

Are We on the Same Jobsite? Expectations of Millennial Students vs. Construction Industry Employees

Christine Piper, Clemson University, USA
Varahee Madadi, Clemson University, USA

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Abstract

This paper gives an overview of a pilot study conducted in a geographical area of the US to understand the millennial generation's perception of the workplace of the construction industry. Many organizations face the challenge of integrating diverse generations in a workplace. With the retirement of a large number of Baby Boomers and the current intake of Millennials in the workplace, organizations are facing a challenge to attract and retain the millennial generation. This study also includes a comparison of the workplace expectations amongst the different generations in the construction industry.

Keywords: millennials, generations, construction industry, employee retention, workforce

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Introduction

Among the many challenges in an organization, one of them is dealing with a diverse workforce. This diversity is not just limited to gender, religious, ethnic and racial backgrounds, but also relates to the various generational values that are present in the workplace today. The current workforce in the construction industry comprises the greatest diversity of generations. There are four generations that are currently involved in the workplace. They are the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y or the Millennials. The US Census Bureau in the year 2014 stated that the youngest generation entering the workforce numbered around 87 million, which is almost one-fourth of the total American population. With the retirement of a large number of US employees belonging to the Baby Boomer generation, organizations face a crisis to recruit and retain the generations younger than the Baby Boomers who hold different values, attitudes and expectations from the workplace (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) study in the year 2004 conducted by Mary E. Burke, states that there are three areas where the generations differ: work ethics, managing change and perception of organizational hierarchy. Other researchers suggest that management associates the millennials with common stereotypes that include disloyalty, entitlement, and casual and unmanageable attitudes (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Based on literature findings, the following questions arise: What are the expectations of the millennial generation of the workplace? Are these expectations similar to the employees currently working in the construction industry? This research study examined the workplace expectations of construction students of the millennial generation and the perception of workplace by current employees. The study also compared workplace expectations amongst different generations in the construction industry.

Background

The current construction industry consists of four generations working together with each other. The four groups are The Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y also known as The Millennials. The Silent Generation includes those born between 1925 and 1945; Baby Boomers between 1946 and 1964; Generation X between 1965 and 1980 and the individuals born after 1980 are known as The Millennials or Generation Y (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Each generation has a set of characteristics by which it is defined. These characteristics include their approach towards work, technology and family.

Silent Generation (1925- 1945)

The Silent Generation, population of approximately 30.5 million (US Census Bureau, 2014) is also known as the Traditionalists. This generation was raised during World War II and has undergone some of the hardest times when compared to all the other generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Their opinions towards family, religion, work and the government were deeply affected by the situations that had arisen during the Great Depression and World War II. Therefore, this generation is known to be conservative, disciplined and have a sense of obligation towards the company for which they work. They like formality, a chain of command, respect and prefer to make decisions based on issues that have affected them previously (Kersten, 2008).

The Silent Generation has been characterized as loyal, dedicated, non-risk takers and believes in teamwork and collaboration. At work they show consistency and uniformity; do not seek out technological advancements; display command-and-control leadership reminiscent of military operations and prefer hierarchical organizational structures. Even though they may be uncomfortable with ambiguity, change, and technology they are considered to be stable, detail-oriented and hardworking. They are uncomfortable with conflict and reticent when they disagree with anything in the workplace (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 1999). They also consider work to be their duty and have an obligation to the organization for which they work (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Baby Boomers (1946- 1964)

The Baby Boomers got their name due to an increase in the birthrate when many troops came home from World War II. The Boomers grew up in times of economic and educational expansion, which lead them to embrace an attitude of entitlement and an expectation to obtain the best from life (Smola & Sutton, 2002). This generation was brought up to respect people of authority, but as they witnessed their idiosyncrasies, they learned not to trust anyone over 30 years old (Karp, Fuller, & Sirias, 2002). Their period of growth was prosperous; and hence, they are known to be idealistic, optimistic and responsible for many social movements in American history like the Civil Rights movement and the Women's movement (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). The Baby Boomer generation, approximately 78 million people (US Census Bureau, 2014), is the largest cohort currently in the workplace and the one associated with a large number of leadership positions (Trunk, 2007). The individuals of this generation have been characterized to believe that success can be achieved only through hard work and sacrifice. They are considered to be workaholics who prioritize their careers, believe in paying dues, are familiar with step-by-step promotion and seek meaning in their life from their work (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Raths, 1999; Strauss & Howe, 1991). The Boomers, being confident task completers, want their achievement to be recognized, but may be insulted by constant feedback (Glass, 2007). Although they have been characterized as being goal-oriented, they are known to be more process-oriented rather than results-oriented. They are also known for their optimism and intuition to avoid conflicts in the workplace (Zemke et al., 1999). The individuals of this generation value health, wellness, personal growth and gratification and also seek job security (Raths, 1999).

