying information was collected outside of their consent to be recorded and used in the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are based on the notion that Millennial employees desire to be led differently than previous cohorts. It is also assumed that how Millennials are led can lead to job satisfaction. SatInc employs people from different regions and states, mostly because of the large university a few miles away. Many people come to the university from outside the area, and thus a representation of multiple regions is present within the Millennial cohort.

Limitations

Limitations to the study include the applicability of results to larger metropolitan areas because the study focused on the smaller region of the Brazos Valley. Some of the participants may have initially chosen to answer based on what they believed I wanted to hear. This may be due to the familiarity some of the participants have with me. This can be mitigated by expressing to the participants the importance of the study and how their honesty can help to better understand leadership principles and job satisfaction. Participants should understand the research could be beneficial for them after the study and analysis.

Delimitations

The study focused on leadership styles and job satisfaction for Millennial employees. I acknowledge there are many factors included in job satisfaction. Organizational values, culture, expectations, and work/life balance are a few variables that factor into job satisfaction. However, Millennials may desire to be led in a different way than previous cohorts, and only referencing several leadership styles in the study framework may affect the outcome of the study.

Additionally, my experience and independent study on leadership may have been a delimiter in trying to remain objective while crafting the research direction.

Summary

A methodology plan assisted me with an outline of how to attack a qualitative study. I was able to identify critical pieces of the project, such as participants, develop questions relative to the practice problem, and describe the data collection and analysis process. Having a clear and concise methodology plan also helped keep me on task, given that the plan served me as an outline.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the results of the mixed methods study conducted to answer the research questions:

Q1: What leadership style does the Millennial cohort prefer?

Q2: Does a specific leadership style lead to employee job satisfaction?

Q3: What is the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of those who manage them?

To restate, the purpose of this mixed methods sequential explanatory study is to analyze how Millennial employees perceive leadership and understand how that perception impacts job satisfaction. Different leadership styles could have different impacts on Millennial employees' job satisfaction. For this reason, it is important to understand these concepts from the perspectives of Millennial employees and those who manage them.

This chapter also explains that the analysis conducted is consistent with the methodologies presented in Chapter 3. I used the JSS developed by Spector (1985) to evaluate the importance of leadership as it pertains to job satisfaction (see Appendix A). SurveyMonkey was used as the survey delivery tool and the results repository. No identifying information was gathered on participants. The survey was designed to assure full participation by requiring an answer before the next question was presented. SurveyMonkey uses the participant's IP address to create a forward facing, unique intermediary identifier to distinguish the participants and assure that they took the survey only once.

Sample and Demographics

The survey participants were in two groups consisting of 25 Millennial respondents from SatInc and 105 Millennial respondents from Texas, totaling 130 Millennial employees in Texas.

Additional gender and education level data for possible study implications were gathered. Forty-eight percent of the respondents were female, and 52% were male. The education level of the respondents varied, with the majority of respondents (41.5%) reporting they were college graduates, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Highest Level of Education

Highest level of education	<i>n</i>	%
College graduate	54	41.5
Some college	36	27.7
Graduate studies	26	20.0
High School diploma or GED	14	10.8
Total	130	100.0

Data Collection

I attempted to use SatInc Millennial employees as subjects for 50 of the 100 survey participants. SatInc's human resources team assisted in sending out a solicitation email to over 150 Millennial employees. Only 25 Millennial employees replied to the email. Soliciting participation for the other participants consisted of using social media platforms to solicit participation. This led to an undesirable result, as only two Millennial employees participated through social media efforts. SurveyMonkey was paid to gather participants fitting the criteria of Millennial employees in Texas. The effort proved fruitful, as SurveyMonkey provided 105 completed surveys.

SurveyMonkey was the tool used to create, disperse, and collect surveys. The JSS was entered into SurveyMonkey behind a consent page explaining the study and who to contact for more information. Two identical surveys and two data collectors were created. Each survey was

paired with a collector to separate SatInc responses (Group 1) from Texas Millennial respondents (Group 2). A third group was created (Group 3) to contain the combined data from both groups ($n = 25$, $n = 105$, $n = 130$ respectively). Proceeding in this manner provided opportunities to compare SatInc's Millennial employees with other Millennial employees from Texas.

Data and Analysis

Before answering the research questions, it is essential to determine the importance of leadership in the framework of job satisfaction. The JSS is a proven instrument in measuring employee job satisfaction (Salkind, 2003). The survey consists of 36 questions and is divided into nine subsets: Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent rewards, Operating conditions, Coworkers, Nature of work, and communication. Total Satisfaction is the sum of all subsets.

Tate and White (2005) stated that people leave managers, not organizations. The expectation is to determine if a higher Supervision subset score relates to a higher job satisfaction score and, if so, to what extent. This is done through the JSS tool and the scoring process. Translated to the total values, the values from 4 to 12 are *unsatisfied*, 16 to 24 are *satisfied*, and between 12 and 16 are *ambivalent* for the subscales of four items with a range of 4 to 24. For 36 items, the possible values are between 36 and 216; the values range from 36 to 108 for *dissatisfaction*, 144 to 216 for *satisfaction*, and 108 to 144 for *ambivalence*. The Supervision subset was the highest average score for both groups individually and combined, as listed in Table 2.