Generation X (1965- 1980)

Around 33 percent of the U.S. population belongs to Generation X, which consists of about 51 million people (US Census Bureau, 2014) that were born between the years 1965 and 1980. The 'X' in Xers refers to the namelessness of the group (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008) because they are considered to be a group of individuals without a clear identity; having generally diminished expectations; and feelings of alienation, pragmatism, conservatism and detachment (Corbo, 1997). Generation X is described as cynical and skeptical (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). This may have been the response to witnessing many negative events while growing up which included an increase in crime and divorce rate (Losyk, 1997). This generation had both parents working; and, hence, they are also known as latchkey kids because they were taking care of themselves everyday (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991). This may

have been the reason that individuals of this generation developed skills of independence, adaptability and resilience (Thiefoldt & Scheef, 2004). Some also consider that growing up alone shaped them to value family and flexible work arrangements that allow them to balance work and family demands (Losyk, 1997). Their untrustworthiness of the corporate sector may have been the result of seeing their parents getting laid off even though they spent most of their time at work (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Work is a difficult challenge and they believe in working smarter rather than harder (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Unlike the Baby Boomers, they do not define themselves based on the career path they have or will achieve. They have changed the career ladder to the career lattice and want to know “What’s in it for me?” They look towards improving their career security rather than concentrating on job security. Thus, they build experience and skills that they can carry with them into the future. They value continuous learning and skill development and are ruled by a sense of accomplishment (Bova & Kroth, 2001). The individuals of this generation are technically competent and very comfortable with diversity, change and competition (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Generation Y (Millennials) (1981- 2000)

This generation is also referred to as the Millennial, Nexters and Echo Boomers. At a population of about 87 million (US Census Bureau, 2014), this generation is now larger than the Baby Boomer generation. Other generations consider them to be equipped with the latest technologies and tools that help them in a world facing economic, geo-political and environmental crises, while some consider them to be “Generation Whine” where they are so over-indulged and protected that they are incapable of handling the simplest task without any assistance (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

Millennials do not have a long-term attachment or commitment towards the organization and regard their job as a means for building their career resume (Howe & Strauss, 2000). The Millennials regard fun in the workplace, not as a benefit, but as a requirement, unlike the Boomers who oppose workplace fun and Xer’s who are mostly indifferent towards workplace fun. They are also known as the “Trophy Generation” or “Trophy Kids” because of the trend to reward everyone for participation rather than rewarding only the winners. Many of the Millennials have observed high rates of divorce and layoffs and are skeptical about long-term commitments. Members of this generation are described as confident, conventional, optimistic, socially conscious and civic-minded. They prefer collective action and team work and desire to have flexibility in their work schedules (Dries et al., 2008; Hewlett et al., 2009; Kowske et al., 2010).

They are the first generation considered to be digital natives. Millennials grew up with existing technologies in abundance and modern ones being developed regularly. They are generally unafraid of new technologies and are usually the first ones to try, buy and spread word about new gadgets and technologies (Glass, 2007). Using technology and incorporating it into their daily lives play an important role. Having access to technology and the Internet has been a source for exploring the world and getting information instantaneously (Zemke et al., 1999). The millennial generation is

considered to have a strong preference for structure and organization. They have a preference towards working with clear expectations and a desire to maintain a well-defined career path (Westernam & Yamamura, 1996). Unlike the Boomers, this generation is unwilling to dedicate much of their daily life to work. They prefer having a balance between their work life and other interests (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Having been raised in an environment with constant feedback, individual attention and praise, they expect the same level of feedback from the workplace in terms of individual development (Ng, Shweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

Methodology

Based on the literature studied and the objectives to be achieved, a survey questionnaire to measure the perceptions of industry with respect to the current work place attributes was developed for students in a mid-size public university located in the southeastern part of the United States and the employees associated with construction companies located in the same region. The questionnaire was structured to obtain responses from questions in the format of rank order scale, Likert-scale and multiple choice. The first section of the questionnaire requested data about the age of the respondent, job position and the level of experience in the construction industry. The next section consisted of rank-order and multiple choice questions that solicited input from the students and employees about the requirements of the construction industry workplace. This included workplace attributes, benefits, opportunities of career improvement, rewards, training, ways to attain work-life balance, and opportunity of traveling. Another section consisted of a series of questions that evaluated their opinion on the work habits currently practiced in the construction industry as well as questions regarding the respondents' expectations of community service.

The participants in the pilot study were students of the Department of Construction Science and Management (CSM) at Clemson University and construction industry employees (CIE) of the Industry Advisory Board and Corporate Partners. The Construction Science & Management Department offers a comprehensive educational program designed to produce motivated, well-educated, responsible citizens with the management and technical skills requisite for leadership positions in the construction industry. The department offers both undergraduate as well as graduate programs with an enrollment of around 180 undergraduates and 25 graduate students. The department has an Industry Advisory Board and Corporate Partners comprised of members from the industry that help provide assistance and guidance to the CSM department. For the purpose of this research members of the Industry Advisory Board and the Corporate Partners are referred to as Construction Industry Employees (CIE).

The questionnaire was distributed via survey monkey to the Construction Industry Employees that are located predominantly in the southeastern states of the US. The web-link distributed to the employees was distinct and could not be distributed to other people in order to receive unique responses. The link was also designed by survey monkey to protect the anonymity of the participant's identity. The students of the CSM Department were handed out the same survey questionnaire in their respective classes. The survey was designed to take around 20 minutes and allowed the participants to opt out of the survey at any time. The respondents were given a time frame of 4 weeks to respond. The analysis of data obtained was done using one-

way analysis of variance, chi-square test for independence and t-test for means using a 95% confidence level to determine statistical significance.

Results

The survey was distributed to 103 students from the freshman, sophomore, junior, senior and graduate classes. There were 42 survey links sent to employees in the construction industry. There was a 100% response rate from the students and a 62.5% (N=25) response rate from the employees in the construction industry. Of the total of 128 responses, 19.6% (N=25) of the respondents belonged to the Construction Industry Employees and 80.4% (N= 103) of the respondents were CSM students at Clemson University. Also, 113 (88.28%) of the respondents belonged to the millennial generation, 8 (6.25%) to Generation X and 7 (5.47%) to the Baby Boomer generation. Of the 113 respondents belonging to the millennial generation, 103 respondents were students and 10 belonged to the population of Construction Industry Employees (CIE). Only 20 (19.42%) of the respondents belonging to the population of students (N= 103) had no experience working in the construction industry. A summary of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents in the survey

	Student	Employee
Millennial (<33)	103	10
Generation X (34-49)	-	8
Baby Boomer (50-68)	-	7
Silent Generation (>69)	-	-
Total no. of respondents		128

To understand the expectations of the millennial generation about the attributes of the workplace in the construction industry, three aspects were considered for the purpose of the research pilot study: work, home, and community. To analyze the work preferences of the millennial generation, ranking-type questions regarding workplace attributes, benefit packages, rewards and training/development opportunities were considered. Out of the 103 student responses, 54 (52.43%) of them ranked “job security and career advancement opportunities” as their top priority. Similarly, 13 responses of the 25 responses (52%) from the construction industry employees ranked it as their top priority.

“Competitive pay and benefits” was another attribute considered to be top priority for 25.24% of the student respondents and 36% of the construction industry employee respondents. The percentage of ranking the benefit packages varied amongst the students and the construction industry employees. Around 40% of the student respondents considered “health and dental insurance” as their top priority while 52% of the construction industry employees considered “incentives and rewards based on performance” to be their top priority amongst the given benefit packages offered by the construction firm. In terms of the rewards to be offered by the company, 87% of the student responses and 64% of the construction industry employee responses ranked “bonus” as their top priority. Extra time off was another benefit considered a top priority by 28% of the construction industry employees.