Table 2*Average Score Per Subset*

Average score per subset	Group 1 (SatInc)	Group 2 (Texas)	Group 3 (Both Groups)
Pay	13.92	13.14	13.2923
Promotion	13.32	13.30	13.3077
Supervision	21.72	17.30	18.1462
Fringe benefits	19.32	14.39	15.3385
Contingent rewards	15.40	14.39	14.5846
Operating conditions	16.12	13.86	14.2923
Coworkers	18.40	16.15	16.5846
Nature of work	16.76	16.48	16.5308
Communication	15.36	15.01	15.0769
Total satisfaction	150.32	134.02	137.154

An assumption can be made that SatInc employees are most satisfied with their supervisory team and least satisfied with pay and opportunities for career advancement based on the subset scores. The second group of Millennial employees appears to feel the same way about their jobs and organizations. Group 2 scored supervision as the highest subset and pay and promotion at the bottom of the scoring.

Another observation from the JSS scoring is that the SatInc group had a total satisfaction score of 150.32. The SatInc (Group 1) score demonstrates that, generally, SatInc employees have higher job satisfaction than the other Millennial employees. Group 2 had a total satisfaction score of 134.02, which falls within the ambivalent range, showing that overall, they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs.

SPSS was used to run multiple linear regression analyses, and PPMCC with the JSS data

of the groups separated and then combined. I used the total satisfaction score as the dependent variable and used all subsets as independent variables. As indicated, the study participants fell into three groups, Group 1, which includes only SatInc employees (see Appendix C); Group 2, consisting of other Millennial employees in Texas (see Appendix D); and Group 3, the total number of participants from Group 1 and Group 2 together (see Appendix B). The purpose of these analyses is to determine the correlation between the supervisory score and the overall satisfaction score within the JSS tool.

The analysis started with using the three groups' data when identifying the mean and standard deviation of supervisor scores (95% confidence interval). Group 1, the SatInc group, was 21.72 within a score range of 5 to 26 ($SD = 3.65$), the mean for Group 2 was 17.30 ($SD = 4.84$), and Group 3 was 18.15 ($SD = 4.94$). This analysis supports the previous findings from the JSS scoring that both SatInc (Group 1) employees and the Texas Millennials (Group 2) are generally satisfied with their supervisory team.

The total satisfaction score was analyzed in the same way using all three groups' data sets. The mean for Group 1 was 150.32 points in a range from 36 to 216 ($SD = 25.13$), Group 2 was 134.02 ($SD = 26.76$), and Group 3 was 137.15 ($SD = 27.14$). This analysis supports the previous JSS scoring results that SatInc (Group 1) employees are satisfied with their jobs. The Texas Millennial employees (Group 2) analysis supports the JSS scoring data showing that this group is ambivalent in their current job.

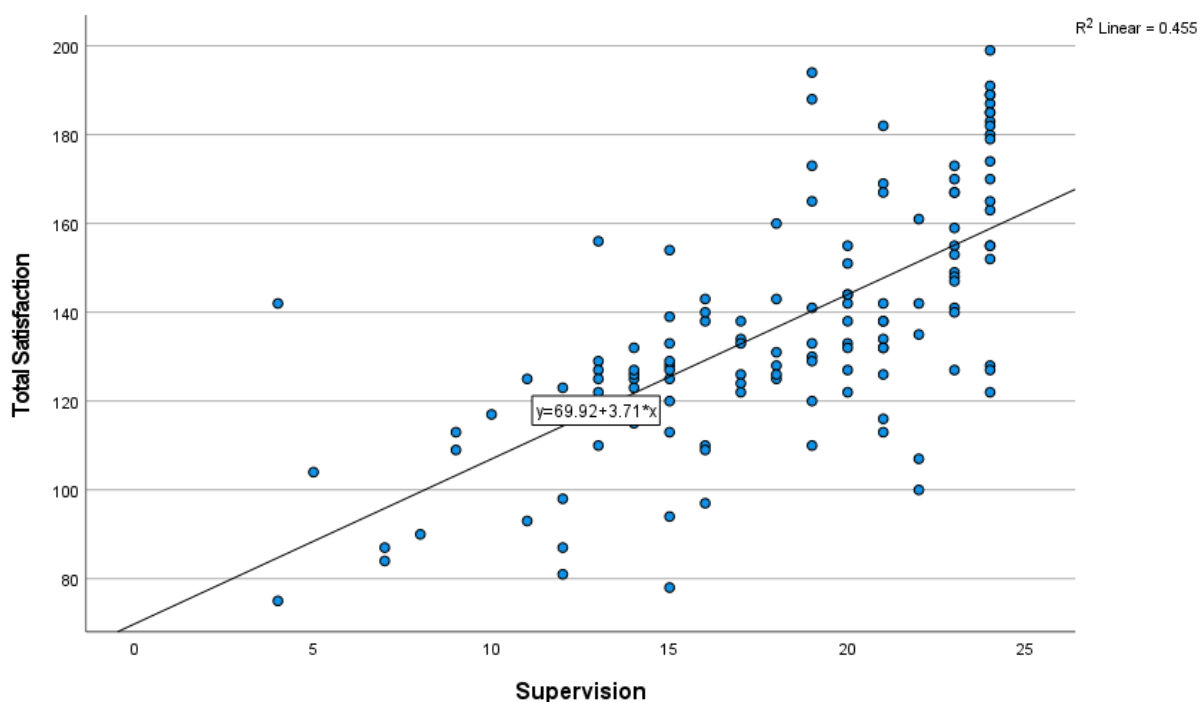
Next, I looked at a one way ANOVA to determine the level of statistical significance. The results indicate that the means of the supervisory score is statistically significant within each group, respectively: $F(6,18) = 3.47, p = .019$, $F(15,85) = 6.46, p = <.001$, $F(16,110) = 7.46, p = <.001$ to the total satisfaction score. These results helped me understand a statistical significance

from the supervisory score to the total satisfaction score.

A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was calculated to assess the relationship between the supervision subset score and the overall satisfaction score in the JSS within the three groups. There was a positive correlation between the two variables with Group 1 ($r = 0.641$, $n = 25$, $p = <.001$), Group 2 ($r = 0.645$, $n = 105$, $p = >.001$), and Group 3 ($r = 0.675$, $n = 130$, $p = <.001$). A scatterplot summarizes the results (Figure 1). Overall, there was a strong positive correlation between supervisory and total satisfaction. Satisfaction scores on the subset of supervisors were correlated with overall job satisfaction.

Figure 1

Scatterplot of PPMCC



I sent out interview requests for several months, both within SatInc and outside of SatInc, after completing the survey. Attempting to solicit participants for the 10-question interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic proved problematic concerning meeting in person or gaining

time with prospective participants over the phone. Several social media blasts were created, and I was able to solicit participants and send them an email with the 10 questions. I obtained five responses from Millennial employees (Group 1) and six responses from supervisors or managers of Millennial employees (Group 2).

MAXQDA was used as the tool for coding analyzing the interviews. There were four coding passes for each set of data: condensation, deductive, and two inductive passes. Condensation is a coding pass that seeks to eliminate the nonessential data (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). This information was highlighted so it could be ignored within both types of data. If it is determined that there is a need for this information, the highlighting can be removed and the data coded.

The second pass was a deductive pass focusing on the leadership styles definitions provided to Group 1 and group 2 at the time of the survey: adaptive, authentic, ethical, servant, and transformational leadership. Words that were inclusive of the definitions were combined into that leadership style. Flexibility, adaptability, change, and individual are words associated with adaptive leadership and were coded as such.

The third pass was an inductive pass. I gathered all the other words associated with each question that was not outlined in the definitions. This pass yielded words such as authoritarian, high importance, and mix. Authoritarian leadership was not listed in the definitions provided to the participants. However, it appeared in the responses from the negatively worded question (Question 7), indicating it is a leadership style with a negative impact on job satisfaction.

The fourth pass was another inductive pass, with attention placed on the last two questions concerning organizational culture for Group 1 and leadership experience for Group 2. This pass resulted in words such as trust, community, and safe in the questions about

organizational culture. A total of 19 codes were added to the deductive code list. One participant explained that the culture in her organization is one of community. Millennial Participant 4 stated, “In my workspace, we have worked hard to foster a light and welcoming community—an environment that promotes productivity and fun. A safe place to gather, make mistakes, and learn together.” The information gathered from these passes created prominent themes within the responses.

Preferred Leadership Style

Interview question 5 of the Millennial interviews states, “What is the most appropriate leadership style you prefer your leaders to possess?” In the responses, a specific leadership style was commonly mentioned. The most common leadership style Millennials listed as a preference is adaptive leadership. Four out of five Millennials from Group 1 listed adaptive leadership as their preferred leadership style. There were also two mentions of authentic leadership, both of which were paired with adaptive leadership.

The adaptive leadership theme was consistent among all participants. Millennial Participant 5 acknowledged that to them, adaptive leadership style was most important:

I think the MOST appropriate leadership style is Adaptive Leadership. It is the most effective across the board. People respond differently to different styles of leadership and in order to increase performance across the board, you need to be able to adapt to your people and to do different situations as well. I think it also contributes to the morale of your team. (Millennial Participant 5)

The other participants responded similarly that adaptive leadership was the most preferred leadership style for Millennials. Herzberg’s theory, while a great foundation for moving other theories forward, neglects to address the nonlinear relationship between factors and job

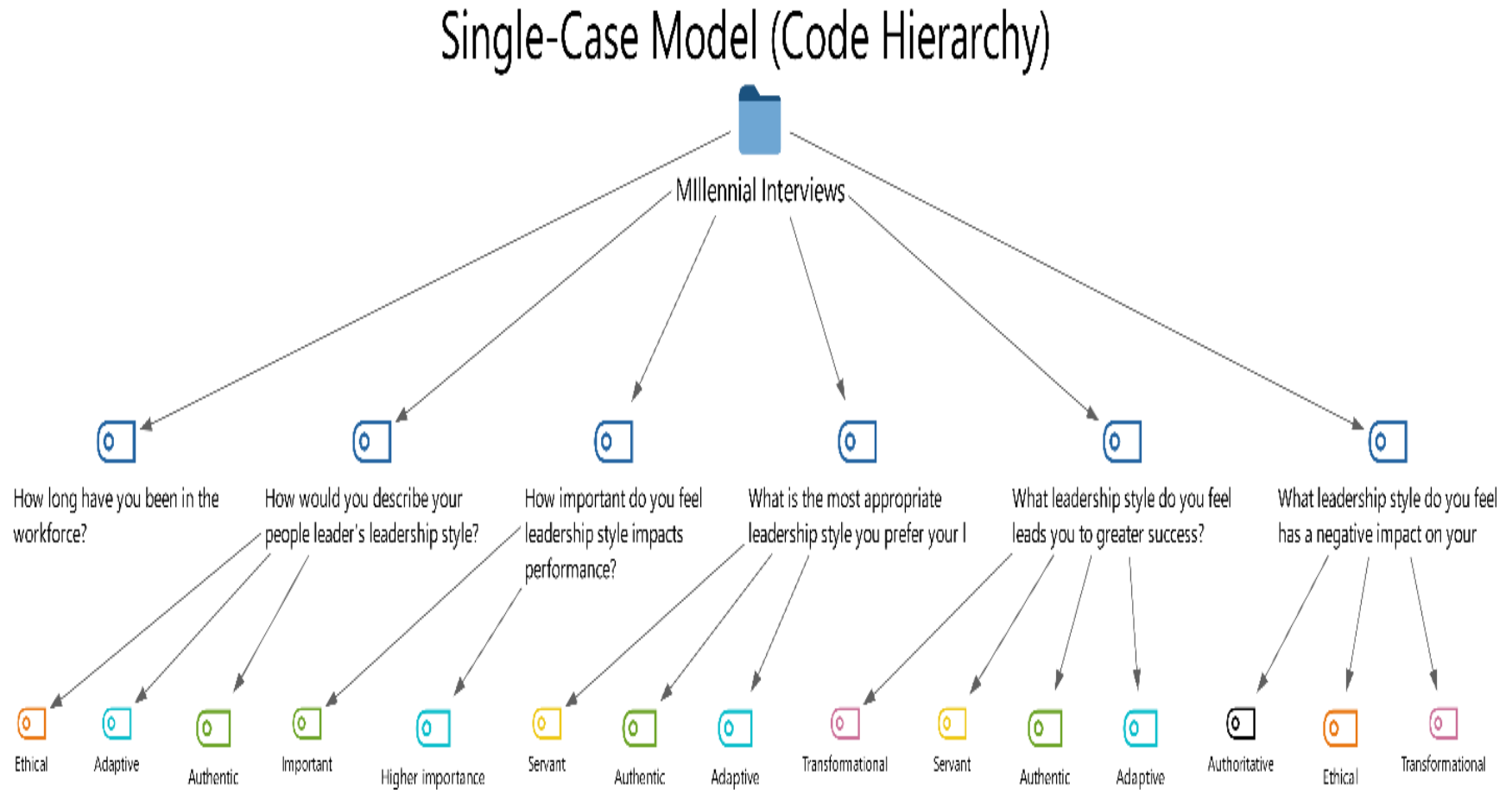
satisfaction. Sachau (2007) addressed this concluding that in terms of happiness and job satisfaction, there is no linear relationship between motivators or hygiene. This could lead to the assumption that a single factor does not necessarily increase or decrease job satisfaction.