When asked about training/ development opportunities, a majority of both populations ranked “continuing education workshops and seminars” as their top priority. The other response repeated by participants of each group was location of the job. Some of the respondents marked this response to be their top attribute when they considered a job in the construction industry.

The other aspect considered for the purpose of this research pilot study was how the millennial generation achieved a work-life balance and their perspective of community service while working in the construction industry. The factors considered were grouped according to their category and asked as a ranking order question. While a majority of the construction industry employees considered “flexible work hours” as their top priority, the millennials divided their priority between “flexible work hours” and “travel distance from work”. Similarly, when ranking the community services that are of high priority, millennials considered “volunteer opportunities in the community” while a majority of the construction industry employee’s ranked “membership in professional societies” as their top priority. Based on the ranking priorities of each group of respondents and the significance of the results achieved, the attributes considered to be of top priority are shown in Figure 1.

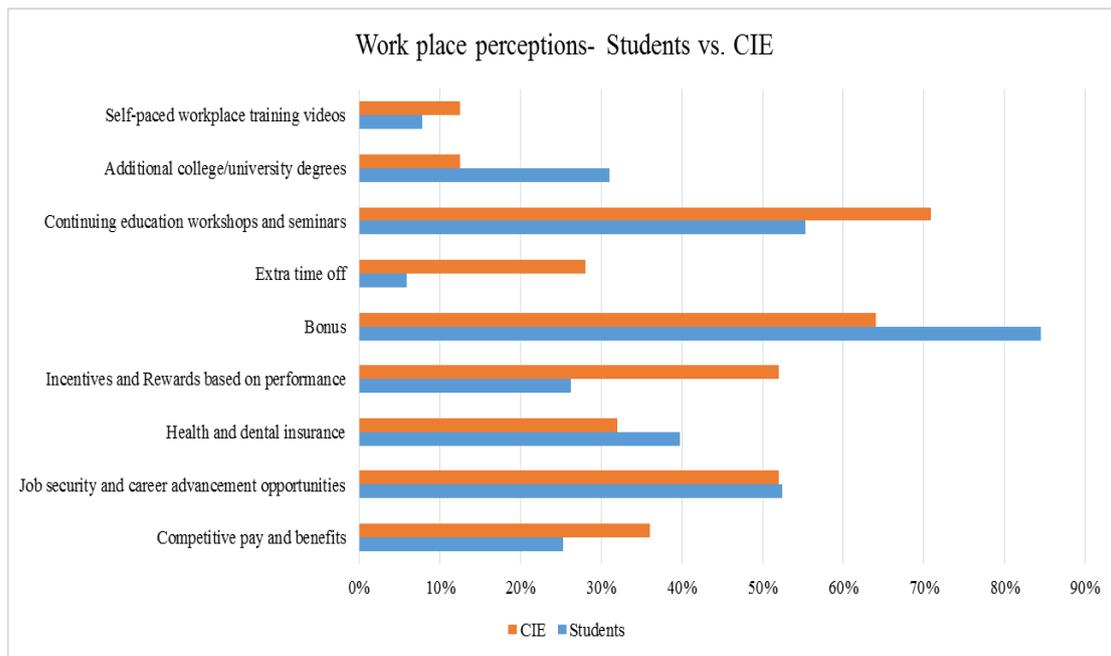


Figure 1: Work place attributes perceptions: Students vs. CIE

Another criteria that was considered to be important was the amount of travel required as part of the job description. Of the entire sample, 60 respondents (N=113) of the millennial generation considered traveling as an opportunity (refer to Table 2). Around 81 of the millennial respondents preferred to travel less than 50 miles on a daily basis. The other respondents considered traveling up to 100 miles, but very few people considered traveling more than 100 miles on a daily basis. Chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between different generations and their preference to travel. The relations between the variables was significant, $\chi^2(2, 128) = 26.85, p = 0.05$. This showed that millennials in this study considered travelling as an opportunity.