Analyzing through the lens of Herzberg's motivator–hygiene theory, it can be assessed that Supervisory is an extrinsic element that contributes to job attitudes as a hygiene factor. The way in which a supervisor leads is also extrinsic to the subordinate. It can be assumed that leadership style is extrinsic and therefore is a hygiene factor. To this end, if a leader uses an undesirable leadership style, such as authoritarian leadership, then the factor is aligned with Herzberg's theory. Leadership style is an extrinsic element that falls in the hygiene category. However, if the same leader uses a leadership style, such as transformational leadership, subordinates yield to the leader's influence seeking motivators such as rapport and approval; thus, the result of the leadership style factor becomes intrinsic.

Self-determination theory (SDT) was used as a lens for this analysis as well. Leaders and leadership styles is an extrinsic motivator. Autonomy and sense of self are hindered by a leadership style such as authoritarian. Conversely, an adaptive leadership style opens the door for opportunities to facilitate growth. The Single Case Hierarchical Clustering model was used for visualization of the different responses concerning leadership. This visualization helped me understand which leadership styles were preferred and which leadership styles were not.

Figure 2

Leadership Styles With Corresponding Questions



Adaptive leadership was mentioned the most in the positive oriented questions, and ethical leadership was the most mentioned in the negative leadership style question, clearly indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

Millennial Leadership Styles Frequency

Millennial leadership styles frequency	Positive (Question 5-6)	Negative (Question 7)	My leader (Question 3)	Total
Adaptive	8		1	9
Authentic	4		4	8
Authoritative		1		1
Ethical		4	1	5
Servant	2			2
Transformational	1	1		2

Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

The fourth question on the interview for both groups needed the results from the JSS and quantitative study to determine that a strong positive correlation between supervisory and total satisfaction exists. Question 4 asked, “How important do you feel leadership style impacts performance?” One participant went as far as to state that the wrong leadership style could actually become an obstacle to success. Millennial Participant 1 stated, “If a leadership style does not mesh with the employees work style it will be an obstacle to overcome for higher success rates.”

The participants overwhelmingly stated that leadership style was of high importance, with four participants stating it was high or the most important contribution to performance.

If the supervisor/manager/owner is a micromanager that criticizes every thing you do, has no adaptability, doesn't learn about their employees, it starts to deteriorate morale. I've

worked at places that have changed ownership and management and that change brought in a whole different set of rules, regulations, and attitudes toward the company. Most of these new attitudes were negative, as the management style did not line up with the company's already set standard. (Millennial Participant 3)

Leaders of Millennial employees shared the sentiment and stated that leadership is of high importance concerning its impact on performance. All the leaders used positive language to infer the importance of leadership on performance. Leader Participant 2 stated, "I think leadership competency significantly affects performance of the direct reports of the leader, as does alignment of leadership style with what the employee values from their leader."

Leaders of Millennials

Question 5 in the leader interview asks, What is the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of those who manage them? The transformational leadership style was cited the most times in the positive worded questions along with adaptive leadership. Leader Participant 6 stated, "Transformational, visionary and coaching would be the styles that I would gear most to Millennials." Blending or mixing of styles is associated with adaptive leadership. This was also detected during the fourth coding pass, where "mix," "mixture," and "combined" were examples of adapting one's leadership style to change (Northouse, 2016).

Authoritative/authoritarian leadership appeared in the coding process with the leader group five times as responses to the question about the negative impact on performance. Authoritarian leadership was not listed in the questionnaire email for either group. The use of the term authoritative leadership versus Authoritarian leadership by the participants may point to an understanding by the participants that these two leadership styles are one in the same. While the

definitions differ in that authoritative leadership is the control of all goals and direction and authoritarian leadership is a more forceful means to control employees, the sentiment is the same. Authoritative/authoritarian leadership appeared as the number one leadership style negatively affecting Millennials' performance, as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Leadership Styles Frequency

Leadership styles frequency	Positive (Question 5-6)	Negative (Question 7)	My leadership style (Question 3)	Total
Adaptive	4		5	9
Authentic	2		4	6
Authoritative		5		5
Ethical			1	1
Servant	2		4	6
Transformational	5	1	1	7

From the perspective of leaders who employ Millennials, adaptive leadership is their choice of leadership style, followed by authentic leadership and servant leadership.

Conclusions

This chapter contains the results of the analysis of both the JSS and the interview questions and connects the analysis to the research questions. There were 130 total survey participants who completed the JSS. All participants were Millennial employees in Texas. There were 11 total interview participants. Interview questions were created to understand how important leadership style is to Millennials regarding job satisfaction. Five of the participants were Millennial employees, and six were leaders who supervise Millennial employees. A high level of importance was placed on gaining insight from both Millennials and their leaders.

The JSS tool provided insight into how satisfied the Millennial employees are with their current job. The tool produced a result that showed a high level of supervisory satisfaction in their current jobs. The multiple regression analysis and PPMCC showed a statistical significance from the supervisory score to the total satisfaction score and a strong positive correlation between the supervisory variable and total satisfaction. This information creates a higher level of importance placed on the leadership of Millennial employees.

There were differences in the perceptions of leaders of Millennial employees and Millennials themselves. These differences are discussed in the chapter and focus on the responses concerning how Millennials prefer to be led. There appears to be a disconnect between the Millennial employees' expectations of their leaders and what they believe to be the most effective leadership style. The Millennial cohort is the largest generational cohort currently in the workforce. If organizational leaders and their Millennial employees are not aligned, there is a greater risk of Millennial job satisfaction.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this mixed methods sequential explanatory study is to examine how leadership and preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of Millennial employees and those who manage them contribute to job satisfaction. This chapter includes a discussion of discoveries related to the literature on Millennials and leadership, organizational leadership, leadership as a motivator, and specific leadership styles that may be useful to managers of Millennials. There is also a discussion on the importance of leadership and leadership style as related to job satisfaction. The conclusion of the chapter speaks to the study's limitations, potential future research, and a summary.

This chapter presents discussion and future research opportunities to assist in answering the research questions:

- Q1.** What leadership style does the Millennial cohort prefer?
- Q2.** Does a specific leadership style lead to employee job satisfaction?
- Q3.** What is the preferred leadership style of Millennial employees from the perspectives of those who manage them?

The level of satisfaction a Millennial employee has with leadership directly affects their level of total job satisfaction. Millennial employees prefer a specific leadership style, and it is not aligned with the perception of people leaders. Leadership can exist in both the motivator and hygiene classifications, as the effect depends on the leadership style. Millennials and leaders of Millennial employees do not appear to feel the same about how their respective organizations treat them.

Interpretation of Findings

While researching and attempting to understand the importance placed on leadership as it pertains to job satisfaction within a specific generational cohort, it is imperative to recognize that this is a general understanding where there certainly are exceptions. Millennials employees are the largest generational cohort in the working class (Whitney et al., 2021). It behooves organizations to create an organizational culture conducive to fostering success and job satisfaction within the Millennial cohort.

Satisfaction With Supervision Affects Total Job Satisfaction

This study's conclusion that as supervisory satisfaction increases, total job satisfaction increases are aligned with the literature on leadership and Millennial job satisfaction (Naim & Lenka, 2017; Pinelli et al., 2018). Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey is a reliable and trustworthy tool for measuring factors influencing job satisfaction. The survey analysis suggests a strong positive correlation between supervisory satisfaction and total job satisfaction. The participants who scored supervisory high also scored total satisfaction high, again suggesting that leadership influences job satisfaction.

Millennial employees also stated that leadership was critical to job satisfaction. Millennial Participant 4 said, "If an employee doesn't feel supported or cared about, why should they come to work?" Other generational cohorts consider leadership the most important factor in job satisfaction (Young et al., 2013). Millennial employees seemingly seek a more personal relationship with their leader, and if allowed, the relationship may influence job satisfaction (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Leaders of Millennial employees are aligned concerning the literature, survey data, and interview results. According to these leaders, supervisory or leadership style is an essential factor

in job satisfaction and success. Some leaders may extend the importance of influencing performance. Leader Participant 2 said, “I think leadership competency significantly affects performance of the direct reports of the leader, as does alignment of leadership style with what the employee values from their leader.” The importance of leadership within job satisfaction appears to be significant in more aspects of job satisfaction.

Preferred Leadership Style of Millennials

The two interview participant groups of Millennials and leaders of Millennials were not aligned concerning the preferred leadership style. Millennials felt that an adaptive leadership style best suited their preference, whereas leaders of Millennials believed that transformational leadership was the style Millennial employees preferred. The difference in leadership styles could have a negative effect on job satisfaction.

The literature on leadership styles and job satisfaction indicates a positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction (Ulutürk & Tayfun, 2019). There is a disconnect between Millennials and their leaders on the most appropriate way to lead. Focusing on using transformational leadership as opposed to adaptive leadership could have a negative impact on the supervisory factor, which could cause a lower job satisfaction score.

Authoritative leadership was not listed in the leadership style definitions provided to the interview participants. Yet, both groups stated that an authoritative leadership style would have a negative impact on both job satisfaction and performance. Literature concerning authoritative leadership consistently says there is a negative correlation between the authoritative leadership style and job satisfaction (Chou, 2012).