Table 2: Generational preference about traveling as a part of their job description

	<i>An opportunity</i>	<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Avoid Travel</i>
Millennials	53.10%	28.32%	17.70%
Generation X	12.50%	75.00%	12.50%
Baby Boomers	14.29%	57.14%	28.57%

In order to understand other parameters the millennial generation and employees considered for the ideal workplace, questions were asked related to job performance, social activities in the work place, communication methods, the environment of the workplace and technology. Respondents were asked to rate each statement based on a Likert-type scale of: 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= neither agree nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= strongly agree.

To get an insight on the different factors that improve “*job performance*”, statements were considered that included close supervision and job performance reviews. Millennials were split on the neither agree nor disagree (33.01%, N= 103) vs. agree (33.98%, N=103) that “*close supervision improves their job performance*” while the construction industry employees agreed (54.17%, N= 25) with the statement. When asked their opinion about “*job performance reviews*” both the construction industry employees and the millennials strongly agreed that the performance reviews were to be taken seriously (58.33%, N= 25; 49.02%, N= 103).

To consider their attitude towards “*formality in workplace*” both millennials and the construction industry employees appreciated formality in speech and dress in the workplace. The construction industry employees (54.17%, N= 25) agreed with the statement “*enjoy attending company sponsored events*”, while the millennial generation disagreed with that statement (38.24%, N= 103).

To understand their perceptions about “*methods of communication*”, both the millennial generation and the construction industry employees were inclined towards the preference of communicating in person rather than using electronic methods. In terms of “*receiving important information and updates by impromptu meetings*”, the majority of the employees agreed (75%, N= 25) with the statement and 51.46% of the millennial generation (N= 103) agreed with that statement.

When asked if they would look at other “*job opportunities*” and remain loyal to their existing employers, a majority of both the millennial generation and the construction industry employees agreed with the statement. Figures 2 and 3 denote the frequency of responses on the Likert scale of the students and construction industry employees with the statements related to the environment of the workplace in the construction industry.

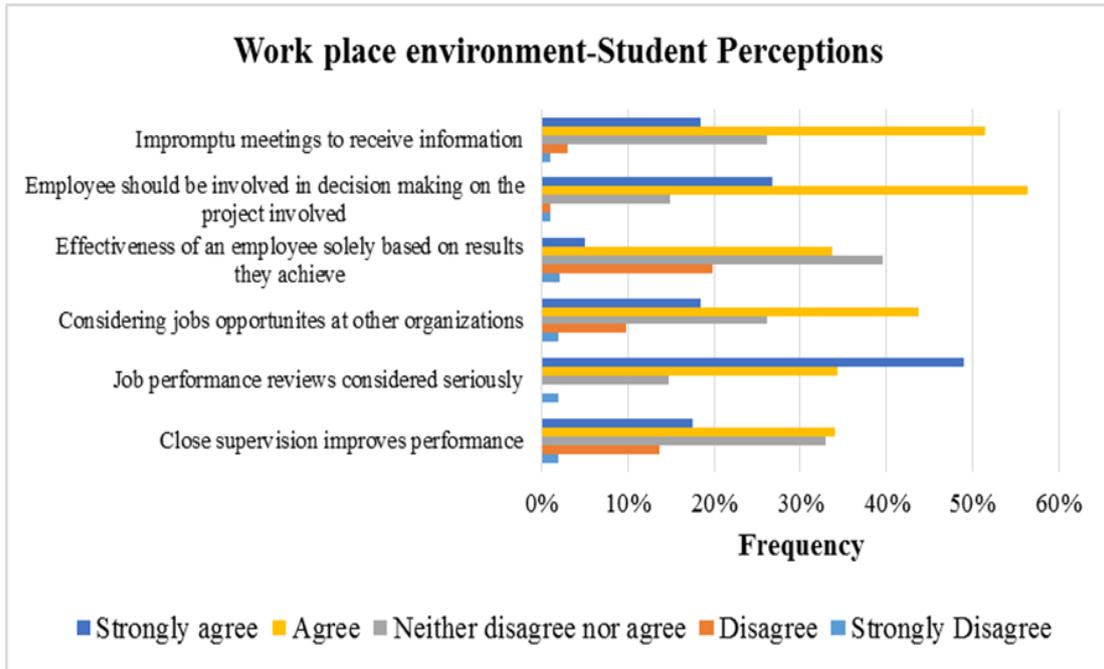


Figure 2: Work place environment in construction industry- Student Perceptions

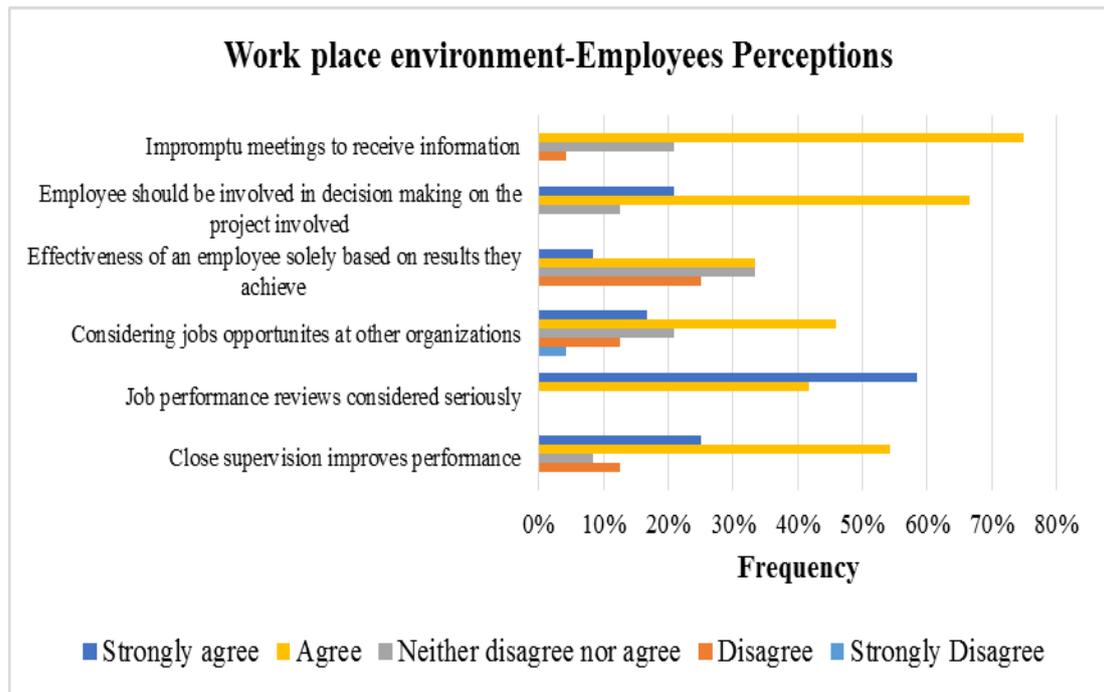


Figure 3: Workplace environment in construction industry- Employees Perceptions

To understand the viewpoint of the students and CIE on working individually or as a team, the aspects of their working preference and the effectiveness were considered. While millennials were split on the neither agree nor disagree (34.95%, N= 103) vs. agree (38.83%, N= 103) on their preference of “*working on group projects than individual projects*”, a majority of the construction industry employees neither agreed nor disagreed (45.83%, N= 25) with the statement. When asked their opinion on “*team work being more effective in accomplishing projects*”, the construction industry

employees (CIE) neither agreed nor disagreed (45.83%, N= 25) while students strongly agreed (33.01%, N= 103) with that statement. However, both construction industry employees and millennials agreed (45.83%, N= 25; 49.51%, N= 103) with the statement of increasing productivity in a workplace by having “*competition amongst coworkers*”.

“*Flexible work hours*” are considered to be a priority by the millennials (41.75%, N= 103) associated with the construction industry but the employees were split between neither agree nor disagree (37.50%, N= 25) vs. agreeing (37.50%, N= 25) with the statement.

To understand the perception of “*technological advancement*” in the company the aspects of incorporating technology and keeping up with latest technology were asked. Employees strongly agreed (50%, N= 25) that the company should be associated with the latest technology to create a competitive opportunity while a majority of the students agreed (53.92%, N= 103) with the same and both were in agreement (46.53%, N= 103; 62.50%, N= 25) with their comfort level of learning and keeping up with changes in technology.

A two-paired samples t-test was conducted to test the significance between the population means of the millennial generation in the construction industry and the population mean of the employees in the construction industry. This test was conducted for all the statements in the survey questionnaire in the format of the Likert scale. The statistical data for each statement is presented in Table 3. The statements that did not provide statistical significant data are “*I consider myself to be more work-focused than family-focused*”; “*I do not mind working more than 60 hours every week if I am a salaried employee*”; “*I prefer working in a company with an informal organizational structure vs. a company with a very formal organizational structure.*”

Table 3: T-Test- Paired Two Sample of Means
For statements related to the workplace in the construction industry

	Statement	Mean	Variance	T-stat	
a	Close supervision improves performance	3.59	0.99	6.69	S
b	Job performance reviews considered seriously	4.34	0.66	18.55	S
c	Considering jobs opportunities at other organizations	3.65	0.94	7.59	S
d	Formality in the workplace	3.72	0.68	9.92	S
e	More work- focused than family focused	2.38	0.91	-7.29	
f	Enjoy attending company sponsored social events	3.83	0.76	10.8	S
g	Communicate in person rather than electronic methods	3.97	0.78	12.38	S
h	Impromptu meetings to receive information	3.81	0.57	12.14	S
i	Working on group projects than individual projects	3.52	0.84	6.39	S
j	Teams considered to be more effective	3.81	0.92	9.55	S
k	Competition amongst co-workers to increase productivity	3.6	0.91	7.07	S
l	Flexible work- hours are a priority	3.72	0.89	8.57	S
m	Company has no control over vacation time	4.02	1.14	10.71	S
n	Company associated with latest technology	4.34	0.43	22.84	S
o	Effectiveness of an employee solely based on results they achieve	3.21	0.8	2.61	S
p	Employee should be involved in decision making on the project involved	4.07	0.5	16.9	S
q	Need to be shown how to do something once	3.61	1.02	6.76	S
r	Comfort level on keeping up with latest technology	4.22	0.62	17.23	S
s	Working more than 60 hours/week as a salaried employee	2.85	1.4	-1.43	
t	A flexible schedule to meet personal/ family commitments	3.73	0.7	9.73	S
u	Follow an established chain of command	3.74	0.63	10.5	S
v	Work in an informal organizational vs. formal organizational st	2.9	1.12	-1.01	

Discussion

While the literature findings stated that the millennial generation is associated with stereotypes, this pilot study showed that the millennials think much similarly to the other Baby Boomers and Generation X respondents belonging to the construction industry. This was seen in their preferences of work place attributes. Table 4 shows the preferences of the majority of responses ranked in the top two positions. One of the attributes considered to affect the preference of the workplace by both the millennial generation and the construction industry employees was the geographical location of the workplace or the jobsite. This showed that the perception of the millennials is not very different from the other generations in the workplace. This contradicted the research done by Ng et al., 2010 that the perceptions of the younger generation and the Baby Boomers differed in terms of workplace attributes and expectations.

Table 4: Perceptions of the workplace attributes by the majority of respondents

	Students Perception	Employee Perception
Work Place Attributes		
Rank 1	Job security and Career advancement opportunities	Job security and Career advancement opportunities
Rank 2	Competitive pay and benefits	Competitive pay and benefits
Benefit Packages		
Rank 1	Health & Dental Insurance	Incentives and Rewards based on Performance
Rank 2	Incentives and Rewards based on Performance	Health & Dental Insurance
Rewards		
Rank 1	Bonus	Bonus
Rank 2	Extra Time off	Extra Time off
Training/ Development Opportunities		
Rank 1	Continuing Education workshops and seminars	Continuing Education workshops and seminars
Rank 2	Additional university degree	Additional university degree
Achieve work- life balance		
Rank 1	Flexible work hours	Flexible work hours
Rank 2	Travel distance form work	Travel distance form work

The research data also showed that the millennials considered close supervision and job performance reviews to improve their performance on the jobs. This supported the statement that the millennial generation expects the same level of feedback that they have received throughout their upbringing in terms of development in the workplace from their supervisors/mentors/employers according to Ng et al., 2010. The construction students also appreciated formality in the workplace which contradicted the SHRM study (Burke, 2004) that the millennials prefer an informal workplace. The millennials also had a strong preference to work in teams and group projects and considered that as a factor to be more effective in accomplishing the project when compared to working individually on the project. They considered technology to be a factor to create a competitive environment and also agreed that they were comfortable keeping up to date with the latest technologies. Apart from that, they believed that competition amongst co-workers might increase productivity in the workplace. The construction student millennials, according to this research study, considered flexible work hours to be a priority to meet personal or family commitments and gave less consideration to working more than 60 hours a week on a regular basis. This supported prior research studies (Dries et al., 2008; Hewlett et al., 2009; Kowske et al., 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002) that stated millennials prefer a work-life balance when compared to the earlier generations. The results of the research study showed that a majority of the millennial generation preferred working in a company with a formal organizational structure and following an established chain of command, but did not prefer attending company sponsored social events for employees and their families. This indicated that the population of this study had a preference of keeping their personal and work life separate from each other.

Another common stereotype attached with the millennials was their method of communication. Based on literature by Zemke et al., 2000 the results stated that the younger generation preferred communicating by electronic methods rather than communicating in person. This research study proved otherwise; students preferred communicating in person rather than by electronic methods and welcomed impromptu meetings to receive important information and updates. Though the millennials in this research study did not care for working more than 60 hours a week on a regular basis as a salaried employee, they did not mind working overtime in order to get a project back on schedule. They considered traveling as an opportunity if it is a part of the job description, but also favored traveling less than 50 miles on a daily basis to a job site.

Based on the results obtained from respondents in this research study, the preferences of the millennial generation in the workplace of the construction industry were:

- Flexible work hours to meet family/ personal commitments.
- Believe in team work and job performance reviews.
- Do not mix personal and work life.
- Prefer to communicate in person rather than using electronic methods and do not mind impromptu meetings to receive important information.
- Prefer using the latest technologies and do not mind learning and keeping up with the changes in technology.

Commonly cited responses to the questions of having a dream job with a perfect work environment were:

- Competitive work environment with challenging projects.
- A structured environment that allows free means of communication amongst the employees and employers.
- Balance of work and family life.
- Benefits in terms of paid vacations or extra days off.
- Work should not be restricted to the home office but should involve active participation at the project site.

Limitations

The first limitation of this pilot study was the relatively small sample size of the population: students from one construction management program and construction industry employees from the department's industry board. The millennial students' values and attitudes may differ by race, gender, social and economic background. They may not have realistic expectations, attributes and experience working in a professional construction environment. Furthermore, the students with previous work experience may have been dissatisfied with their experience in the industry. It is unknown whether this issue may have had an impact on the participant's responses. Both the samples of the population considered were restricted to a single geographical area of the United States. The relatively small size and geographical restrictions may have biased the results of the survey.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research study used the framework of work, family and community to examine the ideal workplace attributes that the millennial generation considered in the construction industry. Unlike many prior research studies that stated the perspective of the millennial generation is completely different from the perceptions of the previous generation, the millennials of the construction industry seemed to disagree. While construction industry employers perceive that millennials view the workplace differently, responses showed that the millennials may not have a completely altering view of the workplace when compared to the other generations. This research study showed that although the millennials may have different expectations of the workplace, they shared similar attributes with current employees of the construction industry who belong to different generations.

If the sample size considered was larger and the population was not restricted to a single geographical area, the results would have had a lesser probability of being biased. It is recommended that with a larger sample of the population, other aspects such as the number of years of experience in the construction industry and the job position of the respondents should be considered. Data could be gathered and differentiated by employer (supervisor) vs. employee. This may help in conducting a comparative analysis of the expectations of the construction industry workplace from two aspects: generational differences and also the student-employee-employer expectations.

The findings reported in this research can help inform employers on how best to attract and engage the next generation of skilled workers. The millennial generation has the capability to encompass their knowledge and skills to fulfill both personal and societal goals. If effectively managed and retained, the millennial generation has the potential to become one of the best generations to serve in the construction industry.

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