Ethical leadership was mentioned more than any other leadership style as a negative leadership style for the Millennial participants. There seems to be a disconnect between the

importance of ethics in leadership and the Millennial cohort. Millennial Participant 5 said, “There are situations where a leader can be too focused on the rules, and doing things a certain way when doing something different isn’t always unethical.” It appears that Millennials and their leaders may not be aligned on the importance of following rules and remaining ethical employees.

Organizational Culture

The interview portion of the study included several questions surrounding organizational culture. The questions asked the Millennial employees to define organizational culture and to then describe their organization’s culture. Millennial Participant 4 said, “In my workspace, we have worked hard to foster light and welcoming community--an environment that promotes productivity and fun.” Their responses indicated that a safe, easygoing culture with a feeling of family described their organization’s culture.

Leaders of Millennials were split in their answers to the question asking how they felt about their organization’s culture and how it viewed leaders. Four of the participants suggested that their organizational culture concerning people leaders was safe and inclusive and that they felt empowered. Two of the leader participants communicated a negative experience concerning their organization’s culture concerning leaders. Leader Participant 4 stated, “It is hard to determine if there is any real value felt toward low level leaders.” It seems that organizational culture may influence people leaders differently from Millennial employees with the participants.

Implications for Theory and Research

It was found that Millennials consider leadership to be of high importance concerning job satisfaction. Millennials also appear to prefer an adaptive leadership style. Herzberg's motivator–

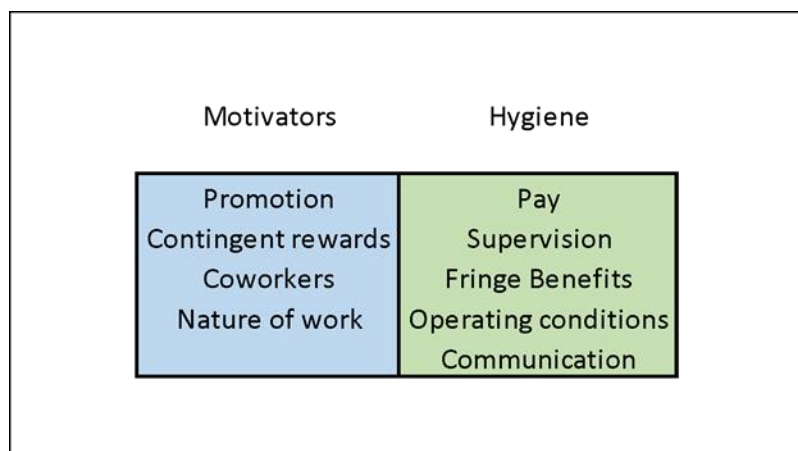
hygiene theory and SDT were used to deepen the understanding and compare results through the lens of these theories.

Herzberg's Motivator–Hygiene Theory

Herzberg theorized that motivators, elements that contributed positively to attitudes in the workplace, were separate from hygiene factors that contributed to dissatisfaction (Whitsett & Winslow, 1967). Herzberg's theory can help categorize the different intrinsic and extrinsic motivators within a job or organization. Sachau (2007) found no linear relationship between motivational factors and hygiene regarding job satisfaction or happiness at work.

This study determined that supervisory is a hygiene factor, but what leadership style is chosen can create intrinsic motivators. If the leadership style of a supervisor is adaptive, for instance, then the supervisory factor may create an intrinsic motivator, such as approval. An adaptive or authentic leader can modify their leadership style to fit a specific situation to enable employee growth opportunities, which can create rapport. The relationship that can exist between employee and supervisor is intrinsic. Conversely, if the leadership style is authoritative, it can cause dissatisfaction, which is an extrinsic hygiene factor. However, leadership style is just one element in overall job satisfaction, as Spector (1985) noted.

Although this study determined that there is a strong positive correlation between the level of satisfaction with leadership and the level of total job satisfaction, the interview participants noted that leadership style was an essential element as a motivator in job satisfaction. Motivator–hygiene theory can be a lens to evaluate other contributing factors such as pay and benefits. The JSS factors contributing to job satisfaction are categorized according to the theory (Figure 3).

Figure 3*JSS and Motivation–Hygiene Theory*

Contrary to the theory, leadership and its impact appear to have no linear relationship with motivator or hygiene. Herzberg opens the door to further research to understand better how these motivators affect an employee's long-term job satisfaction.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on categorizing factors as either intrinsic or extrinsic motivators. The concept of intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is carried out for interest and pleasure, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is carried out to obtain conditional results (Miniotaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2013). In extrinsic motivation, employees are externally motivated and focus on the results of the activities they perform (Urooj et al., 2021). SDT was used to better define and categorize different factors in conjunction with Herzberg's theory. Using the two theories together creates an opportunity to better understand the factor at an intrinsic or extrinsic level.

The list of JSS factors would look like Figure 3 if intrinsic and extrinsic motivators were categorized. Just as there is no linear relationship between motivators and hygiene, an element

like leadership or supervision could induce intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Employees are intrinsically motivated and feel more competent in autonomy supportive environments than in control conditions, such as authoritative leadership (Richer & Vallerand, 1995). The way a supervisor lead determines whether leadership style is an intrinsic or an extrinsic motivator. If the supervisory relationship is purely transactional and authoritative, this can be extrinsic, and Millennial employees are demotivated. If the supervisor and Millennial employee have rapport and the leader is adaptive, then Millennial employees view this as intrinsic given the relationship aspect of the supervisory factor.

Leadership as an intrinsic and extrinsic motivator speaks to the potential fluidity of this specific factor. Leadership's impact can be categorized on either side of Herzberg's theory and SDT. Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) determined that employees who felt they were treated with a high level of respect display higher job satisfaction, which reflects the impact leadership can have on job satisfaction and how it can be intrinsic and extrinsic.

Implications for Practice

I felt that because Millennial employees have a higher attrition rate than other generational cohorts (Gallup, 2016; Jauhar et al., 2017), leadership styles, as they pertain to Millennial employees and job satisfaction, were a critical and timely study. The research and literature surrounding Millennial employees, job satisfaction, and leadership were limited at the time this study began. Although I continued analyzing others' research, there were more studies in the last 5 years on Millennials employees than in the previous decade. The increased importance of such studies on Millennial workers and job satisfaction characteristics such as leadership style cannot be overstated, as the Millennial cohort accounts for the largest generational cohort in the workforce. Using the JSS tool and having only Millennial participants

helped identify the plausibility that leadership influences job satisfaction in the Millennial generational cohort.

The study was able to determine the preferred leadership style of the Millennial employee participants, but the leader participants were not aligned in the expectation of leadership style. Millennial employees in the study overwhelmingly stated that adaptive leadership is the most preferred leadership style. Although the leader participant group did not agree on a single leadership style, transformational leadership was referenced the most, which is significant because there is a clear gap between the Millennial participants and the leader participants.

Organizations that employ Millennial employees could benefit from this study. A high attrition rate among Millennial employees within an organization is cause for a better understanding of Millennial intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, specifically the leadership style of a Millennial's direct supervisor. The study suggests a strong positive correlation between supervisory satisfaction and total job satisfaction. There is also literature that speaks to the importance of HRM and leaders of Millennials working collaboratively to remain engaged in the continued development and facilitation of professional and personal growth.

The study also infers a specific preferred leadership style of Millennial employees. Adaptive leadership was the most referenced leadership style of the Millennial interview participants. Organizations could use the information in this study to structure focus groups to better understand what leadership style their Millennial employees prefer. People leaders could benefit from education and training on the importance of leadership associated with job satisfaction and how leadership style can affect the overall attitudes and job satisfaction of Millennial employees.

There is no single leadership style that fits Millennials. Although Millennials stated in the study that they prefer adaptive leadership, other research has shown that adaptive leadership can have a negative impact on Millennial employees. The shifting of leadership styles associated with adaptive leadership can create a perception of inauthenticity in an environment where authenticity is becoming increasingly significant.

Organizations investing in training and mentoring Millennial's supervisory teams is critical to the success and sustainability of organizations. If Millennial employees want to be heard, understood, and valued in a way that best suits them for success, then adaptive leadership needs to be trained at least at the supervisory level. Teaching leaders listening, nonverbal cues, and engagement methods could increase the ability to recognize the needs of an individual employee. Training on how to address those needs by how the employee needs to be led to be successful becomes a critical component of job satisfaction. This type of engagement can also build rapport and create intrinsic motivators such as appreciation or affirmation.

Limitations

Although the sample size for the survey was large enough, it did not have the granularity I desired. The sample consisted of 130 total Millennial participants from Texas, but only 25 could be confirmed as working in a contact center as they were SatInc employees. Organizations with contact centers in the Brazos Valley Region and Central Texas were not responsive to requests for participation in the survey. This limitation creates a larger generality of findings where the intent was to initiate a more focused study in the Brazos Valley.

The qualitative portion of this study initially sought 5–10 Millennial employees and 5–10 people leaders from SatInc. There were several responses to the request for participation, but ultimately only one response came from a SatInc people leader. All other interview participants

were outside of the SatInc organization. These limitations created another gap in the intent of the study versus the reality of the study, and in turn, the results were broader than expected.

Although data were collected on several characteristics of the participants, those data were not used in the analysis. There are other potential factors that could influence leadership style and Millennials, such as gender and education level. The limitation of analysis creates an opportunity to analyze these data in a future study.

The timing of the study may have affected the results as well. The COVID-19 pandemic moved people from offices to their homes for remote contact center work, which limited the interviewing process. It also changed the dynamic of the supervisor and employee relationship without the daily face-to-face interaction. Contacting other employers in the Brazos Valley became nonexistent, as many of the centers moved to remote or shut down altogether. SatInc experienced an organizational upheaval, and some of the employees interviewed are no longer employed by SatInc. I listed these factors as limitations to acknowledge that responses during the COVID-19 pandemic may be different from those in pre- or postpandemic normalcy. The experiences that all employees felt over the pandemic could change the responses.

Recommendations for Future Research

The sample size for the interview portion of the study was small. A more extensive qualitative study may result in a more comprehensive understanding of how a specific leadership style may impact job satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to rethink their employment paradigms. Remote workers are now more normal. Organizations were forced to adapt to the changing employee demographics, locations, and employee demands. Focusing on Millennials and people leaders within contact centers, if there is a return to pre-COVID-19 in-office paradigms, may yield different results. However, for the same reasons

listed, remote Millennial employees may require a different leadership style than at the time of the study.

Millennial employees and people leaders were not aligned in what leadership style is preferred, according to the study. A qualitative study with a more granular demographic analysis may provide insight into differences in responses based on gender, education level, or race. There were some research gaps concerning Millennial gender analysis as it pertains to job satisfaction. Several of the studies I reviewed contained gender in the data, but there were no specific callouts concerning any differences between males and females. Further analysis of existing data may create an opportunity to refine recommendations for increased job satisfaction through leadership style based on gender.

There seemed to be a difference in how Millennials viewed their organizational culture and how people leaders perceived their organizational culture. This was an unexpected result to have such a disparity between employees and leadership. Literature speaking about organizational culture is clear that both Millennials and their leadership value organizational culture and their place within the culture. A qualitative study consisting of focus groups with people leaders may provide insight into why a portion of them feel negative about their organizational culture. These results could be used to foster a better understanding of how organizational culture can affect people leaders.

The citing of ethical leadership as being a negative leadership style was unexpected. Traditionally, organizations conduct yearly mandatory ethics training courses. The Millennial participant group alluded to the perception that what their people leaders perceive as an ethical decision or policy may not be aligned with what they feel is ethical. There appears to be some subjectivity regarding the line of delineation for what is considered ethical. This disparity may

need more research to fully comprehend the impact of differences in understanding ethical leadership from a Millennial employee or people leader's point of view.

There is an opportunity to expound upon the current research and study the effects of leadership and leadership style on performance within the Millennial cohort. Although this was mentioned in the interview data, there could be more research in this area. Organizations constantly look for ways to be more productive, and the results of such a study may provide insight into how a specific leadership style may impact the performance of Millennials.

Conclusion

There is an accepted assumption based on research that leadership impacts job satisfaction. The JSS analysis suggested that job satisfaction is dependent upon the supervisory factor. The Millennial cohort and people leaders generally subscribe to this notion, as they stated in their interview responses, and literature supports this as well. If a Millennial employee has a high supervisory satisfaction score, it is likely that they also have a high total job satisfaction score.

Millennial employees within the study prefer their leaders to employ adaptive leadership. If leadership has a strong positive correlation to job satisfaction, leadership style becomes important to both the people leader and the Millennial employee. This is where Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory becomes essential. This theory provided a lens to view the research and helped to assert that leadership can be both a motivator and hygiene, depending upon the leadership style.

SDT was another theory used to understand that leadership can be both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivator. Although the supervisor's role falls within the extrinsic factors, the leadership style may create a good rapport and a positive relationship with the Millennial

employee. If this occurs, then leadership becomes intrinsic, as interpersonal relationships are internal.

While no two employees are exactly alike, some themes run through generational cohorts. One such theme is that leadership and leadership style are critical to job satisfaction. The Millennial cohort is no exception, as this study showed that this theme is applicable to their job satisfaction. Millennial employees and people leaders are not aligned in their understanding of which leadership style is most effective in promoting job satisfaction. Millennial employees have a different set of needs than previous cohorts. These needs are met with an understanding that leadership style affects job satisfaction. Organizations focusing on fulfilling these needs of Millennial employees create a sustainable, loyal, and satisfied talent pipeline.

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Appendix A: JSS Survey

JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY Paul E. Spector Department of Psychology University of South Florida Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.		
	PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.	Disagree very much Disagree moderately Disagree slightly Agree slightly Agree moderately Agree very much
1	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2	There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7	I like the people I work with.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9	Communications seem good within this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10	Raises are too few and far between.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18	The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6

	PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT. Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.	Disagree very much Disagree moderately Disagree slightly Agree slightly Agree moderately Agree very much
19	I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1 2 3 4 5 6
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24	I have too much to do at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
25	I enjoy my coemployees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1 2 3 4 5 6
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1 2 3 4 5 6
30	I like my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
31	I have too much paperwork.	1 2 3 4 5 6
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1 2 3 4 5 6
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1 2 3 4 5 6
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
35	My job is enjoyable.	1 2 3 4 5 6
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1 2 3 4 5 6

From *Job Satisfaction Survey* - Paul Spector, P. Spector, 1994,

<https://paulspector.com/assessments/pauls-no-cost-assessments/job-satisfaction-survey>.

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Appendix B: Group 1 and Group 2 Together

PPMCC			
		Total Satisfaction	Supervision
Pearson Correlation	Total Satisfaction	1.000	.675
	Supervision	.675	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Total Satisfaction	.	<.001
	Supervision	.000	.
N	Total Satisfaction	130	130
	Supervision	130	130

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43222.483	1	43222.483	106.866	<.001 ^b
	Residual	51770.440	128	404.457		
	Total	94992.923	129			

a. Dependent Variable: Total Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supervision

Coefficients ^a								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	69.917	6.739		10.375	<.001	56.583	83.251
	Supervision	3.705	.358	.675	10.338	<.001	2.996	4.415

a. Dependent Variable: Total Satisfaction

Appendix C: Group 1

PPMCC

		Supervision	Total satisfaction
Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	25	25
Total satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.641**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6233.629	1	6233.629	16.059	<.001 ^b
	Residual	8927.811	23	388.166		
	Total	15161.440	24			

a. Dependent Variable: Total satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supervision

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for	
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients			Beta	Lower Bound
1	(Constant)	54.312	24.280		2.237	.035	4.086	104.538
	Supervision	4.420	1.103	.641	4.007	<.001	2.138	6.702

a. Dependent Variable: Total satisfaction

Appendix D: Group 2

PPMCC			
		Supervision	Total satisfaction
Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	105	105
Total satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.654**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	105	105

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ANOVA					
Total satisfaction					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	43986.465	19	2315.077	6.456	<.001
Within groups	30479.497	85	358.582		
Total	74465.962	104			

Coefficients^a								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	71.496	7.406		9.654	<.001	56.809	86.184
	Supervision	3.615	.413	.654	8.763	<.001	2.797	4.433

a. Dependent Variable: Total satisfaction

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



April 19, 2021

Dana Martin
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University

Dear Dana,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Millennial Employees in Contact Centers: Leadership Style Preferences Contribution to Job Satisfaction",

(IRB# 21-047) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs