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A Qualitative Evaluation of Leader-to-Millennial Relationship Development

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2009

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Generational conflicts affect socialization practices needed for knowledge transfer and Millennial retention. Because of failed socialization practices, organizations will face significant losses in knowledge capital as Boomers retire and Millennials began to take active roles within the workplace. This interpretative phenomenological study explored Millennials' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development that may influence organizational learning and retention practices. Millennial retention is a primary concern in that knowledge acquired is a result of longevity and work experience. The leader-to-member exchange theory was used to navigate this qualitative inquiry. The reflexive approach was implemented to explore 20 Millennial participants' experiences with their managers. The data analysis strategy incorporated a repetitious review and structural coding of participant interview transcripts. Data analysis affirmed that Millennials perceive effective relationship development as a process containing leader empowerment behaviors with collaborative social exchanges. Exploration of participant experiences further identified that reciprocity is a result of high-quality social exchanges. Research findings benefit executive and middle-level management. The information broadens management knowledge of Millennials' perceptions of relationship development that may increase employee retention needed for robust social systems. The implications for positive social change are that increased awareness of advanced relational leadership systems assists in building congruent internal relationships required for organizational learning and retention.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Tonda Williams, who provided the blueprint for individuality, spiritual strength, and work ethic. I am in deep gratitude for my son Phillip R. Scott III, his quiet support and warm heart that inspired me to take this journey. I want to extend a special dedication to my father, Robert L. Williams Jr., for being a consistent supportive presence in my life. Finally, I would like to thank Richard K. Frasca and Wonderlyn Horsley for encouragement throughout the years. Your positive words and energy provided a foundation that assisted me with attaining my doctoral degree.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Global aging will contribute to a decline in domestic labor, whereby the supply for productive members of the workforce will diminish as older workers retire (DeFranco & Schmidgall, 2014; Higo & Kahn, 2014; Kulik, Ryan, Harper & George, 2014). Due to ineffective social exchanges, organizations will experience deficits in learning and knowledge sharing of workforce members (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cummings-White & Diala, 2013; Sabri, Haron, Jamil, & Ibrahim, 2014). Researchers identified that young employees ages 18-32 encounter difficulties in the acquirement of work relationships needed for job effectiveness (Akhras, 2015; Graen & Schiemann, 2013). Work relationships developed between leader and employee that support learning and organizational performance (Biao & Shuping, 2014; Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013). Establishing effective leader-to-Millennial employee relationships is challenging due to diverse generational characteristics and work values (Helyer & Lee, 2012; Uelman, 2013).

According to Hendricks and Cope (2013), leaders find it difficult to establish a working relationship with Millennials. Researchers identified that differing generational characteristics and work values may influence communications and social development of Millennial employees (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2012). Comparison of generational psychological traits found that Millennials have an increase of individualist and narcissistic characteristics that guide their social behaviors within a professional environment (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak (2013) determined that Millennials value collaborative work environments. In contrast, older employees display strong values toward independence and autonomy (Gursoy,

Chi, Karadag, 2013). These differences in characteristics and work values may contribute to inconsistencies within role expectations and knowledge transfer methods (Kuyken, 2012; Starks, 2013). An understanding of the work relational expectations of Millennial employees may provide an opportunity to establish effective multigenerational socialization methods needed for organizational performance.

A synergistic multigenerational work environment requires positive social change (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012; Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). Social change takes place as generations within organizations collaborate and develop new concepts needed to meet sociocultural demands (Mannheim, 1952). According to Howe and Jackson (2012), social change is a transformational process. The authors proposed that as older generations retire from organizational roles, knowledge and resources are transferred to the younger generation. Building high-quality leader-to- Millennial relationships may assist with continuing the organization's vision.

Although most studies focus on leadership as a predictor of transformational change, relationship-based aspects initiatives provide a core component within the transmission of organizational goals (Aarons & Sommerfeld, 2012; Brouer, Douglas, Treadway, & Ferris, 2013; Metcalf & Benn, 2013). An understanding of Millennials' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationships may aid in the development of relational contributions, to promote positive social change within multigenerational organizations.

In Chapter 1, I will present the foundation for the qualitative examination of Millennials' experiences within leader-to-employee relationships. The background of the study will contain the social implications of Millennial influence on relationship development as well as provide a

brief summary of major generational categorizations. The problem and purpose statement will contain the elements that lead to the development of the research questions and theoretical framework. The nature of the study, assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations will define the research design. Finally, the significance of the study involves the implications for research inquiry, workplace practice, and positive social change within leadership systems.

Background

Understanding the social implications of Millennial influence on leader-to-employee relationship development starts with the evaluation of social mobility and generational characterizations. This section will end with a brief synopsis of Millennials' socialization into the workplace and the importance of qualitative evaluations of the cohort's perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development.

Social Mobility

Sorokin (1959) defined social mobility, as the process that occurs, as cultures shift because of individual relationships with others and social phenomena. Cultural values are learned or transformed according to societal demands (Mannheim, 1952; Ossenkop, Vinkenburg, Jansen, & Ghorashi, 2015). The fundamental basis for understanding the influence of Millennials on organizational behaviors starts with the conception of social mobility as a component that contributes to organizational change (Roodin & Mendelson, 2013). Researchers suggest that changes occur within the organizational structure, due to the emergence and management of a multigenerational work environment (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Hillman, 2014; Kuyken, 2012). The relationships formed within organizational structures stimulate change within collective behaviors and societal expectations (Cummings et al., 2013; Mannheim, 1952; Tams, 2013). The

socialization of Millennials within today's workplace may stimulate the growth and advancement of organizational practices.

Generational Characterizations

Generational cohort theorists guide past and current studies toward understanding group characterizations (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010). Generational groups consist of individuals who share similar behaviors because of historical, cultural, and economic influences that occur during the first 30 years of lifespan development (Jorgenson, 2003; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Although personality traits shape individual behaviors, scientific analysis of generational characteristics and human behavior provides an understanding of components that influence the communications, learning, and retention of cultural values (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Mannheim, 1952). These characteristics assist with defining generational categorizations. The generational categorizations addressed in this study include Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. Beginning and ending periods identified within the categorization of generational cohorts are approximations given the broad understanding that historical, cultural, and biological factors contribute to cohort development (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge et al., 2010). The generational categories and characteristics are as follows:

Boomers. Boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964 (Findlay & Kowbel, 2013; Jorgenson, 2003; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). These individuals hold the majority of upper executive positions within organizations in the United States (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Corwin, 2015). The Vietnam War and civil rights movements influenced Boomers' behaviors (Howe & Strauss, 2009). Twenge (2007) identified that the women's liberation movement influenced the increase of female members entering the job market. These historical events had

an impact on social change within both community and organizational environments (Sorokin, 1959). Twenge et al. (2010) proposed that women entering the workforce influenced the development of the succeeding generations (Generation X and Millennial) values toward gender equality, two-working parents and single parent family structures.

Generational theorists suggested that Boomers' optimism toward their career endeavors reinforced their values and efforts toward professional goal achievement (Young, Sturts, Ross, & Kim, 2013). Driven and dedicated toward building effective organizational relationships, Boomers contribute to the development of the traditional hierarchical structure (Howe & Strauss, 2009). Managers view Boomers as long-term employees who value the progress and involvement of working up organizational ranks (Zemke et al., 2013). Boomers provide a valuable human resource within the cultivation and stability of organizational culture, knowledge, and performance.

Generation X'ers. Generation X'ers are individuals born between the years 1965 and 1981 (Jorgenson, 2003, Twenge, 2007). Members of Generation X followed extreme changes within the traditional family structure (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Twenge proposed that the increased divorce rate and social changes with the rearing of this select group, influenced independent behaviors. Twenge asserted that Generation X is smaller in population as compared to both Boomer and Millennial cohorts. The small population is a result of women's birth control pill consumption and conscious efforts to pursue careers, as opposed to starting families early within life-span development (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Generation X'ers possesses an independent work ethic in comparison to the Boomers and Millennials (Twenge et al., 2010). According to Howe and Strauss (2009), individuals within the

Generation X group lack people skills due to single parenting and dual working family homes. Children were often left home alone for the majority of the day. The term *latch key kids* defined the era of children independence (Gilley, Waddell, Hall, Jackson, & Gilley, 2015). These components contributed to cohorts work attitudes a career development.

According to Costanza and Finkelstein (2015), Generation X'ers show gradual changes in work attitudes. Twenge (2007) proposed that because of increased job losses due to periods of downsizing during economic uncertainty, cohort members lack organizational commitment. Economic uncertainty inspired gradual shifts within organizational expectations (O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014). These changes in attitudes influenced the cohorts' demands for work-life balance. Work-life balance contributed to social changes within employee values and beliefs towards incorporating leisure and recreation as key components of professional success (Twenge et al., 2010).

Millennials. Individuals born between the years 1982 and 1999 comprise the Millennial generation (Findlay & Kowbel, 2013; Jorgenson, 2003). Hite et al. (2015) contend that the Millennial generation consists of a diverse cultural population of individuals. According to Twenge and Campbell (2008), individuals within the generational group watched several iconic companies, such as Enron, Tyco, and Arthur Anderson, collapse due to unethical leadership. Historical events, such as the shooting at Columbine and the September 11 terrorist attacks contributed to the generation's outlook on organizational and national security (Debevec, Schewe, Madden, & Diamond, 2013). Twenge and Campbell identified that these events may have contributed to cohort uncertainty within organizational structures and policies.

Millennials are comfortable and adapt quickly to computer advancements. According to Howe and Strauss (2009), Millennials are digitally connected and utilize computerized mediums as a significant form of social-networking connections. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Myspace contribute to the exposure and acceptance of diverse cultures (Espinoza & Schwarzbart, 2015). Hite, Daspit, & Dong (2015) proposed that increased immigration influence positive social change within Millennial attitudes toward cultural diversity. Although the generation possesses qualities that contribute to the development of a stable and innovative approach to socio-economic challenges, contrasting work values of Boomer and Generation X contribute to organizational conflicts and lack of Millennial employee retention (Hillman, 2014; Murray, 2011).

Technological advancements influenced Millennial communication methods and processes. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) affirmed that Millennials process information differently. The researchers proposed that computerized communications influence learning. As a result of e-mail correspondence, social networking, and text messaging, Millennials developed new attitudes toward personal and professional social exchanges (Abaffy & Rubin, 2011; Sinha & Rauscher, 2014). The Internet contributes to the generation's approach to gathering information (Berman & Marshall, 2014; Gilbert, 2011). Generational analyst suggested that as a result of computerized information processing, Millennials want rapid feedback and instant gratification within workplace practices (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Jorgenson, 2003; Twenge et al., 2010).

The evaluation of Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial characteristics provides an understanding of cohort values within the workplace (Kelan, 2014; Kuhl, 2014; Samadi, Wei,

Seyfee, Yusoff, 2015). Researchers' perceptions of generational differences assist with developing the foundation for exploring Millennials' influence on organizational social change (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010). Mannheim (1952) asserted that generational cycles, which occur when a new generation enters society, aid in the elasticity and evolution of social cultures. In other words, social change is inevitable (Sorokin, 1959). Qualitative evaluations may broaden research knowledge within the social development and of the youngest workforce member.

Millennials' Socializations into the Workforce

The college student population is part of the Millennial age cohort, and on graduation, college students will enter the workforce (Miller & Slocombe, 2012). Millennials' socialization may play a critical role in social change within the organizational workforce (Ertas, 2015; Graen & Schiemann, 2013). Researchers' evaluations of Millennials, while in the college environment, contribute to current discussions regarding leadership systems (Much,Wagener, Breitkreutz, Hellenbrand, 2014; Westerman et al., 2012). Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) evaluated college students' parent-child relationships for greater understanding of epistemological development and social learning. The authors suggested that close relationships with parents contribute to Millennials' independence and ability to form relationships outside of the familial structure. Reports of Millennials' social behaviors and ethical orientation within university environments may contribute to a broader understanding of Millennials' socialization practices in the workplace (Pressley & Kennett-Hensel, 2013). Differences between college and organizational cultures may influence the articulation of the Millennial socialization process.

Millennial employee behaviors affect the development of organizational strategies geared toward attraction, motivation, and retention of the youngest member of the workplace (Abaffy & Rubin, 2011; Graen & Grace, 2015). Work-life balance, career advancement, and learning opportunities are being used to encourage Millennial involvement (Thompson, 2013). Management literature and resources such as, mentorship programs, executive coaching, and seminars assists with multigenerational leadership as Millennials began to take active roles in working society (Hays, 2014). Although Millennial behaviors are defined and discussed within organizational change initiatives, evaluations of Millennial professional working relationships are minimal within management and leadership systems.

According to Deloittle (2014), only 16% of working Millennials perceived that their organization understand their behaviors. Acquiring information through exploring Millennial employees' working experiences minimizes misconceptions that can lead to stagnant socialization measures and decreased retention rates. Exchanges that occur within leader-to-Millennial relationship development provide themes to conceptualize the cohort's shared experience. I gathered and analyzed participant responses to address the gap in knowledge that disconnects Millennial relationship development within the performance and retention of Millennials in the workplace (Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Kaifi et al., 2012; Murray, 2011).

Definition of Terms

Boomers: Individuals who were born between 1946 and 1964 (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Boomers may hold senior level positions and provide the foundation for traditional methods of leadership (Howe & Strauss, 2009).

Generation X'ers: Individuals who were born between 1965 and 1981 (Twenge, 2013). Generation X'ers influence social change within working systems in that employees' embrace independence and quality of work-life (Espinoza & Schwarzbart, 2015; Twenge et al., 2010)

Hierarchical structure: A linear approach within the top-down filtration of information within organizations (Arshad, Goh, Rasli, 2014; Flink 2015).

Leader(s): Individuals who implement and manage organizational change (Bass & Bass, 2009). For the purposes of this study, leaders and managers have the same organizational role and may provide employees resources for learning and performance.

Leader-to-employee: The term adapted by the leader-to-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hu & Liden, 2013). For the purposes of this study, this term is used when referring to social exchanges that occur between leader and employee.

Leader-to-member: The term within the LMX theory used when referring to the social exchanges that occur between leaders and employees within an organizational group (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hu & Liden, 2013).

Leader-to-Millennial: The term adapted by the LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hu & Liden, 2013). For the purposes of this study, this term is used when referring to the social exchanges between leader-to-Millennial employees.

Leadership system: The interactive practices and resources that assist with the implementation and management of organizational change (Bass & Bass, 2009; Day, 2014).

Millennials: Individuals who were born between 1982 and 1999 are called (Twenge et al., 2010). Millennials are influenced by technological advancements and historical events that contributed to social change (Espinoza & Schwarzbart, 2015; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010)

Organizational social systems: A group of individuals' communications methods and relationships that assist with learning and goal achievement (Pan et al., 2012; von Schlippe & Frank, 2013).

Relationship development: Relationship development is an individualistic process in leadership that is continuous and dependent on the quality of the social exchange between leader and member (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1993).

Problem Statement

United States organizations will face significant losses in knowledge capital as Boomers retire and Millennials began to take active roles within the workplace (Ertas; 2015; Pobst, 2014). Millennial retention is a primary concern in that employees gain organizational knowledge through active attendance (Farell & Hurt, 2014; Tulgan, 2011). The average tenure of Millennial employees is 3.0 years compared to Boomer employee average tenure of 10.4 years (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Increased employee turnovers affect the performance and stability of organizations (Kim & Fernandez, 2015). The general organizational problem is managements' inability to increase Millennial employee retention, which provides the foundation for organizational learning. The problem is emphasized within the implementation of organizational benefits to attract Millennials that prove ineffective in sustaining cohort employment (Carpenter & Charon, 2014; Eversole, Venneberg, & Crowder, 2012; Michael, 2014). Flexible work schedules, technological, and career advancements appeal to Millennials but fail at providing the resources to build leader-to-employee relationships needed for organizational retention (Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Kuhl, 2014). Minimal studies are found to support leader-to-employee relationship development as a component of Millennial organizational performance. The specific

organizational problem is that there is a lack of resources provided to build high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships. Understanding Millennials perceptions of leader-to-employee development may enable methods to increase organizational learning and employment retention.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study was to explore Millennial employees' experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Prior to research implementation, the leader-to-Millennial relationship was defined as the interactions that occur within task delegation and role development that assist with building high-quality relationships. The target population encompassed Millennial employees in Long Island, New York who were working with leaders for one year of more. The population was appropriate in that Keeter and Taylor (2010) identified that 6 out of 10 Millennials will leave their current employer. Developing effective leader-to-Millennial relationships is an arduous task in that members of the cohort are perceived as disloyal (Chaudhuri, & Ghosh, 2012; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The implications for positive social change include broadening management knowledge needed for relational leadership resources for Millennial employee learning and retention.

Research Questions

I pose the central question: What are Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development? The following sub questions helped guide my qualitative interpretative phenomenological study:

RQ1a: How do Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationship within the workplace?

RQ1b: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within role

development practices?

RQ1c: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within task

delegation practices?

RQ1d: How do Millennials describe high-quality relationships?

Conceptual Framework

Hershatter and Epstein (2010) suggested that the Millennial expectations of leader-to-

employee social exchanges divert from traditional hierarchical structures. Millennials require

frequent social interactions and guidance (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Miller & Slocombe, 2012;

Ogbeide, Fenich, Scott-Halsell, & Kesterson, 2013). Even though Hershatter and Epstein

stressed differences within Millennial and traditional methods of socialization, minimal

information is found to expand management's body of knowledge within the development of

high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships. Haeger and Lingham (2013) puts forth the claim

that Millennial employees expect to develop close relationships with leadership. Current

knowledge of the cohort's perception and context of relationship development requires

comprehensive discussions within management studies.

The LMX theory is used to explore Millennial experiences within leader-to-employee

relationships. In the conceptual framework, the LMX is illustrated to outline the elements and

social interactions that determine relationship quality with individual members within a group.

These actions may help leaders categorize Millennial employees for effective task delegation. I

created Figure 1 on the basis of Liden and Graen (1980) and Dienesch and Liden (1986) theories,

for the purpose of this study to provide a conceptual understanding of high and low-quality

relationship development. Employees are classified as *in* or *out* group members (Dienesch &

Liden, 1986). According to Liden and Graen (1980), *in* group members are employees who have
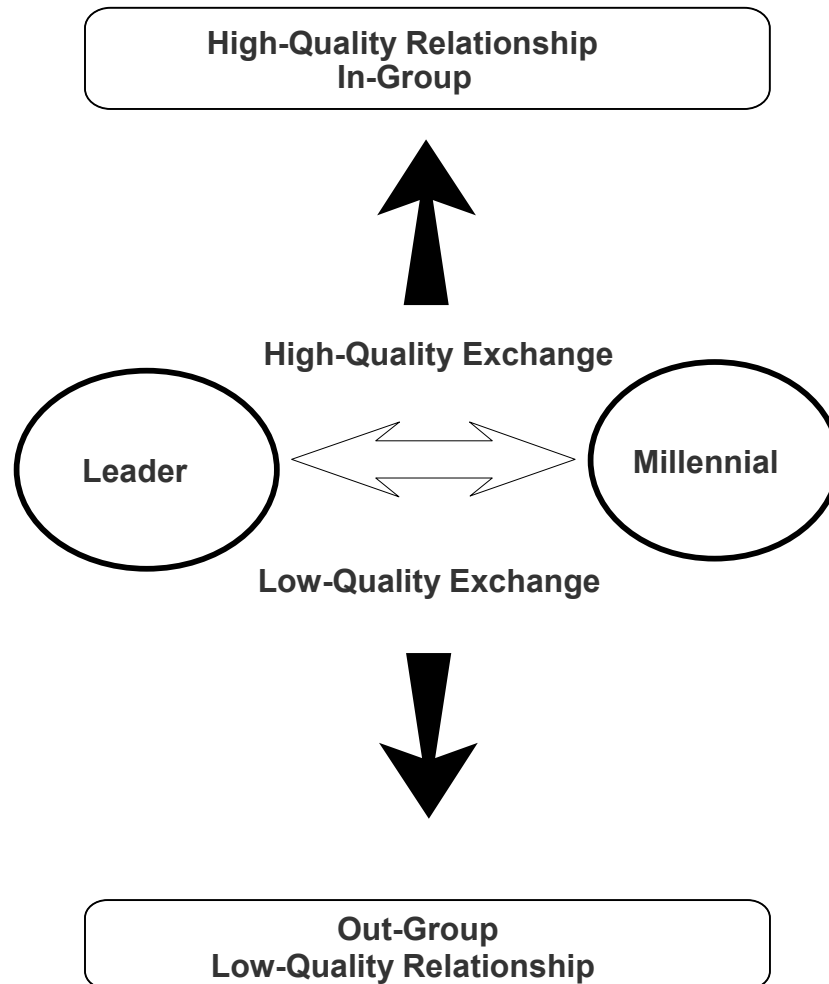
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the leader-to-Millennial exchange. Conceptual model created for this study using the leader-to-member exchange (LMX) theory. Liden and Graen (1980) proposed that leader and member within hierarchical relationships produce high or low exchanges needed for *in* or *out* group selection. The process assists with leader decision-making and determines relationship quality (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

developed high-quality exchanges with leaders. Dienesch and Liden suggested that separating

employees into two groups assist with effective decision making for overall goal achievement.

The process is critical to leadership navigation and employee performance during times of rapid internal and external change (Lam, Peng, Wong, 2015; Metcalf & Benn, 2013).

The performance of leader-to-employee exchanges predicts the quality of relationship development (Casimir, Ngee, Ng, Yuan Wang, & Ooi, 2014; Jaiswal & Srivastava, 2015). High-quality relationships include dyadic exchanges that result in the reciprocity of knowledge, resources, and skills to meet organizational goals (Aarons & Sommerfeld, 2012; Hays, 2014; Volmer, Spul, & Niessen, 2012). Leader and employee within high-quality dyadic exchanges show positive attitudes toward performing tasks and responsibilities outside of their formal employment contract (Liden and Graen, 1980). Reciprocity and positive attitudes in the workplace influence productive leader and employee behaviors (Chaudhry & Tekleab, 2013; Gkorezis, Bellou, & Skemperis, 2015). Low-quality exchanges lack the rigor and enthusiasm found within high-quality exchanges; despite organizational demands that may require increase employee effort (Furunes, Mykletun, Einarsen, & Glasø, 2015; Kauppila, 2015). The LMX theory provides the attributes that enable increased involvement needed for employee learning and performance (Hinojosa, Davis-Mcauley, Randolph-Seng, & Gardner, 2014; Mazur, 2012).

LMX Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework contains the logistics that underlie the phenomenon observed (Maxwell, 2012; Vagel, 2014). The LMX theory developed by Graen (2003) and his peers provide a broad explanation of the components and behaviors that may stimulate leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The theorist proposed that the leadership relationship consist of three elements: (a) leader (b) member, and (c) exchange platform (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Graen, 1980). These elements contribute to the leader-to-employee mutual

exchange of knowledge and values. The following theoretical evaluation describes (a) LMX sub-theories (b) LMX and traditional leadership paradigms (c) LMX theory as a conceptual framework, and (d) LMX theory and development of the interview instrument. In Chapter 2, I will provide a synthesis of seminal and current theoretical literature as it relates to the conceptual evaluation of leader-to-Millennial relationship development within organizational social systems.

LMX Sub-theories

The LMX theory incorporates the role, social, and dyadic exchange theories (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Vidyarthi, Erdogan, Anand, Liden, & Chaudhry, 2014). These sub-theories underlie leader-to-Millennial relationship development (Maxwell, 2012; Vagel, 2014). Liden and Graen (1980) describe the role theory as the process that occurs to assist employees with organizational placement. Leader task delegation practices help develop employee functions and responsibilities (Kelley & Bisell, 2014). Liden and Graen suggested that the social exchange theory frame leader-to-employee communications. Leader networking style and affective behaviors may influence employee commitment and job performance (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Schullery, 2013; Zhang et al., 2012). The dyadic exchange theory include practices that encourage mutuality of leader, employee, and organizational values (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013; Sherman, Kennedy, Woodard, & McComb, 2012).

LMX and Traditional Leadership Paradigms

The LMX theory differs from traditional leadership theories (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The core concept of the LMX is that leaders form unique relationships with individual members within a team, group, or department (Liden & Graen, 1980). Traditional leadership theorists argued that relationships formed between leader and individual members are of the same quality

(Bass & Bass, 2009; Carter et al., 2013). Leadership is transactional in that collective performance is measured by governing rewards and behaviors (Breevaart et al., 2014). Kwak (2012) proposed that leaders' charismatic behaviors positively influence followers' beliefs toward organizational goals and initiatives. Leaders' behaviors embody energetic methods to increase employee enthusiasm needed to push organizational change (Bligh & Kohles, 2012; Weber & Moore, 2014). Although leaders provide a core function, employee diversity in age, ethnicity, and gender determine the effectiveness of traditional leadership views of homogeneous organizational groups (Graen, 2003; Duncan & Herrera, 2014).

According to Petroulas et al. (2010), organizations are heterogeneous, whereby, leaders' view employees as individuals with diverse qualities and characteristics. Differences found in organizational groups impact leader effectiveness (Espinoza & Schwarzbart, 2015; Jonsen, Tatli, Özbilgin, & Bell, 2013). Generational characteristics contribute to organizational changes within the communications and tact of hierarchical structures (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015). Researchers' suggested that heterogeneous groups may require different methods and resources to meet performance demands (Holt, Marques, & Way, 2012; Zheng & Wang, 2012). In heterogeneous organizations skills and social assessments of both leader and employee, assist with developing relationships to meet external and organizational changes (Cummings et al., 2013, Gooty, Serban, Thomas, Gavin, & Yammarino, 2012).

LMX Theory and Development of the Interview Questions

The LMX theory provides the basis for the development of the interview questions. The interview question constructed for this study required Millennials to explore working experiences with leadership to interpret and report emerging themes that describe the essence of

leader-to-Millennial relationship development. These experiences include social exchanges that occur within leader task delegation and role development practices (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013; Imran & Fatima, 2013). Participant responses towards questions regarding leader social exchanges provide a comprehensive interpretation of high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships.

The leader-to-employee relationship incorporate tools needed to influence social behaviors that occur as a result of diversity (Graen, 2003). The seminal theorists suggested that diversity within in age, ethnicity, values, and attitudes are essential elements that stimulate social change (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The differences in work values between generations are needed to challenge old paradigms no longer useful within the advancement of social organizations (Mannheim, 1952). The evaluation of leader-to-Millennial exchanges may minimize misconception of generational relational influences on social change. Generational influences guide the establishment of leader-to-employee relations, whereby leaders assist with the development of younger cohorts' professional growth to facilitate the transition and development of positive organizational change (Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015; Stephenson, 2014).

Millennial generational characteristics may prompt change within leadership systems (Maier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, & Bradford, 2015; Wok & Hashim, 2013). Researchers' suggested that Millennial distinctive work behaviors cause conflicts within the socialization and performance of hierarchical structures (Coulter & Faulkner, 2014; Helyer & Lee, 2012; Twenge, 2007). Explorations of leader-to-Millennial relationships remain hermetic in the performance evaluations of leadership practices that implement organizational change initiatives. Gathering a

rich and thick description of leader-to-Millennial exchange in both task delegation and role development practices supplement current applications used to cultivate young professionals. The LMX theory provides a model for exploring Millennial experiences to understand the cohort's perception of high-quality relationship development.

Nature of Study

Comprehension of Millennial perceptions within the development of leader-to-employee relationships consists of shared beliefs and experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014). Emerging themes within the exploration and interpretation of lived experiences provide meaning and efficacy of social behaviors within relationship development. Although quantitative methods draw upon statistical basis for understanding performance, information evaluate a defined hypothetical structure (Yilmaz, 2013). Quantitative measures interfere with the comprehension of the research phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Maxwell, 2012). Through qualitative exploration of Millennial experiences within their natural setting, information retrieved provides a detailed description of participant responses. The data support a conceptual understanding of leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

The interpretative phenomenological design contains steps needed to permit an authentic exchange between researcher and participant, to explore lived experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The interpretative phenomenological design was selected and appropriate in that it allowed intensive discussions on the essence of the leader-to-employee relational experience (Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). As defined by seminal theorists of the phenomenological approach, experiences are a collection of perceptions, social activities, upbringing, values, imaginations, and emotions (Husserl, 2002; Van Manen, 2014).

These components may provide an illustration of participant beliefs that aid in the conceptualization of worldviews (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2014). In chapter 4, research evaluations of purposeful samples retrieved from Millennial participants revealed the essence of the leader-to-Millennial relationship phenomenon.

The collection of purposeful samples required a data collection strategy (Patton, 2002). According to Vagel (2014), efficient data collection includes interviews conducted within the participants' natural setting. Small sample sizes within qualitative research are typical within the representation of information-rich cases (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Patton confirmed that documented guidelines for determining the amount of participants for evaluations are unfounded in that the essence of qualitative research is explorative. Qualitative research methodologist suggested that the population size range from 6 to 25 participants (Mason, 2010). I retrieved purposeful samples from 20 Millennial participants to meet qualitative guidelines and specifications (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Maxwell, 2012).

The selection of participants for the qualitative research sample is paramount to research inquiry. The participant sample was sufficient, in that Millennial employees are of current concern within management studies (Tulgan, 2011; Twenge et al., 2010). The consensus view seems to be that; Millennial communication style may influence relationship development (Murray, 2011; Rodriquez & Rodriguez, 2015). Researchers' recommendations for further investigation within leader-to-Millennial relationship development suggest that social attributes may provide information to enable positive change within leadership systems (Chou, 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

The Millennial sample population consists of individuals ages 22 to 33. Evaluation of leader-to-employee relationships includes the assessment of social exchanges between participants and leadership (Haga, Graen, & Dansereu, 1974). According to Graen (2003), relationship development occurs upon immediate interaction and continues as leaders and members engage over time. Based on the information provided, participants selected for the study had a minimum of one-year work experience with leaders and were active in the relationship development process.

The interview process is an effective method to collect, evaluate and interpret participant responses (Seidman, 2013). I began with face-to-face interviews. The interview contained structured open-ended questions pertaining to the leader-to-Millennial employee relationship (Bernard, 2013; Vagel, 2014). Audio recordings produced data for transcriptions and analysis of participant responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data analysis strategy included methods needed to harness a tacit understanding of the participants experience to reveal emerging themes for interpretation (Maxwell, 2012; Van Manen, 2014).

Data transcription occurred after participant interviews. Next, I implemented a six-step process for data analysis and interpretation of participant data (Klenke, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). The steps are (a) member checking, (b) bracketing and reduction, (c) delineating units of meaning, (d) horizontalization, (e) summation of individual interviews, and (f) interpretation of themes and report of participants' shared experience. Inspired by seminal authors Moustakas (1994) and Hcyner (1999), Klenke's analytical approach assisted with effective reporting of Millennial experiences. A line-by-line evaluative method facilitated a reflective and concise description of participant's experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Implementation of a reflective

system enabled data analysis of participant responses (Moustakas, 1994). Chapter 3 will provide a clear and concise discussion of the methodological approach to (a) participant selection, (b) recruitment, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, and (e) data management processes within this interpretative phenomenological approach of research inquiry. Chapter 4 will provide a corollary of data sampling and analysis efforts.

Assumptions

Research exploration of Millennial participants' experiences within leader-to-employee relationship may provide a plethora of components that influence data collection and analysis. For the purposes of this study, the assumptions are (a) Millennials have developed effective relationships with leaders, (b) leaders within the leader-to-Millennial relationship are members of older generational cohorts, (c) the organization has assisted with providing leadership with the resources to assist with the development of leader-to-employee relationships, (d) the size of the organization does not influence the development of leader-to-employee relationships. The size of the organization is of particular importance to effective relationship development and allocation of resources (Sung & Choi, 2014).

Organizational size may influence leader-to-Millennial social exchanges. Small businesses incorporate decentralized structures in which upper executive officers communicate and delegate tasks to management and subordinates (Cross & Funk, 2015; Salim & Sulaiman, 2011). Millennials employed within smaller organizations may have access to owners, executives, department managers, and co-workers within the organizational social system (Stam, Arzlanian & Elfring, 2014).

Large organizations have greater distance between management levels, with increased populated departments, and groups (Merat & Bo, 2013). The authors proposed that these characteristics influence leaders' span of control, whereby employees may lack effective social exchanges needed for job performance. Size of organizations may provide the guidelines for developing future research studies. The assumptions identified present the basis for drawing purposeful samples for qualitative evaluation.

Limitations

The LMX theory incorporates both leader and employee social behaviors (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The sole evaluation of Millennial employees' perceptions of relationship development is a limitation within the comprehension of LMX performance. I did not attempt to assess leader-to-Millennial exchange performance. The LMX theory is a conceptual framework needed to interpret Millennial experiences within leader-to-employee relationship development. The employee perspective provided clarity regarding leader-to-member relationship development (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Kauppila, 2015). Leaders have a multidimensional overview of relationship development that may marginalize employee needs and expectations (Duncan & Herrera, 2014; Olsson, Hemlin, & Pousett, 2012). A qualitative report of Millennial employee experiences supported the purposeful exploration and interpretation of leader-to-employee relationship development.

According to Patton (2002), personal and professional experience is a limitation. Patton affirmed that personal and professional experiences qualify the researcher's attitudes toward the participant. Attitudes developed through experiences may hinder effective data collection and analysis. Developing methods to mitigate research limits is useful within qualitative method and

design (Maxwell, 2012). Vagel (2014) proposed that bracketing and member checking will counteract activities that limit effective interpretation of participant experiences. Bracketing assisted with suspending personal and professional knowledge of Millennials in the workplace (Bernard, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Journaling throughout the research process allowed the bracketing of bias thoughts pertaining to participant's experiences (Van Manen, 2014). The process was persistent and enabled an authentic narrative of participants' experiences through mindful activities that minimize bias and misinterpretations (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2015).

Member checking of transcribed interviews ensures the authenticity of participants' data for analysis (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Thomas & Maglivy, 2011). Participants' review of transcribed interview data validates the responses and terminologies used to describe their experience (Bevan, 2010; Tracy, 2010). These activities increase creditability within data analysis and reporting (Seidman, 2013). In Chapter 3, I will define the role of the researcher, ethical intentions toward authentic participant representation, and transferability of qualitative methods. Chapter 4 will evaluate the sample collection and analysis activities that allowed the authentic representation of Millennial experiences within leader-to-employee relationship development.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations of the study include information on relevant components that stimulate the demand for examining Millennials' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development. The exploration of Millennials' experiences contributes to leadership understanding of concepts and exchanges that may influence relationship quality. Examination of

Millennial work values and attitudes toward job satisfaction introduce organizational resources needed for positive social change (Choi, Kwon, & Kim, 2013; Haeger & Lingham, 2013; Wok & Hashim, 2013). Although organizational resources assist with managing Millennials, leader-to-employee relationship development remains obscure within the analysis and performance of multigenerational organizations. Interpretative reports identify themes to broaden leaders' perspectives, needed for positive social change within organizational learning and socialization of young workforce members.

The boundaries of the study appear within the selection of Millennial participants as opposed to the evaluation of both leader and Millennial employee. Evaluation of both leader and member reports may generate a thorough understanding of relationship performance (Hu & Liden, 2013; Imran & Fatima, 2013). The goal of this study was to understand and interpret the Millennials' perspective, to broaden leadership relational knowledge. The boundaries of the study described, influence the implementation of future quantitative and qualitative methods essential for knowledge acquirement.

Significance of Study

The significance of this qualitative phenomenological study is that it established the foundation for developing resources for positive social change within learning and retention of Millennial employees. Effective multigenerational organizations inspire knowledge transfer and sharing to meet internal and external demands (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Heyler & Lee, 2012; Hillman, 2014). Exchanges that occur between generational cohorts produce relationships to assist with learning and social advancement of organizational cultures (Mannheim, 1952; Zemeke et al., 2013). Kaifi et al. (2012) proposed that generations working collectively with diverse

perspectives on workplace values stimulate social change within organizations. Cooperative working relationships between generations provide mutual benefits to the organization, leaders, and employees (Chi, Maier & Gursoy, 2013; Volmer et al., 2012). Despite generational characterizations and conflicts, leadership practices should embrace generational diversity as a vital component within effective organizational systems (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Colquitt et al., 2013; Komives & Wagner, 2012).

According to Mannheim (1952), in order for positive social change to occur, generations must interact, share, and assess information. The process enables the development of new values and principles to meet social advancements (Kemmelmeier & Kühnen, 2012; Sorokin, 1959). Providing an organizational environment to encourage generational social change is essential to effective leadership systems (Gursoy et al., 2013; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Ongoing evaluations of Millennial work values encourage the development of multigenerational leadership strategies (Abaffy & Rubin, 2011; Chou, 2012; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Employee challenges impact organizational social growth and leadership performance (Chou, 2012; Koweske, Rasch, Wiley, 2010; Thompson, 2012). On the basis of the literature currently available, it seems fair to suggest that the newest working members challenge traditional leadership standards (Balda & Mora, 2011; Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Dannar, 2013).

Summary

Organizational changes that occur from generational diversity contribute to the inquisition and analysis of social exchanges with leadership systems (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Heng & Yazdanifard, 2013). In Chapter 1, I identified the importance of generational influence on organizational social change. The presentation of current and seminal research assisted with

defining generational characterizations needed to understand current concerns toward Millennial work values and social behaviors (Chi et al., 2013; Hillman, 2014; Mannheim, 1952). Researchers suggested that distinctions influence social behaviors and contribute to the development of innovative leadership practices (Gilbert, 2011; Schyns, Tymon, Keifer, Kerschreiter, 2013). The evaluation of literature supported the need for further investigation of leader-to-Millennial relationship development (Chaudhauri & Gosh; Graen & Grace, 2015). Chou (2012) proposed that alternative leadership system might assist with managing Millennials.

According to Twenge (2007), Millennials' psychological characteristics influence their demands for frequent and coherent organizational engagements. Leadership communications of job-related tasks help Millennial learning and organizational development (Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Haeger & Lingham, 2013). Minimal research is found that interprets the Millennial perspective toward leader-to-employee communications. Misconceptions may occur within leadership system practices and policies that lack the knowledge and resources to address the current organizational environment (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Chi et al., 2013). Organizational awareness of Millennial perceptions will provide knowledge for leadership system applications and resources. The literature review in Chapter 2 is an assessment of seminal and current literature of the Millennial generation's socialization within organizational relationship development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Millennial work relations aid in organizational and social development. The establishment of work relationships to exchange knowledge and values enables organizations to implement strategies to meet socioeconomic challenges (Agarwal, 2015; Roodin & Mendelson, 2013). The evaluation of literature identified researchers' concerns regarding Millennial socialization as it relates to the development of effective organizational relationships (Balda & Mora, 2011; Gerhardt, 2014). The general organizational problem is managements' inability to increase Millennial retention (Farell & Hurt, 2014; Tulgan, 2011). According to Graen and Schiemann (2013), as the Millennial generation acquire professional roles, changes within traditional social systems must occur. These social changes within organizational systems create an impending dilemma within the availability of resources needed to retain and educate Millennial employees (Hadar, 2013; Kuyken, 2012; Starks, 2013).

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study is to explore Millennial employees' experiences within leader to millennial relationship development. The management of three generations: Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial working together within the current workforce contribute to the reevaluation of effective leadership systems to meet diverse social and environmental changes (Heyler & Lee, 2012; Pan et al., 2012). Due to lack of effective social interactions, organizations face significant losses within the communication of knowledge and information required to meet internal and external demands (Higo & Khan, 2015; Sabri, Haron, Jamil, & Ibrahim, 2014). Older employees who may occupy senior level positions have increased knowledge and experience need for Millennial organizational development (DeFranco & Schmidgall, 2014). Generational perceptions and

stereotypes deter effective knowledge sharing needed for organizational learning and retention (Chi et al., 2013; Hines & Carbone, 2013; North & Fiske, 2015).

Uncertainties about Millennial employees' work skills and values exist and dissuade leader affiliative behaviors (Arnett, 2013; Ng et al., 2012). Todd (2014) identified that inconsistencies exist between senior management's expectations and actual Millennial performance. Researchers' determined that Millennials face dilemmas in the comprehension of tasks delegated, as well as lack of tacit knowledge that is necessary to meet role demands (Baker, 2013; Sabri et al., 2014). Tacit knowledge is a form of social discernment that aid in personal and professional development (Park, Vertinsky, & Becerra, 2015). Management reports have shown that researchers perceive leaders as withholding knowledge due to generational stereotypes and misconceptions of work roles and communications (Heng & Yazdanifard, 2013; Martin & Gentry, 2011; Merriweather & Morgan, 2013). The lack of sufficient social exchanges within organizations results in (a) conflict, (b) decreased job satisfaction, (c) uncertainty, and (d) lack of commitment (Loi, Chan, & Lam, 2014; Standifer, Lester, Schultz, & Windsor, 2013; Zhou & Shi, 2014). The emanation of inadequate relational exchanges disrupt the development of social systems needed for organizations to navigate internal and external challenges (Osman, & Nahar, 2015; Pan et al., 2012).

First, I will describe the literature search strategies including (a) databases searched, (b) identification of key terms, and (c) iterative searches. Next, the theoretical framework is described including (a) LMX elements, (b) relationship development, and (c) significance of LMX theory. I will include an examination and synthesis of research literature pertinent to current perceptions of Millennials within organizations. The gap in research section will contain

the vacancies that exist within the comprehension of leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Finally, I provide a summary of the literature on leader-to-Millennial relationship development within multigenerational leadership systems.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy is the germane approach implemented to retrieve information regarding research theory and leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The exploration and selection of relevant information began with searches through several databases for peer-reviewed articles, books, and dissertations. These databases included the following: *ABI/Inform, Business Source Complete, Ebscohost, PsychInfo, Sage Publications, and Science Direct.* Peer-reviewed literature encompassed the collaboration of management studies within the scope of leadership, Millennial work values, and LMX theory.

Millennials are beginning to emerge into the workplace which may explain the lack of empirical evaluation of work relational performance within management studies (Deery & Leo, 2015; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Murray, 2011). The literature search contained exhaustive efforts to retrieve information on the Millennial generation's work values, organizational relationships, and LMX theory. The literature search provided a modest selection of management studies and trade articles that refer to Millennial social behaviors within organizational systems. Results were produced using the appropriate keywords and phrases exploring generational characterizations within management, with specific identifiers to provide information regarding the Millennial cohort.

I used the following keywords and phrases: *generation, generational differences, Millennials, and Millennial socialization*. For the library database search on the LMX, the

following keywords and phrases were used: *dyadic leadership, dyadic relationship, leader-to-member exchange theory, LMX theory, role theory, social exchange relationship, and vertical dyad linkage theory*. Literature evaluation of the exchange theory inspired further exploration into the perceptions and behavior of effective leader-to-employee relationships. Keywords used within the preliminary research of the LMX theory provided several additional key terms for the conceptual development of this research, as follows: *psychological contract, reciprocity, trust, and employee role development*. Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee directed literature searches on topics involving the cohort's influence on work relationship performance. Thus, phrases used are as follows: *Millennial and relationship development, Millennials and work attitudes, leader perceptions and Millennials, multigenerational relationship development, and Millennial influence on organizational change*.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation in qualitative research provides a concept or theory as a basis for further investigation (Vagel, 2014). The theoretical framework of research study offers a description of the researcher's cognitive approach (Maxwell, 2012). The LMX theory supports the leader-to-Millennial conceptual schematic. The social exchanges that occur between leader and employee influence the quality of relationship development within the workplace (Ertürk & Vurgun; 2015; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Zhou & Shi, 2014). Seminal and current research presented in this section contains information regarding the management of theory within the understanding and exploration of the Millennial experience within current leader-to-employee relationships.

Seminal authors of the LMX theory agreed that leaders form different relationships with individual members within an organizational group (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980). The researchers suggested that leaders delegate responsibilities based on member skill sets and work attitudes (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Haga et al., 1974). Leaders develop reciprocal relationships with employees who exhibit reliable and trustworthy behaviors (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013; Waters, Bortree, & Tindall, 2013). These factors may also contribute to varying levels of employee responsibilities.

More recently, researchers have found that leaders' perceptions of employee limitations minimize meaningful role delegation practices (Jones & Shah, 2015; Sue-Chan, Au, & Hackett, 2012). As a result, employees with minimal responsibilities may lack the social interactions needed to acquire and retain work knowledge (Hau, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2013; Zhang et al., 2012). The roles formed within the leader-to-employee relationship are defined within the socialization process and provide the basis for organizational learning (Jokisaari, 2013; Madlock & Chory, 2013). The following is the evaluation of the LMX exchange (a) elements, (b) relationship development, and (c) significance of the theory; to present a literature based evaluation of the conceptual application and rationale.

The Roles of LMX Elements

According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), the LMX elements include leader, employee, and the exchange platform. LMX elements interlock and react to enable leader decision-making and collective goal achievement (Humborstad & Kuvas, 2013; Kim & Schachter, 2013). LMX activities aid in the performance of hierarchical structures. The activities that occur within the exchanges between leader and member reinforce inter-office attitudes and affiliative behaviors

(Osman & Nahar, 2015 ; Zhou & Shi, 2014). For this reason, a thorough evaluation of the LMX

elements provides a fundamental understanding of roles and interactions that may occur within

leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

  Leader element. Leaders are organizational representatives and serve as role models and

agents of change (Bass & Bass, 2009; Grandia, 2015). Leadership behaviors assist with the

development of organizational expectations that influence job performance (Ertürk & Vurgun,

2015; Imran & Fatima, 2013). Hocine & Zhang (2014) affirmed that leaders' provide motivation,

guidance, and resources that build member morale required to complete organizational

initiatives. Top, Akdere, Tarcan (2015) reported leaders' impact member job satisfaction and

commitment. Researchers' show that leadership quality and support, positively influenced

employee retention and organizational performance (Carter et al., 2013; Gkorezis, 2015; Sut,

Christina & Dysvik, 2014). Leaders initiate role making and relationship development through a

series of exchanges that create shared organizational values (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995;

Johnson, 2014). Efficient social exchanges aid in leader-to-member relationship development

(Biao & Shuping, 2014; Jokisarri, 2013; Kelley & Bisel, 2014).

  Leaders' perceptions of member attitudinal similarity influence the exchange quality and

contribute to efficient social exchanges (Jackson & Johnson, 2012; Volmer, Niessen, Spurk,

Linz, & Abele, 2011; Zhang et al., 2012). According to Phillips and Bedeian (1994), leader

interpersonal requirements guide in-group member selection. The authors proposed that leaders

may choose members with similar goals. Experienced leaders may select members who possess

qualities and skills that complement their leadership style (Mead & Maner, 2012; Zhang, Wang,

Shi, 2012). Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching (2015) further explain that leaders form different

relationships with members based on personality and performance. Employee agreeableness supports role development and job satisfaction, in that these positive behaviors facilitate leaders' perceptions and decision-making (Gürkan & Aktaş, 2014; Imran & Fatima, 2013).

Member element. Although leadership plays a critical role in the development of high performing relationships, members assume equal responsibility within the quality of the dyadic exchanges (Kim & Schachter, 2015; Tee, Ashkanasy, & Paulsen, 2013; Zhang et al., 2012). Member receptivity, agreeableness, and high-quality performance contribute to the exchange process (Imran & Fatima, 2013; Liang-Chieh & Wen-Ching, 2015). These member behaviors positively influence leaders' attitudes (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Volmer et al., 2011;). Upward influence is a term used to describe the effect members have leadership behaviors (Dockery &Steiner,1990; Kassing & Kava, 2013). Upward influence occurs when members motivate leaders through positive feedback, personality characteristics, and complementary skills (Chaturvedi & Srivastava, 2014; Luu; 2012; Steizel & Rimbau-Gilabert, 2013). As a result, leaders increase members' job autonomy (Buch, Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Nerstad, 2014; Hocine & Zhang, 2014; Volmer et al., 2012).

Member performance enforces leader's decision-making (Tee et al., 2013; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Carsten, 2014). The quality and rate in which member responds and execute tasks influence leadership trust in the delegation of future roles (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993; Shantz, Alfes, Truss, & Soane, 2013). Members provide feedback through verbal and performance measures that identify organizational triumphs and stressors (Chaturvedi & Srivastava, 2014; Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2014). The interactions between leader and member

qualify communication and development of inter-office roles that contribute to organizational goal achievement (Johnson, 2014; Madlock & Chory, 2013; Richards & Hackett, 2012).

Exchange element. The exchange element incorporates several dimensions that contribute to effective hierarchical structures (Sheer, 2014; Susskind, Odom-Reed, & Viccari, 2011). Susskind et al. determined that these dimensions include (a) leader and member interactions, (b) leader expectations toward employee, (c) employee expectation towards leader, (d) employee satisfaction, and (e) organizational resources. Leader-to-member interactions and expectations influence role development (Shantz et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2012). As leaders become familiar with employee skills and values they form trustworthy relationships (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013; Liden & Graen, 1980). Within these types of relationships, employees receive greater responsibility and learning opportunities (Kelley, Bisel, 2014; Schilke & Cook, 2013; Sue-chan et al., 2012). Researchers proposed that members experience greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Loi et al., 2014; Wang, Fang, Qureshi, & Janssen, 2015).

Leader-to-member exchanges form alliances needed for the sharing and collaboration of knowledge and skills (Sheer, 2014; Zhang et al., 2012). The exchanges that occur from the time of initial interaction throughout member tenure contribute to the alignment of relationship goals (Conway & Shapiro, 2012; Dockery & Steiner, 1990). Consistent conversations and engagement practices allow leader and member to access skills and resources to meet organizational demands (Al-Jubari, 2014; Alfes, Shantz, Truss, & Soane, 2012; Mohd Soieb, Othman, & D'Silva, 2013). Frequent social interactions may strengthen high-quality relationship development.

LMX and Relationship Development

   The activities between leader and member create and maintain organizational inter-

dependence within a three stage process, whereby mutual trust and reciprocity is formed (Caimo

& Lomi, 2014; Hau et al., 2013). Figure 2 is a visual example I constructed for the purpose of

this study to provide a conceptual understanding of the relationship development process. The

process includes (a) role-making, (b) role-taking, and (c) role-routinization (Dienesch & Liden,

1986; Graen, 2003; Scandura & Graen, 1984).

Task Delegation

Leader

Role-maker

Member

Role-taker

Performance
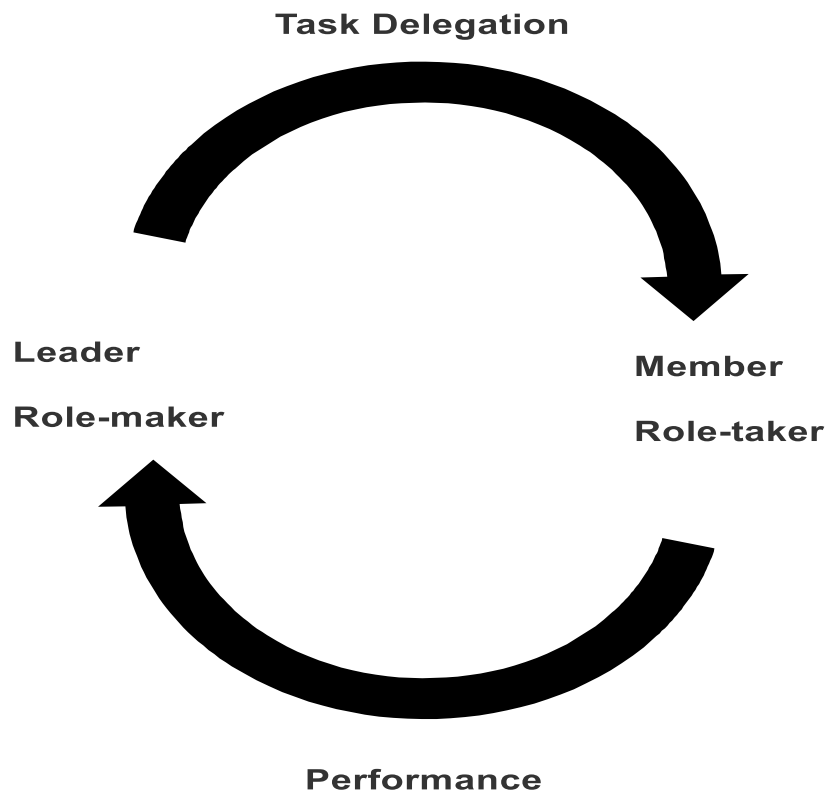
Figure 2. LMX and relationship development. The leader-to-member relationship development
process includes the leader as the role maker and member as the role taker (Dienesch & Liden,
1986; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Shantz et al., 2013). The development process is a system of
events, which depending on leader task delegation and member performance; contribute to the
development of future roles and advancement. These leader-to-member activities assist with
relationship quality (Chaudry & Tekleab, 2013).

Role-making. Researchers have identified the role-making process as a series of continual performance evaluations (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Johnson, 2014). In this stage, leaders delegate responsibilities to assess member attitudes and skills. These performance measures affect the delegation of future tasks and career advancement (Hu & Liden, 2013; Michael, 2014). If a member fails to execute tasks, the leader may cease to extend challenging roles or responsibilities (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013; Imran & Fatima, 2013; Sue-Chan et al., 2012). Leaders' decision-making practices minimize the risk of giving tasks to members who lack the skills for effective execution (Gürkan & Aktaş, 2014; Hinojosa et al., 2014).

Role-taking. The second stage of relationship development occurs during the initial interaction between leader and member (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Zhang et al., 2012). In this stage, member ability, affect, and feedback increase leader trust needed for efficient decision-making and role development (Sue-Chan et al., 2012). Shantz et al. (2013) proposed that member engagement within role-taking mediate job satisfaction and commitment. During this period, leaders measure member skills and initiative behaviors for future roles. As a result, leaders build trust within member role negotiations (Kelley & Bisel, 2014; Schilke & Cook, 2013).

Role routinization. The third stage of relationship development includes the establishment of roles and guidelines that assist with the development of reciprocal behaviors and mutual goal achievement (Scandura & Graen, 1984). The formation of roles and guidelines are routines created during successful role making and taking practices. The social exchange between leader and member becomes a core component within the maintenance of effective routine behaviors (Chaudry & Tekleab, 2013; Madlock & Chory, 2014). Leaders' communications of tasks, values, and performance measurements provide a pivotal function in

establishing organizational habits (Gkorezis et al., 2015; Jian & Dalisay, 2015; Michael, 2014). Researchers seem to validate the view that engagement practices between leader and member stimulate interdependence and shared organizational values (Al-Jubari, 2014; Ozcelik, 2015; Saunders & Tiwari, 2014).

Significance of the LMX Theory

The research method and design benefits from the use of the LMX theory based on the premise, that socialization is critical within the development of high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships. Researchers identified the types of exchanges that influence relationship development and the relevance of leader-to-member exchanges within efficient organizational social systems (Chaudry & Tekleab, 2013; Shantz et al., 2013). The use of the LMX theory provides a conceptual structure to guide data collection and analysis of Millennial employee responses to questions that encompass (a) relationship development, (b) role development practices, (c) task delegation practices, and (d) relationship quality. The information retrieved from the interpretation and analysis of Millennial employee experiences help advance evaluations of high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

Literature Review of Millennials in Organizations

The following evaluation of current research will assist with understanding current perceptions of Millennials within the workplace that may control the quality of leadership systems. The information contains the evaluation of Millennials within management literature as it pertains to (a) traditional hierarchical structures, (b) communications and social skills, (c) learning and knowledge acquirement, (d) leadership preferences, and (e) organizational commitment.

Millennials and Traditional Hierarchical Structures

Leader perceptions of Millennial behaviors toward relationship development within hierarchical structures have resulted in a lack of leader affiliative behaviors in leadership systems (Corgnet, Gonzalez, & Mateo, 2015; Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Wok & Hashim, 2013). Leader affiliative behaviors are receptive to new ideas and shared control, whereby leaders create an environment to enhance communications for active collaboration of skills and knowledge (Ganon, Vough, & Nickerson, 2012; Kaur, 2013). The lack of leader affiliative practices may stem from generational perceptions (North & Fiske, 2015; Schullery, 2013; Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2014). Millennial social practices are perceived as leadership system deterrents (Hilman, 2014; Teclaw et al., 2014).

Millennials are blind to hierarchical norms that limit their ability to obtain organizational knowledge (Brown, Thomas, & Bosselman, 2015; Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015). Hershatter and Epstein (2010) affirmed that Millennials will gain information from peers and managers outside of their department or group. Although the generational cohort exudes confidence within the gathering and processing of information, leaders often perceive this behavior as arrogant and contradictory to high-performing leadership systems (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2014 ; Haeger & Lingham, 2013). Leader negative perceptions hinder social exchange quality (Farr-Wharton, Brunetto, & Shacklock, 2012; Gursoy et al., 2013). The absence of high-quality social exchanges between leader and Millennial employee may have a direct impact on knowledge sharing required for organizational learning and retention (Chou, 2012; Graen & Grace, 2015; Sabri et al., 2014).

Millennial behaviors toward traditional leader exchanges may affect the quality of leader-to-employee relationship development (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Uelmen, 2013). A decrease of fluent social exchanges regarding work roles and values contravene knowledge acquirement and professional development (Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Hadar, 2013). Hesitant social activities stagnate leader and management systems that may result in ineffective organizational change practices and economic loss (Cummings et al., 2013; Eversole et al., 2014). Millennial employees may experience difficulty in building active social networks to acquire organizational knowledge. Chou (2012) proposed that Millennials are effective within teams and possess the necessary qualities for building productive reciprocal relations. These contrasting arguments stimulate the exploration of Millennial employee experiences within professional relationships with leaders to understand the concepts and practices needed to advance multi-generational leadership systems.

Millennial work attitudes and generational characteristics prompt organizational social changes within traditional hierarchical structures (Gursoy et al., 2013; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Holt et al., 2012). Top-down communications of information and task delegation are standard methods of these types of organizational structures (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Shared information, according to organizational protocol, identifies upper managers as the primary source of information filtration for individual and collective performance (Arshad et al., 2014; Flink, 2015; Li, Shang, Liu, Xi, 2014). The traditional hierarchical structure provides the guidelines needed for cultural development and knowledge sharing (Bass & Bass, 2009; Day, 2014; Tams, 2013). The comprehension of Millennials' perceptions toward these work

environments influences the direction and performance of human resource management (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Graybill, 2014).

In-depth analysis of Millennials' work values identified discrepant cases and contexts regarding traditional hierarchical structures. Researchers' proposed that Millennials lack tolerance within traditional hierarchical structures (Haeger & Lingham, 2013; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). Chou (2012) affirmed that Millennials work best in an environment that allows flexibility within working conditions that promote knowledge sharing; whereby strict hierarchical guidelines may minimize task effectiveness. Trees (2015) determined that Millennials performed adequately within team environments with frequent feedback from leadership. Variations in researchers' proposals contribute to the following literature evaluation of Millennial's behaviors within leader-to-employee social exchanges.

Millennial employees' expectations may influence change within hierarchical system practices. Balda and Mora (2011) proposed that Millennial respond adversely to power distance that limit the exchange of information. The researchers identified that the cohort prefers close bidirectional communications that reinforce learning and knowledge sharing. In this type of structure, leaders and employees work together, interchanging ideas to solve work-related dilemmas (Chou, 2012; Kodatt, 2009; Lam, Xu, & Chan, 2015). Millennial communications preferences indicate that the cohort may require a distinct management structure. Pavett (2012) suggested that Millennials are supportive of organizations that implement executive controls. Kuhl (2014) explained that Millennials expect real-time feedback, job guidelines, and performance measures for career development.

According to Thompson and Gregory (2012), Millennials' values toward the quality of leader collaborative exchanges may contribute to effective hierarchical practices. Millennials perceive collaborative exchanges as a means to gain experience and tacit knowledge (Bremer, Andersson, & Carlsson, 2013; Ryan & O'Connor, 2013). Gaining experience assists with career development in that acquiring organizational knowledge increases marketability (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2014; O'Connor, 2015). Millennials show increased job satisfactions within organizations with increased learning opportunities found in mentoring and training resources (Kaifi et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Millennials learn and develop organizational skills from leadership (Gosh, 2014; Samadi et al., 2015). Social exchanges between leader and member enable knowledge sharing and decision-making needed for organizational development (Hadar, 2013; Jiang & Liu, 2015; Park & Gursoy, 2012). Researchers' affirmed that Millennials require distinct leadership practices for effective individual and collective performance (Graen & Grace, 2015; Ng et al., 2012; Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Quantitative analysis of generational differences within leadership preferences identified minor dissimilarities (Koweske et al., 2010). Interpretation of Millennials' shared experiences broaden management knowledge within leader-to-employee social exchanges that enable organizational learning and development.

Millennials' Communication and Socialization Skills

The socialization of Millennials within organizations impact management systems (Chou, 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011). Millennials' communications behaviors influence change within leadership systems (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Periodic meetings and discussions regarding work direction and performance motivate and retain young

professionals (Hays, 2014; Ng et al., 2012). The communications approach differs from traditional methods that provide performance reviews on a monthly, semi-annual or annual basis (Beane-Katner, 2014; Westerman et al., 2012). Perceptions of differing communications patterns contribute to researchers' beliefs that organizational change is needed within the advancement of multigenerational leadership systems (Fenzel, 2013; Hendricks & Cope, 2013).

Leaders must provide a platform for effective communication of organizational goals (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011; Michael, 2014). Hershatter and Epstein (2010) evaluation of university students identified that Millennials require communication of deadlines and systematic methods for academic goal achievements. The authors reported that professors received negative performance reviews from students due to lack of communications and ineffective academic measurements. Tulgan (2011) and Marcinkus (2012) identified that Millennials needed consistent leadership exchanges. Their reports revealed that these routine activities supported learning and commitment behaviors. Forecasts of an imminent change in the demands of emerging employees, support further evaluation of Millennials' perceptions towards leader-to-employee communications within the workplace.

Millennials' Learning and Knowledge Acquirement

Millennials gain and process information differently in comparison to older generations due to the rapid increase of technological resources available in the home, academic, and work environment (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Murray, 2011). Millennial dependence on computer sources and social networks contribute to their methods of knowledge acquirement (Balda & Mora, 2011; Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013; Sinha & Rauscher, 2014). Palfrey and Gasser (2008) proposed that the Millennials' learning method incorporates three stages of knowledge

processing: (a) gazing, trawling thought large groups of information; (b) deep diving, examination within specific areas of interests that allows the investigation of content; and (c) feedback loop, sharing information gathered with personal and professional peers. Understanding Millennial knowledge processing may help with research assessments and analysis of participant shared experiences, in that organizational learning affects both social and work performance (Hadar, 2013; Sung & Choi, 2014).

According to Balda and Mora (2011) and Ghosh (2014), knowledge is relational. The amount shared, processed, and transformed is a reflection of the authorization of social interactive practices. The current challenge faced by organizations is developing interrelationships to harness Millennials' skills and attributes (Eversole et al., 2012; Holt et al., 2012; Petroulas et al., 2010). Social interactive practices ensure that organizational values are absorbed to execute competitive demands (Hillman, 2014; Karatepe, 2013). Researchers affirmed that leaders assist with Millennial employee learning through constructive organizational social experiences (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Dugan, Bohle, Woelker, & Cooney, 2014). Evaluation of Millennials' social experiences may contribute to organizational learning. Researchers suggested that engaging in daily activities and challenges, increases knowledge and role development (Bremer et al., 2013; Kempster & Parry, 2014; Thompson, 2013).

Millennials' Leadership Preferences

The Millennial generation provides a core component within current examinations of future leadership practices (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Twenge, 2013). Millennials expect a fluid dispersion of ideas and information that may challenge leadership methods used to share

knowledge (Gerhardt, 2014; Farrell & Hurt, 2014). The incorporation of decentralized methods of knowledge sharing, within a traditional hierarchical structure, result in inter-office conflicts (Carpenter & de Charon, 2014; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Petroulas et al., 2010). Millennials' expectations toward leadership methods can obscure relational effectiveness (Malik & Khera, 2014). Millennial employees' demands for collaborative leadership compromise traditional forms of task delegation and role development practices (Graybill, 2014; Gursoy et al., 2013). Millennials may require guiding leader behaviors (Johnston, 2013). These leadership practices may deter older employees' work performance (Coulter & Faulkner, 2014; Hillman, 2014).

Researchers confirmed that the lack of understanding of generational views of leadership creates conflict (Hershatter & Epstein; 2010; Lyons & Kuron, 2015; Maier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, & Bradford, 2015). Evaluation of generational leadership preferences assists with understanding perceptions of forecast organizational changes. Kodatt (2009) identified a significant difference within leadership preferences of generational cohorts. Manova analysis of six dimensions of leadership across three generations identified that Millennials preferred participative leadership (m=4.82) practices in comparison to Generation X (m=4.56) and Baby Boomers (m=4.42). Participative leadership includes employees within the delegation and decision- making process (Day, 2014). Day defines team orientated leadership as the practices that assist with group performance, whereby leaders delegate a project or task to a group. Group collaborations give members' decision-making power needed for project or task completion (Bass & Bass, 2009; Braun, Peusi, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Payton, 2015).

Millennials value professional relationships that encourage the engagement of ideas and concepts (Gilbert, 2011; Gilley et al., 2015). These values differ from previous generations (Kodatt, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010). Researchers of discerning study reports show that there are minimal differences between generational perceptions of effective leadership practices (Deal, Stawiski, Graves, Gentry, Weber, & Ruderman, 2013; Mencl & Lester, 2014; Kowske et al., 2010). The disquisition of generational differences suggests that further studies may broaden management understanding of Millennials' perceptions of leadership systems. The exploration of Millennials' working relationships provides a framework for future evaluations and measurements of leadership preferences.

Millennials and Retention

The term *job-hopping* is pervasive within current evaluations of Millennials (Case, Guan, & Paris, 2014; Hagel, 2014; McGinnis-Johnson & Ng, 2015). Millennials frequent changes in employment contribute to researchers' perceptions that the cohort lack organizational commitment (Ozcelik, 2015; Thompson & Gregory, 2012; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015). According to Keeter and Taylor (2010), 57% of the Millennial research population will seek new job opportunities in the future. The survey information supports the claim that Millennials are prone to seek a variety of employment opportunities (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Petroulas et al., 2010). As a result, leaders restrain affiliative behaviors needed for high-quality relationship development (Gallicano et al., 2012; Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

While it may seem that Millennials tend to change jobs frequently, Kowske et al. (2010) identified that the cohort have higher levels (p<0.05) of organizational and job satisfaction than Boomer and Generation X. Sanfrey, Hollands, & Gantt (2013) asserted that Millennials work

well in a cohesive and supportive environment that assists with increased commitment attitudes toward their employers. According to Gilbert (2011), organizations must produce methods of building alternative management practices to increase retention. Leadership faces the challenge of implementing change initiatives that will create value-driven relationships to increase Millennial employees' commitment behaviors (Espinoza, 2015; Ozcelik, 2015; Winter & Jackson, 2014).

Researchers identified that Millennial employees' attitudes towards work-life balance and career development, influence commitment behaviors (Ehrhart, Mayer, Ziegert, 2012; Kowske et al., 2010). According to Twenge and Campbell (2008), Millennials increasing demand for work-life balance determine their career choices and guide organizational commitment behaviors. Millennials pursue job opportunities that will allow them to balance both personal and professional endeavors (Gilley et al., 2015; Howe & Strauss, 2009; Zemke et al., 2013). Millennials prefer not to work extended hours to gain organizational recognition (Deery & Jago, 2015). Millennial employee demands have resulted in organizational change initiatives within work cultures (Graen & Grace, 2015; Winter & Jackson, 2015).

Millennials' understanding of task assignments and employers' responsibility toward career advancement increase commitment (Chien & Lin, 2012). Employee job description and performance measures may guide organizational behaviors (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Kuron et al., 2015; Jang & Maghelal, 2015). Leadership practices that engage Millennial employees support the development of high-quality relationships (Chou, 2012; Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015). Lack of leadership management within task and role development,

contribute to absenteeism, employee conflicts, and Millennial turnovers (Gursoy et al., 2013; Park & Gursoy, 2012).

The psychological contract contains the responsibilities of the organization and employees (Chaudry & Tekleab, 2013; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013). Both organizational and member expectations are satisfied and assist with building a synergistic work environment (Chien & Lin, 2012; Kauppila, 2015; Windle & von Treuer, 2014). Ng, Feldman, and Butts (2013) affirmed that the alignment of leader and Millennial employee goals the psychological contract influenced organizational retention. Although the organization provides resources and compensation, leaders are critical to goal achievement (Metcalf & Benn, 2013; Vermeeren, Kuipers, & Steijn, 2014). Leaders serve as the administrator of resources that motivate and guide employees toward meeting contractual demands (Jiang & Liu, 2015).

The initial interaction between leader and employee establish guidelines and expectations within the psychological contract (Osman & Nahar, 2015; Smissen, Schalk, & Freese, 2013). Leader expectations are formed during recruitment and provide the components for employee retention as well as contribute to the development of high-quality leader-to-member exchanges (Chien & Lin, 2012; Zhang et al., 2012). Employees rely on the psychological contract as a basis for developing organizational values and trust that stimulate commitment behaviors (Mead & Manner, 2012; Ng et al., 2013).

Festing and Schafer (2014) suggested that differences within generational understanding of leader-to-employee expectations effect the terms of the psychological contract. Boomer and Generation X expectations contributed to transactional exchanges between leader and employees (Cummings et al., 2013; Kelan, 2014). Amayah and Gedro (2014) proposed that employees'

work performance corresponded with monetary compensation and career advancement. Hard work and long hours showed motivation and commitment to organizational goal achievement (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Young, Sturts, Ross, & Kim, 2013). Boomers, in particular, expected organizational compensation, and career stability in exchange for longevity (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Servert, & Gade, 2012; Howe & Strauss, 2009).

According to Twenge (2007), Millennials' perceptions toward the lack of security within corporate employment practices may contribute to the construction of psychological contracts. Millennials' reaction to corporate layoffs of their parents may influence work values toward organizational commitment (Festings & Schafer, 2014; Lub, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2015). Millennial's professional achievements are not based on tenure. Thompson (2013) identified that the cohort's career goals include finding meaningful work and increasing learning opportunities. Millennials believe that working within a variety of organizations assist with career diversity (Hagel, 2014; Ng et al., 2012). Consistent and informed communications within organizations assist with the alignment of Millennial career and learning expectations. Routine communications minimize leader and employee behaviors that may derail performance of leadership systems and retention efforts (Jian & Dalisay, 2015; Michael, 2014; Malik & Khera, 2014).

The review of management literature revealed that Millennials require more from leadership systems (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Lub et al., 2015). Kaifi et al. (2012) suggested that Millennials demand consistent feedback with managers. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) proposed that members of the cohort process information differently. Leaders within leadership systems, encounter communications conflicts within the delegation of work-related tasks and

organizational practices (Flink, 2015; Jian & Dalisay, 2015). Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development broaden research understanding of practices needed for organizational learning and retention within multigenerational leadership systems.

Gap in Research

I implemented the interpretative phenomenological design to address the gap in the literature, which is the deficit in research understanding of leader-to-Millennial relationship development within effective performance of multigenerational organizations. Current knowledge of Millennials within organizational systems enables meaningful discussions of Millennials impact on organizational change (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Winter & Jackson, 2014). Evaluations of Millennials' characteristics and work values dominate management research (Much et al., 2014; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Howe & Straus, 2009). Leaders of the organizations studied, have started making changes to meet cohort values toward work-life balance and career development (Choi et al., 2013; Ehrhart et al., 2012; Murray, 2011). Researchers have suggested that organizations are gaining a new perspective toward embracing Millennials' professional expectations (Kuhl, 2014; Ogbeide et al., 2013). However, managers have identified conflicts within the cohort's work values that influence organizational learning and retention (Chou, 2012; Graen & Grace, 2015; McMillan, Chen, Richard, & Bhuian, 2012).

Millennials require creative engagement practices to assist with organizational goal alignment (Anantatmula & Shrivastav, 2012; Gilbert, 2011). Hershatter and Epstein (2010) proposed that Millennials demand immediate attention that may deter collective goal achievement. Researchers' evaluation of generational behaviors traits suggested that in comparison to prior generations, Millennials show an increase in self-esteem and narcissist

behaviors (Twenge & Campbell, 2010). Westerman et al. (2012) defined narcissi behaviors as increased sensitivity to professional criticism, inordinately competitive, and self-centered. These behaviors influence Millennials' social and knowledge processing within group and may contribute to communications challenges (Cain, Romanelli, & Smith, 2012; Fenzel, 2013).

Generational differences within workplace values influence the quality of leader-to-employee collective behaviors (Roodin & Mendelson, 2013; Standifer et al., 2013). Twenge and Campbell (2008) identified that the Millennial cohort's system of beliefs may influence the reciprocal exchange that occurs between leader and employee. Researchers identified that generational characteristics have minimal influence on organizational structure and practices (Mencl & Lester, 2014; Koweske et al., 2010; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). A point often overlooked, is that the Millennial employee population is increasing (Graen & Grace, 2015). The Millennial employee population will continue to grow, as the youngest members finish high school, attend college, and enter the workplace (Holt et al., 2012; Kuhl, 2014; Twenge, 2008). For this reason, Millennial generational studies support the claim that the emergence of new work values and behaviors provoke organizational social change (Gallicano et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Winter & Jackson, 2014). These conflicting reports regarding Millennial influences on organizations suggests a gulf within the comprehension of effective leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

Kim and Yang (2013) confirmed that attracting, retaining, and developing Millennial employees incorporate career training and advancement. According to Graen & Schriesman (2013), Millennials lack the social resources needed to make viable work relationships required for organizational development. Millennial retention and knowledge transfer challenge

leadership systems, in that lack of understanding and generational stereotypes contribute to failed policies (Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015;Strawderman, 2014). Although generational characterizations influence management perceptions, researchers asserted that knowledge is needed to understand and develop effective leader-to-Millennial relationships (Findlay & Kowbel, 2013; Samadi et al., 2015). The information retrieved from participant relational experiences within task delegation and role development practices may enable discussions required for creating resources to aid in the learning and retention of Millennial workforce members.

Summary

Researchers suggested that Millennial characterizations and work preference influence social change within the performance of organizational systems (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Ehrhart et al., 2012). Twenge and Campbell (2008) contend that a work-life balance and individualistic attributes contribute to the Millennials' professional values system. In accordance with research findings, organizations have begun to make changes within structure and policies (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Kim, Knutson, & Choi, 2015). Ultimately, organizational changes may not alleviate the issues that occur within the socialization and management of Millennial workforce members.

Leadership relations may assist with the development of reciprocal exchanges needed for knowledge sharing and task performance (Caimo & Lomi, 2014; Hines & Carbone, 2013; Kodatt, 2009). The literature examined identified Millennials' work characteristics and values that may influence organizational systems (Leveson & Joiner, 2014). Researchers' investigated socialization and learning within the development of work roles (Roodin & Mendelson, 2013;

Starks, 2013). Leaders' information provides the basis for understanding current concerns regarding Millennials' learning and retention in the workplace (Much et al., 2014). Although these concerns are relevant to leadership systems, a gap exists within management's knowledge of Millennials' perceptions of high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships (Lyon & Kuron, 2014; Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Petroulas et al., 2010).

The interpretative phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry provided research findings to broaden management knowledge of Millennial perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development. Study results aided in the comprehension of the cohort's conceptualization of leadership systems within the multigenerational environment. Chapter 3 will contain the research design and rationale. I will explain the significance of the interpretative phenomenological approach and exemplify ethical procedures taken to explore Millennial employees' experiences within organizational leadership systems.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study was to explore Millennial employees' experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Chapter 3 describes the method and design of the study. In the following sections, I discuss the proposed (a) research design and rationale, (b) role of the researcher, (c) method, (d) issues of trustworthiness, and (e) ethical procedures. Chapter 3 closes with a summary of the key components of the research method used to enable purposeful sampling and analysis of participant transcripts.

Research Design and Rationale

The qualitative interpretative phenomenological design provides data to answer the question: What are Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development? The following sub questions guided my qualitative interpretative phenomenological study:

RQ1a: How do Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationship within the workplace?

RQ1b: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within role development practices?

RQ1c: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within task delegation practices?

RQ1d: How do Millennials describe high-quality relationships?

The development of the leader-to-Millennial relationship is a central concept of this study. Hierarchical social interaction and performance, determine the quality of relationship

development within organizations and their consequent success (Flink, 2015; Treadway et al., 2013). The Millennial employee's work values stimulate organizational change practices and policies (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Petroulas et al., 2010; Starks, 2013). In the literature review, I identified a gap within management's knowledge of the components that contribute to high-quality leader-to-Millennial relationships that assist with organizational learning and social performance (Day et al., 2014; Jokisaari, 2013; Madlock & Chory, 2013). Researchers' suggested that Millennials' experiences within hierarchical structures lack social involvement needed for knowledge transfer (Graen & Schieman, 2013; Hadar, 2013; Marcinkus, 2012). The exploration of Millennial employees' experiences contributes to the enhancement of organizational social change initiatives within the scope of multigenerational relationship development.

The interpretative phenomenological design provides a reflexive method to data collections and analysis to delineate participant experiences within the leader-to-employee work relationship. Phenomenological studies explore a shared experience that compiles and interprets the nature of reality for each research participant (Maxwell; 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (2014) proposed that the phenomenological method supplies the foundation for authentic reflection of the participant's experience. A line by line analysis illicits meaning and clarification of Millennials' terms and phrases associated with hierarchical social development (Küpers, 2013; Smith et al., 2009). The analytical procedure helped in the understanding of participants' shared experiences.

The phenomenological embodiment of the leader-to-employee exchange enables an adept interpretation of relational activities (Fisher & Robins, 2014). Evaluation of leader-to-

Millennial social exchanges within hierarchical structures presented emerging themes that contributed to the comprehension of information needed for evaluative discussions concerning employee learning and performance. Discovery of these themes broadens the conceptual understanding of Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development to aid in the evolution of leadership systems.

The interpretative phenomenological design provides a platform for participants to reflect and recollect the details of experiences (Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Individual perceptions underlie a collection of beliefs and values that emerge from social experiences (Husserl, 2002). These individual experiences aid in the complex understanding of a shared phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014; Vagel, 2014). Although the majority of leader-to-member exchange theory studies use quantitative methods for understanding the variables that influence role development and job satisfaction, the qualitative research method chosen for this study explores Millennials' experiences within relationships with leaders (Gürkan & Aktaş, 2014; Zhang et al., 2012). According to Fischer and Robbins (2014), the phenomenological lens may provide a platform to reveal the underlying meaning of leader-to-employee relations.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher includes the collection, interpretation, and reporting of the participant experience through face-to-face interviews (Vagel, 2010; Van Manen, 2014). The qualitative interpretative phenomenological design includes activities that enable authentic sampling and analysis. Authentic sampling and analysis practices contain member checking and reflexive methods to minimize bias. Minimizing biases and conflict of interest assists with purposeful sample collections (Miles et al., 2014). In this study, all information regarding current

and past relationships with participants was revealed and documented. Development of an ethical procedures strategy identified within the issues of trustworthiness section of this chapter helped in handling concerns that aroused during the process of obtaining, analyzing, and reporting participant interview information.

Method and Design

The evaluation of Millennial employees' experiences include a method and design for data collection and interpretation (Miles et al., 2014; Vagel, 2014). Investigated in this section are the components of the qualitative interpretative phenomenological study. The components are (a) participant selection logic, (b) recruitment strategy, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, and (f) data management plan.

Participant Selection Logic

The process of leader-to-employee relationship development occurs within three stages (a) role-making, (b) role-taking, and (c) role-routinization (Osman & Nahar, 2015). Research analysis of the LMX does not specify exact time periods or duration for high-quality relationship development. Theorists suggest that relationships develop instantaneously upon the assessment of leader role-making and member performance (Dockery & Steiner, 1990; Scandura & Graen, 1984; Zhang et al., 2013). Based on my review of the LMX literature, participants selected were in established relationships with managers for 1 year or more. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion (see Appendix H), developed per requested by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), helped with the purposeful sampling process.

Participant criteria for inclusion were defined as (a) Millennials who work full-time, (b) Millennials who work directly with administrators, directors, managers, or supervisors, and (c)

Millennials who have a working relationship with their manager for one year or more. Participant criteria for exclusion were defined as (a) Millennial employees with minimal leader or manager contact, (b) Millennials employees who work in decentralized work environments where leadership changes as per assignment or project, and (c) Millennial employees who work on a temporary basis. Temporary work arrangements, in particular, lack high-quality social exchanges needed for effective organizational membership (Kossek, Thompson, & Lautsch, 2015; O'Donnell, Yukl, & Taber, 2012). These types of work designs include flexible structures and responsibilities that may counteract relationship development, whereby leaders refrain from sharing organizational knowledge and resources (Chien & Lin, 2012; Parker, 2014).

I used a purposeful sampling strategy. In a purposeful sample, the researcher consciously selects participants from a particular setting in accord with the purpose and the phenomenon studied (Palinkas et al., 2013). The Millennial participants selected, supply information not obtainable from other sampling methods (Miles et al., 2014). Useful participant selection required a recruitment strategy and rationale to guide research practices.

Recruitment Strategy

The goal of this strategy was to obtain permission from 20 participants or until sample saturation occurred. Small sample sizes are typical and range from 6 to 25 participants (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014). There is a compelling reason to argue that defining participant size prior to research contradicts the exploratory nature of qualitative inquiry (Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2002). Sampling is continual, in that the researchers should gather participants until the point of saturation (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Sampling saturation occurs when information within participant interviews cease to provide new themes and categories

(Mason, 2010). Obtaining permission from 20 participants before data collection allowed sufficient sampling and analysis of the research phenomenon.

Sampling Strategy

The sample strategies presented provides exhaustive measures needed to obtain purposive samples in the case or instance where one sample method resulted in too few participants.

Criterion based selection. Miles et al. (2014) defined criterion based selection as an effective method for establishing creditability within the characterization of a shared experience. Criterion based selection within this study included gaining information from young professional committees within Huntington and Melville Chambers of Commerce. Participant invitation and consent forms (see Appendix A) were emailed to committee members who fit the inclusion criteria. Letters of cooperation from the committee chair acknowledge that the association understands the research purpose, criteria, and consent to access members about participant selection (see Appendices B and C).

Snowball strategy. The snowball sample strategy consists of activities that helped acquire participants through informant recommendations (Miles et al., 2014). Building rapport with organizational leaders who are current members of the local Chambers of Commerce assisted with the implementation of the snowball sample strategy. Chamber members who have knowledge of the research objectives and criteria were encouraged to recommend participants for the interview process (Elo et al., 2014; Seidman, 2013).

Maximum variation. The last method of sample selection is maximum variation. Maximum variation is a sampling criterion that helped identify themes and patterns shared within differing organizations (Polit & Beck, 2010). According to Patton (2002), selection of

participants from different organizational settings minimizes one-sidedness that can hinder data analysis and reports. Selecting participants from a particular organizational sector may render information that is limited to the characteristics and contexture of a particular business culture. Individuals were chosen from the following organizational sectors: (a) education, (b) financial services, (c) government, (d) insurance, (e) non-profit, (f) publishing, (g) real estate, and (h) retail. Equally important, variability in organizational backgrounds demonstrates reliability of information gathered to explain the essence of Millennial participants' shared experience (Maxwell, 2012; Vagel, 2014).

Instrumentation

Interview questions and audio recordings were the data collection instrumentation utilized to capture data. The development of the research interview questions required an organized process to gain useful and reliable participant responses (Maxell, 2005; Smith et al., 2009).

Background. Interpretative phenomenological evaluation of Millennial employees working relationships with leadership required instrumentation that gathers information from participant recollection of experiences for comprehensive reporting (Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2002; Smith et al., 2009). Quantitative measures assisted with the evaluations of leader-to-employee exchanges using multi-dimensional and uni-dimensional scales to assess relational performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Michel & Tews, 2016; Yang, Ding, & Lo, 2015). The construction of open-ended questions allowed participants to describe the essence of leader-to-Millennial relationship development in the workplace. The sequence of questions enabled genuine responses to describe social exchanges within role development and task delegation

practices. Follow-up questions encouraged participants to share contextual descriptions to comprehend Millennials' holistic experience within leader-to-employee relationships (Vagel, 2014).

Development. The interview questions include 11 open-ended questions that helped in the exploration of Millennials' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development (see Appendix D). The seminal theorist of the LMX theory suggested that high and low-quality relationships are resultant of social exchange performance (Graen, 2003). Leaders and employees who engage in high-quality exchanges have relationships with increased levels of trust, reciprocity, and mutual goal achievement (Graen & Cashman, 1975 Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Liden & Graen, 1980). Low-quality relationships include leader-to-employee exchanges that meet the requirements defined within the employers' contract. Low-quality exchanges lack the organizational and psychological resources needed for high performing work relationships. The interview questions contained the terminology to elicit responses that may describe leader-to-Millennial exchanges within organizational relationships.

The interview protocol for this interpretative phenomenological study comprised both experience/behavior and follow-up/clarification questions, to interpret Millennial participants' shared experiences (Patton, 2002). Patton proposed that experience/behavior questions assist with gathering participant information through the recollection of activities that explain the research phenomenon. Follow-up/clarification questions provide the interviewer with an opportunity to revisit participant responses for in-depth understanding (Morse, 2015; Vagel, 2014). This category of questions enabled the gathering of rich and thick descriptions of the participants' experiences (Van Manen, 2014). The understanding of qualitative interview

standards provided the structure for developing an instrumentation draft for expert review and validation. The interview protocol (see Appendix D) contains experience/behavior questions. The follow-up/clarification questions, when used, delineate participant terms and phrases.

Validation. Expert panel members were selected to evaluate the interview instrument on clarity, appropriateness, and relevance. The preliminary interview consisted of 15 questions, of which 12 were accepted and approved by expert panelist. Members identified issues of wordiness, vague terminology, and inconsistencies with the interview approach. A follow up email included revisions of the instrumentation for expert approval. Expert approvals provided supportive documentation that the interview questions met the requirements for creditable data collection and analysis.

The validation of the interview instrument included the selection of five expert panel members. The expert panel was selected through email invitation of a defined group of individuals with academic and professional expertise within management and leadership. Email invitations (see Appendix E) was sent to 25 perspective individuals within the management fields of academics, business, information technology and nursing. The invitation letter I constructed introduces the research problem, purpose, and conceptual framework used to examine leader-to-Millennial relationships.

Data Collection

Data collection incorporates the steps and processes taken to gather and prepare interview documentation for researcher analysis. The interview location is of particular importance within qualitative data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Seidman, 2013). The site selected for participant interviews provides minimal distractions to gather responses and detailed meaning

regarding the practices involved in leader-to-Millennial relationships. Upon request, interviews were conducted at the participants' private office due to scheduling difficulties.

Information collected from face-to-face interviews using note taking and audio recording supplied data for analysis. I conducted the participant interviews and transcribed the information for qualitative coding and evaluation. Data collection ensued during face-to-face interviews. I scheduled a 60-90 minute time frame for the participant interviewing process (Seidman, 2013). The process consisted of a review of the (a) informed consent (b) interview process, and (c) participant debriefing practices. The informed consent and debriefing process addressed in the ethical procedures section of Chapter 3 identify my intentions toward protecting participants' human rights.

Data Analysis Plan

Moustakas (1994) proposed that qualitative phenomenological inquiry must incorporate a rigorous analytical process, that suspends the practitioner's personal meaning to illuminate participant lived experiences. Suspension of personal meaning within data collection and analysis continuously occurs to reduce researcher judgments and false claims. According to Klenke (2008) and Smith et al., (2009), the collaboration of data collection, analysis, and interpretative activities contribute to the quality of research inquiry. Heidegger (as cited in Lopez, 2004) asserted that the interpretative phenomenological approach explores experiences to understand the essential nature of the participant's reality. Vagel (2014) confirmed that data analysis should incorporate methods to reduce bias that may hinder the interpretation of participants' recollection of the experience. The data analysis plan contains the methods and

steps used to reduce biases that can obstruct the credibility of participant responses and research interpretations.

The data analysis plan include the following steps (a) member checking, (b) bracketing and reduction, (c) delineating units of meaning, (d) horizontalization, (e) summation of individual interviews, and (f) interpretation of themes of participants' shared experience. The six-step plan helped establish an audit trail for future research evaluations within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The following is a comprehensive assessment of the data analysis plan:.

Member Checking. Member checking is the foremost measure in the data analysis plan that offers authentic and participant approved samples for evaluation. Member checking assists with building credibility of data collection practices (Harper & Cole, 2012; Vagel, 2014). I assembled and transcribed data from participant interviews. Research participants received a transcript of their interview documentation for review of obscure terms and idioms. If needed, a follow-up face-to-face or telephone call enabled a follow-up discussion and retrospection of participant issues. The conversation provided time to revisit interview questions for clarity and confirm that the information in the transcript represents a veritable communication of the participant's experience.

Bracketing and reduction. Bracketing and reduction happen consistently throughout the collection and analysis stages of the study (Husserl, 2002). Journaling compartmentalized my personal objectives associated with study participant experiences and interview behavior (Klenke, 2009; Vagel, 2014). Align with the methods defined by Lincoln and Gruba (1985), bracketing and reduction initiatives assisted with diminishing barriers that deter the effectiveness

of the human research instrument. Implementation of the bracketing and reduction process helped with the coding and interpretation of participants' experiences during leader-to-employee relationship development.

Delineating units of meaning. Delineating units of meaning include defining and interpreting participant responses found within audio interview data. Evaluation of terms and phrases that present themselves within participant interviews provide a rich and thick description of the research phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014). According to Smith et al. (2009), line-by-line analysis assists with the recognition of emerging terms and ideas. Maxwell et al. (2014) found that within the inaugural set of interview cases, researcher and participant dialogue provides the code structure needed for horizontalization. Manual coding of the first three interviews helped develop structural coding used in the NVivo 10 software application.

Horizontalization. Horizontalization includes the clustering of units of meanings that support the interpretative understanding of participants' shared experience (Miles et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2009). Gathering units of significance found within individual interviews provide the elements required to prepare a list of important statements. Next, lists of significant statements were compared and analyzed to identify relationships between participants' responses. Vagel (2014) affirmed that the process help create a participant narrative.

Summation of individual interviews. Summation of individual interviews included the comprehension and development of descriptive participant case responses. The report described the participant's perception of events that occurred within the phenomenon investigated. Vagel (2014) suggested that the researcher provide a thorough and contextual description of participant's responses to assist with the data analysis and summations. Identification of

observable behaviors that support or contradict verbal responses will contribute to the reliability and authentication of participant experiences (Van Manen, 2014).

  In-depth summary of themes and interpretation. An in-depth summary of themes and interpretation consist of gathering detailed reports of individual interviews. The collaboration of participant interviews enabled the development of a comprehensive interpretative report on Millennial participants' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development (Klenke, 2008). Equally important, Smith et al. (2009) advised that interview summaries should include a theme-by-theme visual guide to assist in the interpretation and presentation of participants' shared experiences. A summary of my reflections during data collections and analysis minimized issues of trustworthiness within the creditability and confirmability of Millennial participants' interpretations (Tracy, 2010; Vagel, 2014).

  Although the data analysis plan supports the defining and organization of research activities, information regarding conflicting cases required a course of action to minimize redundant and obtrusive accounts. Member checking addressed discrepant, inapplicable and overly abstract case data (Maxwell, 2012; Tracy 2010). Inadequate responses to interviews provide the basis for the evaluation of confirming and disconfirming evidence, whereby a difference takes place between participants' articulation of similar terms and recounts (Freeman, DeMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, St. Pierre, 2007). Member checking permits a follow-up discussion for participant clarity and amplified meaning (Vagel, 2014). Based on the methodology and design, all information confirming or disconfirming contributed to the exploration of Millennial employees' experiences.

Data Management Plan

The development of effective reporting occurred using the NVivo 10 software application for data collection and analysis. Computer applications allow researchers to organize large amounts of codes and information (Bazely, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). I incorporated Mile and Huberman (1994) five principles of data management using the NVivo 10 software application. The data management principles are as follows: (a) formatting, the methods used to transcribe and document interviews and observations; (b) cross-referral, the procedures used to link data within different participant cases; (c) indexing, a structural code list or book used to define the meaning of general terms within participant interviews; (d) abstracting, merging key ideas of observation or field text into a brief and succinct summary; and (e) pagination, placements of numbers and letters to assist with identifying the location of terms within interview transcripts and literature. Data management is imperative within qualitative research, in that the steps taken to store and retrieve information support effective analysis (Bazely, 2013). Chapter 4 will describe in detail the methods used for data management and analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Vagel (2014) proposed that quality and creditability assists with establishing value within the objectivity of research roles and methodology. Establishing trustworthiness within qualitative inquiry required a discourse regarding the processes that provide (a) creditability, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability of participant cases (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The evaluation of issues of trust-worth bolstered data collection and analysis of participant cases.

Creditability

Establishing creditability required methods to demonstrate legitimacy within the

gathering and analysis of purposeful samples (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, Murphy, 2013; Vagel,

2014). Demonstrate by creditable means aim to supply evidence of research rigor within the

articulation, verification, and arrangement of data collection practices (Miles et al., 2014).

During the sampling process, I documented the steps used to attract and retain participants to

establish creditability of the study method and design. The qualitative selection and evaluation of

Millennial participants required methods that assist with opening a perceptive mode of

communications.

First, I established a rapport upon initial interaction. Discussions of the research

objectives minimized misconceptions of the interview process as well as stimulated awareness

within the scope of leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The informed consent

outlined within the ethical procedures section in this chapter played multiple roles in this inquiry.

The informed consent helped explain the (a) research objectives, (b) interview process, and (c)

the rights of the participant. The process assisted with establishing trust needed to obtain vivid

descriptions of participant experiences.

Transferability

Qualitative researchers' affirmed that naturalistic inquiries must include additional data

collection methods to assist with developing an audit trail (Vagel, 2014; Miles et al., 2014).

Audio recording and note taking during interviews helped access and create a thorough

understanding of Millennials' experiences within leader-to-employee relationship development.

Maximum variations within the selection of participants demonstrate transferability across

distinct groups and social environments (Polit & Beck, 2010). Participants professional diversity helped define the essence of leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The selection strategy enabled the selection of participants from different organizations and business fields to provide a core understanding of the components that underlie Millennial employees' experiences (Maxwell, 2012; Thomas & Maglivy, 2011).

Dependability

Articulation of study and reliability of data for analysis provide proof of dependability in qualitative inquiry. Dependability of the research processes includes a detailed description of the intended practices outlined in the data collections section of this chapter and actual methods addressed in Chapter 4. The steps are pertinent to future replication (Thomas & Maglivy, 2010). Establishing an audit trail in the initial stages of research development is crucial to the qualitative inquiry process. Documentation of thoughts, terms, and interview settings provides readers with a comprehensive account of select participants and the research phenomenon. Member checking assists with establishing reliability of the data retrieved from participant responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Vagel, 2014). The execution of structured participant interviews, assisted with building an in-depth understanding of holistic experiences needed for analytical reasoning (Maxwell, 2012; Van Manen, 2014).

Confirmability

Addressing issues of trustworthiness include understanding elements that can contradict or support sound researcher judgment (Patton, 2002). Patton proposed that maximum variability and reflexivity minimized subjectivity within sample collection and analysis. As noted in the sampling strategies section, this study used maximum variability in the selection of participants

from a variety of organizations to minimize issues of trustworthiness. The selection of participants from different organizational backgrounds helps establish confirmability. Confirmability demonstrates value and creditability within participant reports and epistemological analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Yilmaz, 2013). Participants' professional diversity helped characterize everyday practices within individual experiences to provide a shared narrative of leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

A reflective approach minimized bias. Understanding the factors that can influence researcher judgments is critical to the collection and analysis of the participants' experience. Lincoln and Gruba (1985) asserted that awareness of personal bias and beliefs can add value to qualitative inquiry. Van Manen (2014) proposed that reflexivity within qualitative research provide a self-disclosed accounting of events that may affect research data collection and analytical process. I demonstrated reflexivity using journal entries within notebooks transferred to the NVivo 10 software application.

Ethical Procedures

The gathering and analysis of data from participant interviews required ethical standards and strict codes of conduct (Maxwell, 2012). The process of gaining information regarding participant experiences may pose a potential threat within the care and representation of data (Vagel, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). Researchers must incorporate measures to ensure the safety of human research participants (Miles et al., 2014). The objective of this section is to address ethical procedures and care within the procurement of Millennial participants for purposeful sample collection.

Institutional Permissions

Institutional permissions and practices are stated as follows: I did not gather participant data until such time the IRB approves the research proposal (see Appendix F). The IRB number for this study is 02-10-15-0230896 with an expiration date of February 9, 2016. The sampling strategy enabled the gathering of research participants. Participants' name and personal information remains confidential. Case numbers were used to identify participants within the presentation of research findings. Transcripts, audio recordings, and journal notes from interviews are stored within a password protected external drive to prevent local and unauthorized access for five years. All data will be shredded and removed from physical and computer storage locations upon IRB guidelines and requirements (Miles et al., 2014).

Informed Consent

An informed consent (see Appendix G) was issued within the participant selection process and before the interview proceedings. The informed consent identified the purpose of the research and clarified that his or her participation is voluntary and confidential. I informed the participant of his or her right to withdraw from the interview or study at any time upon request. Finally, I explained that a debriefing process, held after the meeting, would help clarify questions or concerns regarding the study. The debriefing process established a follow-up communications plan and provided instructions required for the member checking process.

Debriefing Process

I facilitated the debriefing process at the conclusion of the interview. During the debriefing process, I explained the participant's rights found within the informed consent and provided an approximate time that transcripts of the interview would be available. I advised the

participant that a follow-up meeting would be required to go over participant questions or inconsistencies found upon initial review of the interview transcripts. At that time, participants had the option of selecting a telephone conference in place of meeting face-to-face. Inconsistencies in the documentation and interpretation of information required a face-to-face second interview meeting for evaluation.

Treatment of Data

Information protection is a central component of qualitative data analysis. The process includes the organization and protection of researcher data. Storage and protection of information ensured the security of research documents. Loss prevention efforts entailed the allowances and accommodations made for securing transcripts, digital recording, and computerized data. Procedures to secure data include the creation of backup sets of information on a separate hard drive. Backup sets of digital recording, journals, instrumentation, and forms are locked in file drawers. Research equipment and software were updated to assist with efficient data recording, analysis, and reporting (Bazeley, 2013). Data management practices are essential to the integrity and implementation of methods identified within this qualitative research inquiry (Miles et al., 2014; Vagel, 2014). All research efforts assisted with maintaining a secure platform for data analysis and accessibility.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The research method and design provide an understanding of the strategies that encompassed this interpretative phenomenological approach. In Chapter 3, I explained the rationale and key concepts of the qualitative inquiry. The evaluation of the method and design, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures revealed a systematic approach used to

minimize research biases and misinterpretations. Defining methods to establish creditability within qualitative research presented my intention toward effective data collection and analysis. The steps provided activities needed to protect human subjects. The ethical procedures strategy comprises the (a) statement of institutional permissions, (b) informed consent, (c) debriefing process, and (d) treatment of data. In Chapter 4, I will define the role of the researcher and present the conglomeration of steps that resulted in broadening management knowledge of leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study was to explore Millennial employees' experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The execution of the hermeneutic method of data analysis helped create a research design to elicit participant information for deeper and reflective analysis. According to Smith et al. (2009), the research design permits a comprehensive overview of a particular phenomenon. The interpretative phenomenological method provided information that answered the central research question: What are Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development? The following sub questions helped guide my investigation:

RQ1a: How do Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationship within the workplace?

RQ1b: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within role development practices?

RQ1c: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within task delegation practices?

The data collection and analysis of twenty Millennial participants working for 1 year or more with their current manager provided exhaustive information that described the social exchanges that occur within task delegation and role development. In this chapter, data analysis and presentation of results will include figures and direct quotations from participant interviews. My findings affirmed that Millennials perceive effective relationship development as a process containing empowerment behaviors needed for collaborative social engagement. Exploration of

participant experiences further identified that reciprocity is a result of effective relationship development.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the qualitative researcher required a variety of responsibilities (Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2002). The roles are as follows: (a) a protector, guard and enact methods to protect participant rights and data acquired during the research process; (b) an explorer, engage participants to assist with the emergence of ideas and concepts that underlie a lived experiences; (c) an interpreter, translates participant experiences through data analysis; (d) an auditor, incorporate steps to establish trustworthiness and accountability; (e) a learner, comprehend participant narratives needed to broaden knowledge regarding a specified research phenomenon; and (f) a narrator, produce a representation of combined participant responses (Houghton et al., 2013; Lincoln & Gruba, 1985; Moustakas, 1994). My role enabled proficient sampling and analysis of participant responses as it pertains to the comprehension of a shared experience.

The qualitative researcher role also entailed the collection and interpretation of the participant experience through ethical practices that delivered authenticity and creditability to the problem identified. Information acquired within structured interviews with Millennial participants assisted with the discernment of social exchanges during leader-to-employee relationship development. The evaluation of leader-to-millennial social exchanges required an epistemological process to broaden research knowledge within the scope of high-quality relationship development. Transcripts of in-depth interviews revealed critical data needed to understand Millennial perceptions of leader-to-member exchanges within organizational social systems.

Researcher's past and current relationships may influence responsive behaviors. According to Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013), effective qualitative designs include descriptions of researcher relationships and sampling strategy. Minimizing biases and conflict of interest assists with purposeful sampling. Therefore, disclosure of information regarding current and past relationships with participants help reduce (a) discrepant responses, (b) obscurity, (c) interviewer, and (d) participant bias. I impart, that at the time of the data collection, I did not have a personal or work relationship with participants. A sampling strategy addressed within the methodology section of this chapter will detail the procedure used to ensure that individuals selected contributed with authentic responses to describe the leader-to-Millennial relationship development phenomenon.

Establishing an audit trail was critical to the conformability of participants' shared experiences. Miles and Huberman (1994) affirmed that documentation of the researchers approach, observation, and self-analysis expedite qualitative analysis. Clear and concise record keeping deliver a coherent and accountable qualitative report (Maxwell, 2012). Documentation establishes an audit trail and aligns researcher intention with the stability of the methodological process (Vagel, 2014). The development of an ethical procedures strategy within the issues of trustworthiness section in Chapter 3 served as a valuable guide during the process of obtaining, analyzing, and reporting participant interview information.

Research Setting

The settings for face-to-face interviews were held in a closed office or conference room to protect participant's privacy and to minimize interruptions. Six participants requested interviews at their organization, in the privacy of their office due to scheduling conflicts. The

remaining interviews were held outside of the participant's organization, at either public library or Chamber of Commerce conference room. During each interview, I reviewed the informed consent and summarized the purpose of the study and the my role. Before each initial meeting, I explained that the interview would be digitally recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The participant was allowed time to ask questions regarding the informed consent and interview process. The interviews began after participant approval that he or she understood their rights and research protocol.

Personal and organizational conditions that influenced participants' responses at the time of study include changes within organizational roles that may affect relationships with managers. Changes include social interactions that occurred before the face-to-face interview that altered participants' roles within the organization or department. For example, changes in leadership behaviors may influence participant perceptions of the organization and roles previously established by managers (Smith, 2015). During the interview, Participant 5 expressed feelings of abandonment in that her manager is in the process of retirement, and is rarely available to offer assistance. Shifts within responsibilities that alter employee confidence levels may contribute to adverse responses toward current leader social exchanges. Negative elements such as workplace stress, changes in the organizational structure, or work conflicts contribute to a surge of low-quality relational exchanges (Shin, Taylor, & See, 2012). Although this case exhibit characteristics that epitomize a low-quality relationship with leadership, the data supplied from the interview provided emergent themes that aligned with the collective experience of research participants.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

The Young Professional Group within the local Chambers of Commerce in Long Island, New York, provided a purposeful sample population that met the proposed participant age criteria to fulfill Millennial generations' standards for evaluation. Email invitations to acquire participants were sent to twenty-three Young Professional Group Members, of which 11 responded. A questionnaire helped determine participant inclusion and exclusion (see Appendix H). Six of the eleven committee members met the criteria for inclusion. Committee members who participated were asked to provide email addresses of work peers, friends, and family who may fit the sample criteria. Email invitations were sent to 23 referrals. The snowball strategy helped attain 14 research participants who met the research criteria and agreed to participate in the study. Consent forms were reviewed and signed by participants before their interview sessions.

The maximum variation was the last method of sample selection. Participants from a variety of organizational settings strengthened the validity of the emergent themes gathered from individual experiences. The inclusion/exclusion screening questions (see Appendix H) helped identify the field of business, employee tenure, and length of time working with the current manager. Table 1 displays the demographic details of the participant sample.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Gender	Age	Field of business	Years w/job	Years w/manager
Participant 1	M	33	Financial services	3	1.5
Participant 2	F	24	Law office	3	1
Participant 3	M	31	Financial services	1	1
Participant 4	F	26	Government	1	1
Participant 5	F	29	Nonprofit	3	3
Participant 6	F	25	Financial services	4	4
Participant 7	F	31	Nonprofit	2	2
Participant 8	F	22	Nonprofit	4	4
Participant 9	F	26	Financial services	2	2
Participant 10	F	32	Nonprofit	2	2
Participant 11	M	25	Retail-Family business	5	5
Participant 12	F	29	Nonprofit	6	6
Participant 13	M	28	Law office-Family business	1	1
Participant 14	F	32	Nonprofit	10	10
Participant 15	F	31	Financial services	8	1.5
Participant 16	M	29	Journalist	7	7
Participant 17	M	27	Real estate	1	1
Participant 18	F	30	Education	3	3
Participant 19	M	30	Insurance	1	1
Participant 20	F	27	Nonprofit	2.5	2.5

Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods included steps and procedures needed to collect and prepare interview documentation for in-depth data analysis and rendering. Data was collected from 20 Millennial participants. Before the face-to-face interviews, I reviewed the informed consent with each participant and allotted time to respond to participant concerns. The face-to-face interview included 12 open-ended questions validated by an expert panel (see Appendix D). The interview questions were created to explore and provoke participant feelings and emotions that describe the essence of their relationships with their manager. Interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes among research participants. All of the interviews were recorded on two digital recorders. One recorder served as the primary source used for transcription. The second recorder provided backup for loss and retrieval functions.

Participant information, consent forms, and transcript hard copies were stored in individual file folders. Each participant was assigned a number to protect his or her identity and privacy. File folders were labeled with corresponding numbers for accessibility. Participant folders and digital recording devices were locked securely in a file cabinet after each data collection, transcription, and reporting session.

Analysis of Interview Data

The analysis of interview data incorporated the processes used to gather, code, and reduce data for thematic reporting. This section discusses the implementation of the following procedures (a) transcription, (b) bracketing, and (c) data coding and analysis.

Transcription

Each digitally recorded interview was transcribed using the Express Scribe software

program, earphones, and foot pedal. Information was typed directly into a word document and

saved. Transcription of interviews occurred in 30-minute intervals. Thirty minutes of digital

recording took approximately two-three hours to process. The bulk of the interviews were

transcribed in three to five business days. All transcripts were saved to a password protected

computer file, on an external hard drive stored within a locked file cabinet. Transcript copies

were printed for review and manual data coding. All printed copies were stored in a locked file

cabinet.

Bracketing

According to Sorsa, Kiikkala, and Astedt-Kurki (2015) bracketing reduces researcher's

judgments that may interfere with data collection and analysis. In this study, the use of

journaling to bracket ideas and personal conceptions reduced bias. Throughout the research

process, journaling helped manage concepts that aroused from memory. Bracketing assisted with

self-awareness and reflection that enabled an authentic interaction with each participant. The

bracketing process minimized information overload. Reflecting on interview content, personal,

and professional experiences provided an opportunity to compartmentalize mental data in memos

within the NVivo program for future analysis.

Data Coding and Analysis

Aligned with Smith et al. (2009) discourse of interpretative phenomenological analysis

(IPA), coding occurred in six stages. For the purpose of this study, Figure 3 is a visual model I

created of the IPA strategy. The model was designed to define the stages taken during data

analysis.

Stage 1	
Initial Review of Interview Data	Interview Transcription

Stage 2
Manual Coding of Participants' Transcripts

Stage 3		
Structural Coding In NVivo 10	Identifying Emergent Themes	Repeat Stages 1-3 for All Participant Cases Before Proceeding to Stage 4

Stage 4	
Combine Terms and Phrases	Defining Thematic Associations

Stage 5		
Analyze for Connections	Identify Patterns Across Participant Cases	Remove Duplications within Coding

Stage 6
Develop Interpretative Description of the the Shared Experience

Figure 3. IPA coding and analytical strategy. A Model created for this study to identify the six stages included in the coding and analysis of participant transcripts. The process is needed for effective analytical focus and interpretations of participants' shared experiences of a defined research phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

The first stage took place during the initial review of transcribed data. During transcription, an initial review of the participants' responses helped with familiarization of speech and keywords. After participants had reviewed transcripts for clarity of vague terms, a printed copy was used for manual coding. The digital copy was saved to an external hard drive. The second stage consisted of manual coding interview transcripts. Manual coding provided a preliminary overview of research themes. Keywords were highlighted, and notes were placed in the right-hand margin of the transcript. Manual coding of the first three transcripts helped with building a preliminary coding structure. The preliminary coding structure was transferred and developed within the NVivo software application.

According to Saldaña (2012), structural coding using computerized software assists with line-by-line analysis and categorization of interview data for in-depth analysis. Structural coding minimizes data overload in that sub-questions served as an indexing guide needed to identify common themes. The third stage incorporated the steps for identifying emergent themes. The NVivo 10 application advanced the structural coding process and revealed emerging themes categorized within assigned nodes. Transcripts were classified according to the research sub questions (see Appendix D) to help interpret Millennial employee experiences within relationship development.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                          Central Question                             │
│  What are Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-            │
│  employee relationship development?                                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐
│ Parent Node   │  │ Parent Node   │  │ Parent Node   │  │ Parent Node   │
│      1        │  │      2        │  │      3        │  │      4        │
│               │  │               │  │               │  │               │
│   Themes      │  │   Themes      │  │   Themes      │  │   Themes      │
│               │  │               │  │               │  │               │
│ Sub Question  │  │    Sub        │  │    Sub        │  │    Sub        │
│     1a        │  │ Question 1b   │  │ Question 1c   │  │ Question 1d   │
└───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘

┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐
│    LMX/       │  │  LMX/Role     │  │  LMX/Task     │  │ Millennials & │
│ Relationship  │  │ Development   │  │  Delegation   │  │ High Quality  │
│ Development    │  │  Practices    │  │  Practices    │  │ Relationships │
│  Practices    │  │               │  │               │  │               │
│               │  │  Interview    │  │  Interview    │  │  Interview    │
│  Interview    │  │  question     │  │  questions    │  │  questions    │
│  questions    │  │               │  │               │  │               │
│    1-5        │  │     6         │  │    7-9        │  │    10-12      │
└───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘
```

Figure 4. Stage 3 structural coding process. The process used for classifying emerging themes into parent nodes in NVivo 10. The structural coding process identified emerging themes to interpret Millennial employee experiences within relationship development to answer the central question: What are Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development?

Following Smith et al. 2009 methods of IPA, themes reveal the collusion of participants and researcher descriptions of a defined experience (p. 92). A query report helped to identify emerging themes within sub-question 1a-1d. Figures 5-10 provide visual graphs of emerging themes gathered for each research sub question.
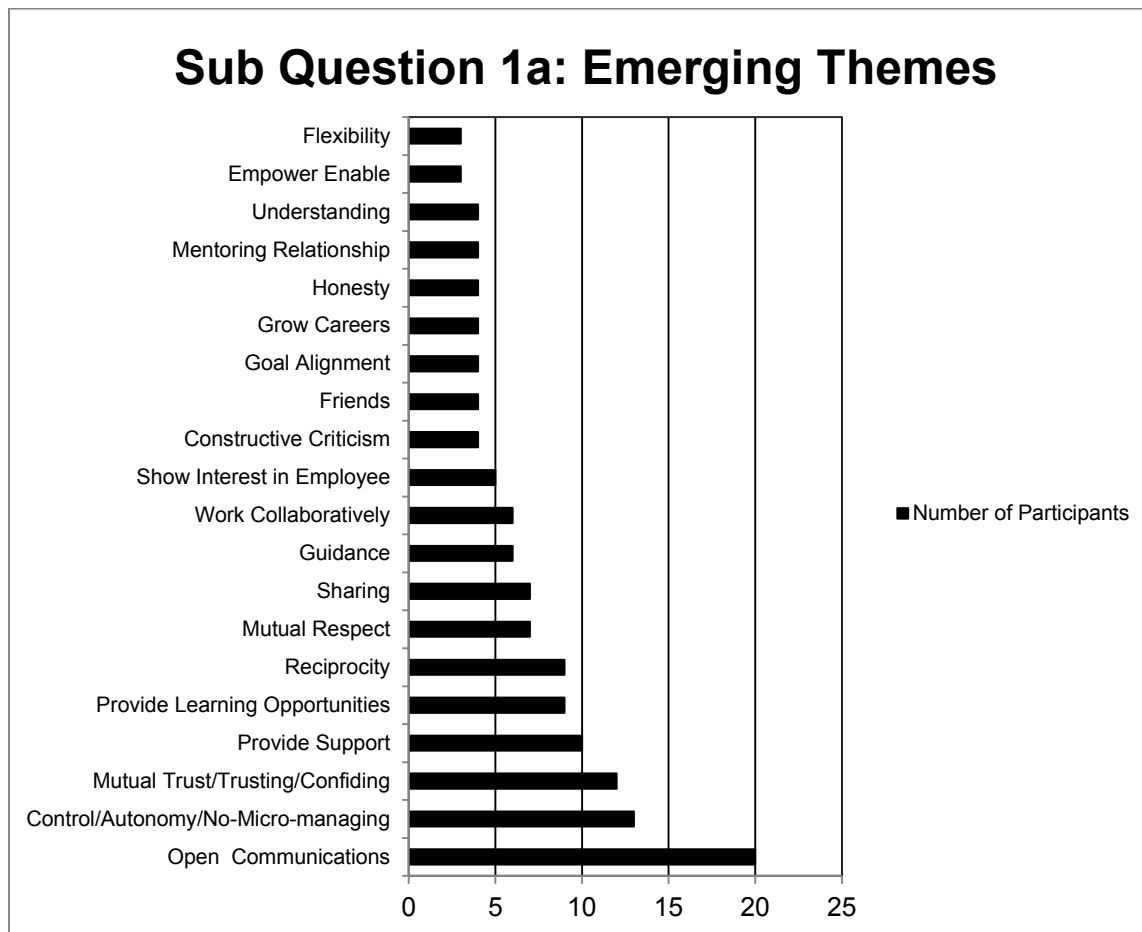
Figure 5. Sub question 1a: Emerging themes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub question 1a: How do Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationships within the workplace? Key themes identified were open communications, autonomy, and trust.

Sub Question 1b: Emerging Themes

Constructive Criticism
Skills Building Tasks
Previous Experience
Ownership
Learning from Experience
Mentored by Manager
Outside of Work Exchanges
Empowerment

■ Number of Participants

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14

Figure 6. Sub question 1b: Emerging themes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub-question 1b: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within role development practices? Key themes identified were empowering, past experiences prior to working with manager, and mentoring.

Sub question 1c: Emerging Themes

Weekly Meetings
Volunteering/To Help the Company
Volunteering/Ownership
Volunteering/Learning Opportunity
Volunteering/ Part of Work Culture
Volunteering /Aligns with Mission
Tasks Outside of Role/Part of Work…
Tasks Outside of Role/Part of job
Tasks Outside of Role/Learning…
Task Outside of Role/Like
Task Outside of Role/Don't Like
Prefer Feedback on Task Performance
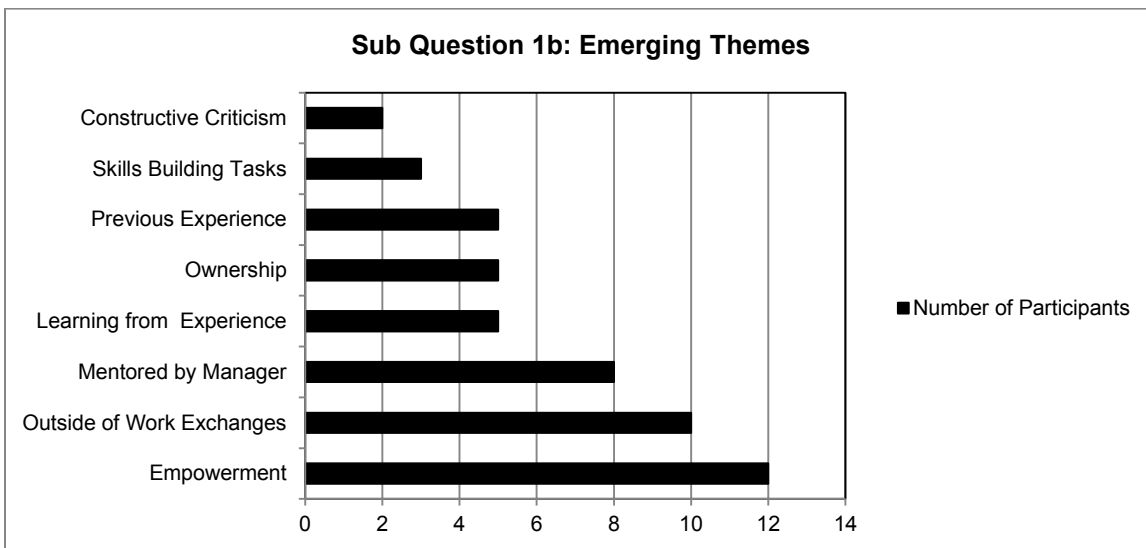
■ Number of Participants

0 5 10 15

Figure 7. Sub question 1c: Emerging themes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub-question 1c: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within task delegation practices? Key themes Identified were weekly meetings, learning opportunities, activities that help the organizations, and tasks that align with skills.

Sub Question 1d: Emergent Themes

Flexible
Opportunity to Learn
Supportive
Goal Alignment
Helpful to Manager
Direct and Clear Communications
Collaborative/Team work

0   2   4   6   8   10   12

■ Number of Participants
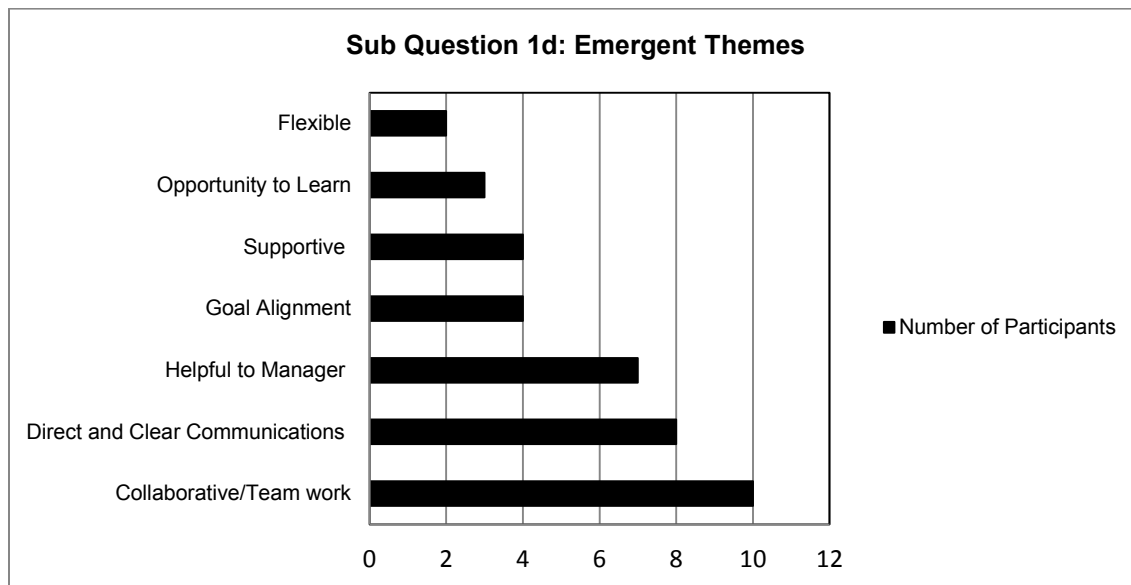
Figure 8: Sub question 1d: Emerging themes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub-question 1d: How do Millennials describe high-quality relationships? Key themes identified were that high quality relationships are collaborative with direct and clear communications.

Sub Question 1d: Leader Attributes

Mutual Respect
Provide Flexibility
Lead by Example
Openness/Open to new…
Supportive
Align Job with Employee Skills
Understanding
Provide Opportunites to Learn
Be Approachable/Be a People Person
Open to New Ways/Adaptable
No Micromanaging/Take Task…
Good Communications
Direct Communications/Clear Goals…

0   2   4   6   8   10

■ Number of Participants

Figure 9: Sub question 1d: Leader attributes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub question 1d: Describe leader attributes to assist with building high-quality relationships. Key themes revealed were communications attributes, no micromanaging, and open to new ways of handling work-related tasks.

Sub Question 1d: Employee Attributes
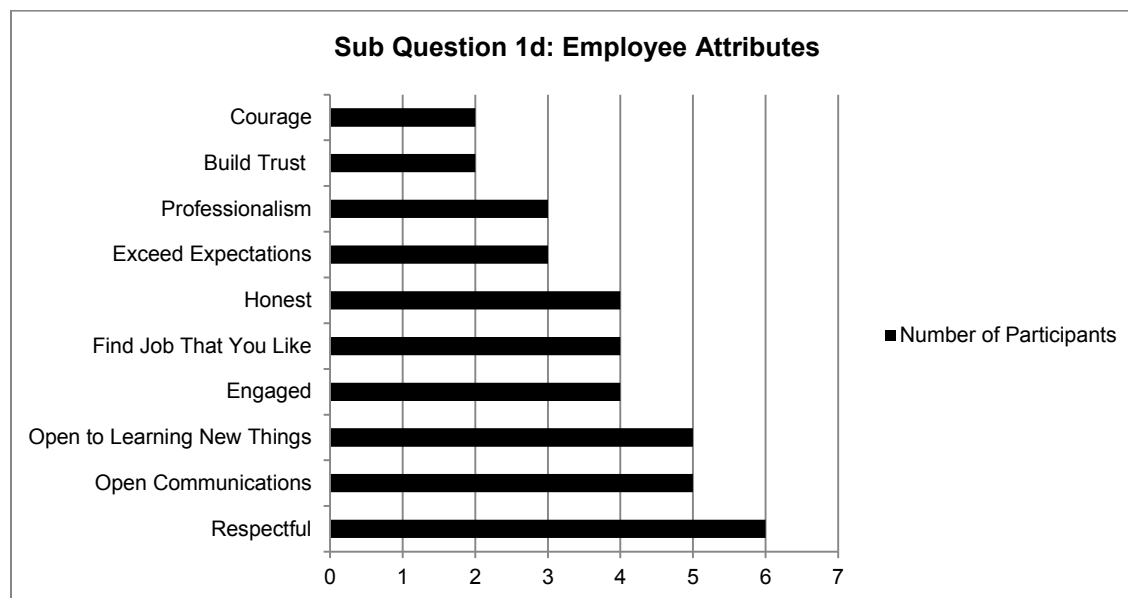
Figure 10. Sub question 1d: Employee attributes. Identified emerging themes within responses of sub question 1d: Describe employee attributes that assist with building high-quality relationships. Key themes identified were respectful, open communications, and open to learning new skills.

Coding and analysis of participants' responses on sub question 1a provided three key emerging themes that described how Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationships within the workplace as providing (a) open communications, (b) supportive, and (c) trust. Sub question 1b identified four emerging themes that described leader-to-employee social exchanges within role development as (a) empowering, (b) past work experiences, (c) mentorship, and (d) learning opportunities. Sub question 1c identified three key emerging themes that described Millennials perceptions of social exchanges within task delegation practices as (a) weekly face-to-face meetings (b) learning opportunities, and (c) providing activities that align with their job and organizational goal. Sub question 1d, Identified emerging themes that describe the attributes of high-quality relationships as collaborative with direct and explicit communications.

The participants' defined leader and employee attribute that assist with high-quality relationship development. Leaders' attributes that emerged from participant data involved characteristics of good communications. Participants explained that managers with good communications have direct and clear instructions. Managers will provide the basis for employee learning. Managers' openness to listen and accept new methods of handling work related tasks, aided in leader-to-employee relationship development. Participants described employee attributes as respectful and open social communications with a willingness to learn.

In the fourth stage of data analysis I combined terms and phrases within each sub section of emerging themes. Figure 11 is a visual example I constructed for the purpose of this study as a compilation of emerging themes within effective leader to employee relationship development. As described by Braun, Clarke, and Terry (2014) the analysis included defining thematic associations to assist with determining primary and subtheme categories. This exploratory phase was exhaustive in that journaling, memos, and participant quotes advanced the analytical process. The fifth stage involved a comprehensive review of participant responses to ensure that duplicate accounts were removed. The final stage of data analysis provided an interpretative description of recurrent themes across participant cases. The process provided two primary themes and eleven subthemes that interpret Millennials perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development.

**Task Delegation
Social Exchanges**

- Clear Instructions
- Weekly Meetings
- Open-door Policy
- Goal Alignment
- Feedback

**Leader/Manager
Characteristics**

- Direct Communications
- Good Communications
- Task Delegation Risks
- Open to New Ways
- Approachable
- Provide Opportunities to Learn
- Understanding
- Align Job with Employee Skills
- Supportive
- Collaborative Enviroment
- Lead by Example
- Provide Flexibilty
- Mutual Respect

**Effective
Leader to
Millennial
Relationship
Development**

**Millennial Employee
Characteristics**

- Respectful
- Open Commnications
- Open to Learning New Things
- Engaged
- Find a Job You Like
- Honest
- Exceed Expectatioms
- Professionalism
- Trustworthy
- Courage

**Role Development
Social Exchanges**

- Empowerment
- Outside of Work
  Exchanges
- Mentored by Manager
- Learning from Experience
- Ownership
- Skills Building Tasks
- Constructive Criticism

Figure 11. Combined emerging themes. Emerging themes within participants' responses from all sub questions provides a visual diagram of thematic associations within effective leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

Results and Findings

Evaluation of the transcripts of 20 Millennial participant experiences with managers within the workplace provided data to help answer the central research question: What are

Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development? Data analysis using the NVivo 10 provided common emerging themes. Horizontalization of common emerging themes from the analysis of four sub questions provided information needed to interpret Millennials experiences to explain the essence of leader-to-employee relationship development. As described by the LMX theory, leader, member, and exchange are three elements that aid high-quality relationships.

The conceptualization of the LMX theory helped with the interpretation of emergent themes to present a shared narrative. Thirty-Five emerging themes were combined and analyzed for reporting qualitative results. Data coding and analysis identified empowerment and reciprocity as two core themes within Millennials' perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development. The following section provides a discourse of both primary and subthemes found within the explication of transcript data. I provide tables, with examples of participant responses for each identified theme.

Primary Theme 1: Empowerment

Empowerment within leader- to- employee relations allows sharing responsibilities to provide employees with a sense of control and independence (Wong, Christina, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2014). Wong et al. proposed that empowerment strategies include (a) delegation of creative and high-risk tasks, (b) access to resources, (c) managers sharing knowledge needed for job performance, and (d) leader- to-employee collaboration to assist with organizational goal achievement. According to Li, Wei, Ren, and Di (2015) empowerment can facilitate mutually supportive behaviors in that employees feel a sense of obligation in response to affirmative management practices. When participants were asked to share an experience that assisted with

developing their role in the company, 60% revealed that empowerment behaviors facilitated role

and relationship development (see Table 2).

Table 2

Primary Theme 1: Empowerment

Participant	Response
8	"One experience is when I started working for my manager, she said 'I want to revamp the entire program. Do what you think its best.' That type of thing. So she somewhat just gave me the encouragement and the opportunity to do whatever I saw fit to make the program better. She said, 'I want to train the volunteers. I want to have a process that everyone follows. I want everyone to be on the same page. I want staff volunteers to understand what we do here and what we want from both parties. But there isn't a solid way that we do that now. I want you to make that happen."
12	"What assists me with developing in the company is when managers give me new roles. For example, the president of our organization gave me a huge responsibility for a major fundraising event. He wanted me to negotiate a sponsorship deal. I told him, I've been here for a year, and you want me to negotiate a sponsorship deal for the summer campaign. This is our biggest event of the year with a major company. It was like Volkswagen of America. I said you realize someone else is the director of development right?" He goes, 'I don't care, and I want you to do it!' And I did. And I don't know how I did, but I did."
17	"I think for me, my manager, most of the time because it's the two of us, if he couldn't go to a meeting or if he had to do a presentation before board members, he would send me. I mean it seems like such a simple thing, but he would give me an opportunity to represent the Department and to represent him directly. If it were a presentation, he wouldn't just send me out there without information to help me succeed. He tells me 'this is what's on the agenda, and this is what I need you to make sure they know."

Subtheme 1: Opportunities to Learn

Managers, who provide opportunities to learn by building an open platform to exchange

ideas, enable employee creativity and knowledge acquirement (Park, Song, Lim, Kim, 2014;

Rana & Goel, 2014). Participants expressed a proclivity for professional learning. Professional learning included gaining knowledge and skills to assist with role development. In the data analysis, 40% of research participants shared that task delegations and volunteering of new roles, provides an opportunity to acquire skills and develop in their professional field (see Table 3).

Table 3

Subtheme 1:Opportunities to Learn

Participant	Response
4	"When I'm with my manager, working over-time, I like spending those extra hours on tasks that are not normally in my scope of job duties because there is some other skill that I can probably learn out of it."
11	"I'm more passionate about things that I don't know a lot about. I think that has to do with learning. So I'm passionate about learning therefore I'm passionate about taking on a task that I don't know a lot about."
17	"I like it. I welcome it. I'm constantly learning. Like I said before, I was my manager's client at one time. I went through his training program and purchased buildings. Now that I'm an employee, I'm continuously learning with new and more complicated deals, and situations. So I've always chalked it up to a learning experience. I'm all for it."

Subtheme 2: Employees Must Express an Openness to Learn

Employees' willingness to learn and accept new challenges helped establish effective leader-to-Millennial employee relationships within organizations. The data collections process explored employee attitudes toward role challenges. Participants explained that attitudes toward learning contributed to effective relationship development. When participants were asked to give advice to help employees build high-quality relationships with their manager, 35% of participants shared that Millennial employees should express an openness to learn (see Table 4).

Table 4

Subtheme 2: Employees Must Express an Openness to Learn

Participant	Response
10	"Being open to learning new things because one of the biggest things I noticed and I find it sometimes in me too is that sense of, I don't know how to do this (rumbling paper). Almost like, asking the manager to do it for me. I do see that with some of the interns or the younger employees. Someone once said this to me and I love this quote, 'everything is *figure out-able*.' So it's true, especially with the internet and technology. 'Everything is *figured out-able*.' Just figure it out! I think that, if you're tired, not in the mood, if it doesn't appeal to you, or you just don't want to figure it out, the attitude of 'just show me how to do this' can hold you back."
15	"Just educate yourself and be a sponge."
16	"Employees should have the willingness to learn and an open mind."

Subtheme 3: Mentoring

Mentoring takes place between a senior level executive and the new employee (Ghosh, 2014). According to Martin and Bok (2015), mentoring builds professional skills through guidance; knowledge sharing that encourages employee confidence, and job satisfaction. Millennials shared that managers who enacted guiding and mentoring methods inspired organizational growth. When asked to explicate the social exchanges within effective role development practices, 40% of participants explained that mentoring helped with job formation (see Table 5).

Table 5

Subtheme 3: Mentoring

Participant	Response
3	"It's important that all the clients that we generate are clients that we keep. So my managing partner wants to make sure that everything that we're doing is done the right way. He put an emphasis on that in the training process."
7	"In the beginning, I was new, and I think my manager was watching to see if I could handle the work. Because she had taken on the role when the position was empty, it was her baby for a while. I would go to her for guidance. When she finally saw I could handle it, she let go of the reigns a lot more and let me kind of fly with it. I still view her as a mentor because she has been in the world for so long, and she has been successful."
12	"My manager tells me all the time that her job is to make it so that I'm prepared to take her job."

Subtheme 4: Collaborative

Maier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, and Bradford (2015) confirmed that Millennials value a collaborative workplace environment. Collaborative work environments include all members in the project development and execution processes (Brocke & Lippe, 2015). Participants characterized collaborative social exchanges as leadership behaviors that provide a supportive climate and inclusion of employee feedback. Results revealed that 50% of Millennials described high-quality leader-to-employee relationships as a collaborative alliance for effective teamwork (see Table 6)

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Table 6

Subtheme 4: Collaborative

Participant	Response
6	"Employees should be willing to work hard and work together with everyone, collectively."
8	"There's not a job in the department that we all haven't touched upon because she's created that type of relationship that you help your team."
9	"Everyone share's everything, everyone talks about everything, and our desks are so close. I'm not texting all day. I don't ever go on Facebook because I'm engaging with everyone in the office."
18	"I think managers should involve the employees in the process. It means that your voice and opinion matters regardless of the outcome. It makes someone feel appreciated, valued, and part of the effort going forward. I think it's with education or with business, you want them to buy-in, and you want them to have the commitment because they feel like they're apart of the system."

Subtheme 5: Open Communications

Kupritz and Cowell (2011) define open communications as honest interactions that provide employees with information to reduce negative assumptions. Transparent and informal communications influence individual and collective performance (Farr-Wharton et al., 2012; Wittig, 2012). Millennials perceive open communications as an effective component within relationship development with managers. When asked to define open communications with his or her manager, 65% of research participants described good communications within effective leader-to-Millennial relationships as sincere and informal concerning work and personal information (see Table 7)

Table 7

Subtheme 5: Open Communications

Participant	Response
1	"My manager has a sit-down with the staff and goes over their professional development and the things that they want to achieve in life so that it's not that you're just here to work and this is where your life is going to be forever. It's more like, what do you want to achieve moving forward? What are some of the steps you want to take in your life? What are your personal and professional goals?"
7	"I think that informal communications are going to allow for a good working environment. You don't need to get along as friends, but you can stop talking about work for a minute and say, how was your weekend? How is your daughter? Having real moments, I think, make the business moments easier to have."
16	"Managers talk to your employees. Just level with your employees include them in the process of whatever you're going thru in the organization."
17	"I think openness in communications is right at the top of the list."
	Participant 17 explained the concept of openness in communication as:
	"Transparency in business decisions while things are being done. Provide an opportunity for us to understand what you're doing is making a change and growing the company in one way, shape, or form. So, it's not like we are valuing just the work we're individually doing. You see your contribution to the company."

Subtheme 6: Employee Openness

Researchers defined employee openness as a personality trait that provides a broad

perspective on work roles and relationships that stimulate creativity (Madrid & Patterson, 2015;

Park, Song, Lim, & Kim, 2014). Participants shared that employees should be open and honest in

their communications with managers. Openness was described as an employee attribute needed

for effective relationships with leaders. When asked to provide an employee attribute to assist

with role and relationship development, 25% perceived employee openness as a social exchange used to share personal and professional dilemmas that may impede task completion and relational exchanges (see Table 8).

Table 8

Subtheme 6: Employee Openness

Participant	Response
8	"Employees should be open and honest about their mistakes. When I first started out, I made a lot of mistakes. I'm not going to lie. More than someone that would've had experience. When my supervisor approached me about it, I didn't put the blame on other people. I definitely owned my mistakes. When you make mistakes, and you will, especially if you're new at something, you will definitely make mistakes. Own the mistakes you make. Say, you know that's my fault. I'm sorry. I can I make that better. Try to learn from others."
14	"My model for everything in life is just be honest and that's not to say that you have to spill your secrets but you know be up front. Especially, if you don't know what you're doing, Just ask. Because if you sit there and just try to figure it out. you're going to make a mistake."
19	"In the past, I've always owned my mistakes ahead of time. So I'll tell them, "Hey listen, I know this was a bad decision." When you own something, it is much harder for them to come down on you. You don't have to try to beat it to a head that already understands."

Subtheme 7: Direct Communications

Direct communications provide in-line face-to-face interactions between a manager, employee, and organizational peers (Cole, 2015). Results indicate that 50% of participants agree that the task delegation process should include face-to-face weekly meetings with shared calendars and electronic communications forms of follow-up work instruction (see Table 9).

Table 9

Subtheme 7: Direct Communications

Participant	Response
3	"My manager is not hidden behind some fancy office door. He's out there with us. You usually don't see that. We share calendars in the office so we know when he's available"
4	"I think that if you have the ability to be in a smaller office where you can see your staff, I think it's good to pop in and have actual face to face time with them. To know who your employees are and they get to know who you are as a leader. Also, follow-up texts and emails can provide employees support"
13	"When I first started working with my previous managers I was trying to get my feet underneath me and it was difficult with-out constant face-to-face contact. I felt meetings were important to establish guidelines. Also, I think a clear and concise chain of command with clear and concise marching orders, for the most part, at the start is important. Then, eventually as you get more and more comfortable managers should give employees more autonomy."
18	"The educational system is somewhat difference from the business environment. Teachers have autonomy to create lesson plans. The principals supervise the academic department to make sure we are following operational protocols. That's how the system work, but I'd prefer if the principal would speak to us on a weekly basis to keep up-to-date on some of the issues that we're having in the classroom."

Subtheme 8: Constructive Criticism

Constructive criticism will provide employees with cognizability of manager ideals and expectations to enable organizational learning (Fowler & Wilford, 2016; Mishra, Boyton, & Mishra, 2014). When participants were asked to describe elements for an effective leader-to-employee relationship, 30% revealed that constructive criticism was an essential element used in the relational process (see Table 10).

Table 10

Subtheme 8: Constructive Criticism

Participant	Response
2	"I think constructive criticism in the review process is so beneficial. Especially if you're doing well, It's great to hear constructive criticism if you're doing badly. If no one tells you, how can you get better? I mean it's all in how you say it. If someone says, 'you suck', that's not going to help your work ethic. But if somebody sits you down and gives you positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, you're more than likely do better, than if nobody said anything to you. Positive reinforcement after a big project, that's effective as well, like a pat on the back. That's effective."
8	"I think constructive criticism is a big thing. I feel that everyone makes mistakes, especially when you come into a new role, but there is a definite difference in how you handle that and how that you handle errors that can definitely help you to encourage an employee or it can help deter the employee from wanting to try something new to make something better."
18	"A manager should be there just to provide different perspectives and not in a critical way and not in a better way, just to hear the options and see what works for you."

Primary Theme 2: Reciprocity

Reciprocity is mutual trust and respect that enables a leader and employee to share knowledge beyond role expectations (Torche & Valenzuela, 2011). Reciprocal behaviors encourage a firm sense of responsibility and compensation whereas leaders may increase resources and provide fringe benefits to serve the employees and vice-versa (Gkorezis, 2015; Shin et al. 2012). Forty-five percent of Millennial participants explained that they felt a sense of obligation based on the managers' support and autonomy (see Table 11).

Table 11

Primary Theme 2: Reciprocity

Participant	Response
1	"I mean I'm going into the office on a Saturday. I work until ten o'clock at night. I do what I have to do because one, I respect the friendship, and two; I'm not going to be a director of training and development for the rest of my life. I want to build a relationship that will assist me with my career goals."
9	"My manager brought me to a level where I want to be professionally as an advisor. He helped me understand the products, the logistics, and the holistic planning side of things. He helped me understand the client's needs and provide services to fit their interests. But then I help, on my spare time with social networking and marketing"
14	"He was always giving me projects and letting me do them on my own, but also if I had questions or whatever, he was very supportive. He inspired me to develop my role in the organization"

Subtheme 9: Trust

Chen, Lin, Yen (2014) affirmed that as leader-to-employee relationships mature, trust increases. Manager trust in employee skills promotes knowledge sharing and task independence (Hau et al., 2013). Participants associated trust with autonomy and increased responsibilities within the company. When asked to name elements within effective leader to employee relationships, 60% of participants identified trust as a component within effective relationship development (see Table 12).

Table 12

Subtheme 9: Trust

Participant	Response
12	"I would say definitely trust. In a sense, of trusting me to do the job and get the job done, and with that, comes freedom. I don't feel like I'm being micro-managed. I mean there's a lot of stuff being thrown at me all the time and I know what's important and what's not."
14	"Of course you're there to get the job done as a manager, but you also have to first trust your employees enough to give them the space to do the things on their own."
15	"I feel like he does let me run with it, but if he didn't feel it was right, he's actually listening to what I'm saying, he's actually thinking about if it's right or not. If he didn't think it was right, I trust his reasons why he would say no."
20	"I started to do some outreach and then slowly, I guess I proved that I could do more things and can be trusted with more responsibilities and I started taking some other things on and they kind of let me go with it."

Subtheme 10: Manger's Respect for Employee

Manager's respect for employee skills supports relationship development and job satisfaction (Pulakos, Hanson, Arad, & Moye, 2015; Van De Voorde, & Beijer, 2015). The findings help determine that the delegation of meaningless tasks show a lack of respect for employee time and aptitude. When asked to share feelings regarding the delegation of tasks outside of his or her job description, 30% of participants expressed concerns about managers delegating aimless tasks outside of regular duties with a lack of consideration toward employee workload (see Table 13).

Table 13

Subtheme 10: Manager's Respect for Employee

Participant	Response
2	"Honestly, it kind of ticks me off. Like when she knows I'm doing a lot and I'm really swamped, she will give me something real stupid to do like faxing something for her kid's soccer team. It's minimal. It's not like she would ask me to do something extreme that I know I don't have time for. But sometimes those little things tick me off a little bit, because it makes me feel, as though she doesn't respect my time.
5	"She thinks that I'm her personal assistant. So and it really does frustrate me. Again, I don't have a problem doing stuff outside of my job duties and I'm happy too, cause I'm bored, but as far as picking up your dry cleaning for you because you don't feel like going anywhere or getting address labels for you like personal address labels that's not something I need to waste my day or concern my time with."
19	"I'm a big fan of viewing it as an opportunity, when I'm given something outside of my work duties. As long as it's not somebody dumping something for no reason and it's another person that can be doing the job within their spectrum. I don't like breaking out of the designated workflows because there's a reason for them."

Subtheme 11: Employee Respect for Manager's Role

Respect is the foundation for positive social exchanges between managers, employees, and peers (Saunders & Tiwari, 2014; Zhang et al., 2012). Respectful exchanges occur when parties seek to comply based on credibility (Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin, 2015). Participants emphasized that reverent employee behaviors aid in positive social exchanges. Data analysis of interview responses determined that 30% of participants perceived that employee's respect of manager's role and work protocol is critical to effective relationship development (see Table 14).

Table 14

Subtheme 11: Employee Respect for Manager's Role

Participant	Response
9	"There's a lot of access to information on social media. We might come off very dismissive to an older generation manager or coworker. Because of our generation's ability to use technology to our advantage, we can be disrespectful in our communications. I don't enjoy disrespect; I think you should have a respect factor toward your manager and older coworker as well."
11	"I think you want to stick to a certain professional aspect. You have to show clear respect. It's ok to joke with them every now and again, but I don't go out with the sales manager to get drinks for a reason. I don't want to cross the line."
18	"I think to speak obviously respectfully and professionally. For instance, if you have a problem, say 'here are my issues, I would like to see this done, or I felt this was unrecognized.' Whatever your issues may be, I think it's unfair if you don't voice it in a respectful manner that and then expect things to change or be different."

Qualities of Discrepant Cases

According to Booth, Carroll, Ilott, Low, and Cooper (2013), identifying discrepant cases occurs after the data collection and analysis process. Patton (2002) confirmed that discrepant cases are unique in comparison to the participant population. Although purposeful sampling assisted with minimizing disconfirmation within sample data, unforeseen attributes demand further exploration of the participant's experience. Manual and structural coding analysis of participant responses helped with identifying complex cases.

Discrepant cases in this research are participants within familial relationships with the managers that may skew data analysis of the traditional manager to employee relationships. Two

participants in this research study worked in family businesses. Both participants are primary stakeholders within the growth and sustainability of the organization. Information retrieved helped to understand the similarities and differences within employees' expectations of managers within the family business and non-family businesses. Participant 13 had low expectations based on family methods of social exchanges and protocol. Participant 13 admitted

"First, it's a little offsetting approaching a family member as a boss. It's really complicated. I remember when I started he asked me specifically, he says listen you can't call my dad in the office. You have to figure out something else to call me. He goes by his last name in the office, but it's weird to call someone your own last name."

Although the family business culture may contribute to the compartmentalization of family and professional issues, increased levels of commitment were common within role development within the organization. Their contribution was valued in that participants worked outside of the family business prior which helped in their assessment and comparison of past and current manger- to- employee relationships. Both participants worked for more than one manager for over one year prior to joining the family business. When asked what advice to give to managers?

Participant 11 shared, that "managers should leave their personal problems at home. I've seen with previous employers, managers not able to separate their work from their social life or their personal life and I think that's a big thing that a lot of people have problems with.

Participant 13 responded, "you know, I like a manager who is firm, with a one-on-one dynamic. I prefer working under one person, knowing what one person wants. Having

worked under both with one person directly and a bunch of different people when you work under a bunch of different people; what person "X" want isn't what person "A" wants. What person "A" wants isn't what person "C" wants, and they all have different styles. If you did it for person "X" and he thinks it's good, then person "A" may not like it and give you a bunch of changes."

Participants' work experiences with prior employers help explore relationship development in various systems. The discrepant cases support and provide depth to the participants' narrative of leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development. Future comparative analysis of Millennials within the family and non-family businesses may determine if familial values influence relationship development with regard to organizational learning and retention.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

A discourse in the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis, substantiate research results for review. The evaluations of (a) creditability (b) transferability (c) dependability (e) confirmability, and (f) data saturation procedures, help attain valid and primary data for analysis. Results of research rigor qualify the cumulative interpretation of Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development.

Creditability

Sampling behavior, increase value within qualitative research endeavors (Houghton et al. 2013). Establishing creditability included verbalization of the informed consent, journaling ideas, and member checking of participants' transcripts. Note-taking and researcher awareness help strengthen my interview style employed with each participant. The first set of interviews I noticed that participants were distracted when I took notes. Before each meeting, I informed the

participant that both digital recording and note taking would ensue throughout the interview. Although note taking was limited, each time, the participants were distracted and looked at my notebook. Moving forward, I decided to engage the participant with minimal breaks in eye contact. This active engagement allowed the participant to relax and speak informally about their experience. Immediately after each interview, I journaled my thoughts for follow-up and in-depth discussions if needed during the member checking process. Digital recordings and member checking were a critical component used for clarity.

Lincoln and Gruba (1985) maintain that prolonged engagement prior, during, and after the interview process. I established rapport during the process of gathering participants. During the young professional group meetings, I would provide a brief summary of my research study and participant requirements. I extended time at the end of the meeting to answer questions regarding the research, interview process, and dissemination of results. An essential element stressed throughout meetings and discussions were participant confidentiality and schedule flexibility. Email correspondence increased participant confidence and trust. Correspondence questions and concerns were answered within twenty-four hours via electronic or telephone communications.

The follow-up interview questions help broaden ideas, feelings, and depth of relational experiences. Participants were debriefed after the interview. Participants were asked if they had additional information to share regarding their work experiences with their managers. The time given enabled the participant to discuss in-depth factors they felt assisted with the effective relationship development. Next, the participants were instructed on the following in the debriefing process (a) projected date of the completed transcript, (b) time required for member

checking of vague information, unclear terms and meaning, (c) notified participant of rights and procedures used for research withdrawal, (d) information for continued open communications regarding the research study, and (e) permission to invite others to participate in the research. Follow-up emails were sent after participant interviews thanking them for their time and cooperation.

Transcription of data occurred three to five business days after the participants' interview. Participants were sent transcripts with contact information, if needed, to address questions and inconsistencies within the document. I did not receive notice of participant concerns. However, two of the research participants shared concerns that conversational language and filler terms may deter the data analysis process. After reassuring participants that the language was appropriate, in that the questions and conversational dialogue help articulate their experience. Both participants agreed and provided approval for data analysis. Coding occurred after participants acknowledged that transcripts were authentic and represented their individual experiences with managers. Manual and computerized coding helped to minimize possible biases than can occur during effective data analysis.

Transferability

Vagel (2014) and Miles et al. (2014) qualitative discussions entailed a thorough evaluation of transferability measures within data samples and analysis. Maximum variations and detailed descriptions demonstrate transferability and authenticity within (a) participant selection, (b) data collection, (c) analysis, and (d) reporting methods. Maximum variation of Millennial participants from various organizational backgrounds contributed to an authentic understanding of leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development. Open-ended questions aid in the

exploration of individual experiences. Follow-up questions encouraged thought provoking

dialogue that resulted in a participant narrative of relational events that contributed to role

development.

The recollection and documentation of participant experiences provided the framework

for structural coding, analysis, and reporting. The results help create rich and thick descriptions

of participants' relational experiences. Freeman (2014) proposed that the thick description

process should occur throughout the research. Awareness and involvement of detailed thoughts,

responses, and surroundings aid in the manifestation of the research phenomenon. Thick

descriptions provide depth and vision for researcher interpretation and analysis. According to

Ponterotto (2014), thick descriptions encompass transparency and details using participants'

organic expressions. Journals and memos were used as the foundation for interpreting the

complexities of the human relational experience. The vivid descriptions shared within data

analysis, and reports of research results may broaden knowledge needed for future research

evaluations.

Dependability

Proof of dependability is simultaneous within the conversion of the steps taken to collect,

study, and report participant data (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). The

member checking process authenticated data transcripts for analysis, which showed evidence that

the origin of information is reliable for coding. Aligned with Lincoln and Gruba (1995),

establishing an audit trail and providing reflexivity throughout the inquiry process were crucial

elements of rigor in this qualitative study. Houghton et al. (2013) insisted that comprehensive

note taking, journaling, and transcription analyzed within NVivo aid in auditing bias

representations of information. The data analysis process identified common themes within 20 participant interviews. Common themes were examined within the interview question construct. Surrounding content describing participants' experiences supply a synoptic articulation of events during leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The audit checking and member checking process were applied to assure that all information was included that may have been missed within both manual and structural coding processes.

Confirmability

According to Miles et al. (2014) confirmability, addressing issues of trustworthiness include the evaluation of elements that influence researcher's judgement within data collection and analysis. Patton (2002) and Merriam (2014) determined that maximum variability provides a strategy to investigate the authenticity within the representation of various sample sources. Purposeful sampling of Millennial participants from diverse fields of management exposed an authentic chronicle of the research phenomenon. Setting up an audit trail through journaling transferred into NVivo prompt a deeper investigation of participant experiences. The reflexive approach suspends judgements that hindered effective coding and analysis (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985).

Data Saturation

O'Reilly and Parker (2012) affirmed that methods to obtain data saturation are undefined and obscure. Dworkin (2012) proposed that saturation occurred when emerging themes ceased, resulting in repetitious coding and redundancy within participant interviews. The study population included 20 participants. After coding and analysis of Participant 12, saturation of key emerging themes occurred. Pre-scheduling of interviews prior to data saturation enabled a

thorough evaluation of emerging themes within the remaining eight participant interviews. Divergent themes were found within Participant 11 and Participant 13 responses. Stakeholder and familial conceptualization of trust within relational exchanges emerged. In both cases, participants worked for a paternal family member who may contribute to increased levels of commitment and trust within the leader-to-employee relationship. Although these familial themes emerged, the evaluation of these participants' relational experiences provided depth and cumulative value. Data saturation is appropriate in that sampling resulted in exhaustive practices needed to understand the essence of leader-to-Millennial relationship development.

Summary of Findings

The objective of the study is to explore the Millennial experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Chapter 4 formalized and disclosed the steps taken during data collection and analysis. The finding extends management knowledge of Leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development within organizations. The interpretative phenomenological approach confirmed that Millennials understand that learning from managers is necessary for organizational and professional growth. Millennial employees rely on managers to provide knowledge through empowering social exchanges found within high-quality relations. High-quality relationships assist with organizational learning and retention (Chuang, Chen, & Tsai, 2015; Metcalf & Benn, 2013). Participants identified that building an effective relationship with their manager helped with role development. The findings rendered the following responses to answer the research central and sub questions.

Research Central Question

Research central question: What are Millennials perceptions of effective leader-to-employee relationship development? Research analysis revealed that Millennials perceived effective relationship development as a relational process. Align with the LMX theory, findings show leader task delegation that provided challenges and opportunities to learn facilitated role development. Leader empowerment behaviors support performance and commitment. The results also confirmed that Millennials preferred a collaborative working environment conducive to knowledge sharing. Millennials embraced mentoring as part of the training process. As a result, Millennials felt a sense of obligation to reciprocate with increased initiative. Millennials perceived that accepting challenging tasks would enhance their professional skill-set.

Sub Question 1a

Sub question 1a: How do Millennials perceive leader-to-employee relationships in the workplace? Data analysis determined that Millennials perceived leader-to-employee relations as containing (a) open communications, (b) employee autonomy, (c) mutual trust, (d) support, and (e) learning opportunities. Participants' shared that as leaders began to relinquish control to employees; mutual trust was established that enabled delegation of future challenging roles. Findings confirmed that future task delegations stimulated employees' desire to learn.

Sub Question 1b

Sub question 1b: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within role development practices? Millennials described social exchanges within role development as empowering. Manager's knowledge and trust, promote employee confidence. In return, Millennials felt comfortable with accepting increase tasks. Social exchanges provide a

platform for receiving knowledge to assist with organizational advancement. Social exchanges include weekly face-to-face interactions that allow task delegation, mentoring, and facilitate role development. Participants shared that working experience before their current job helped with professional development. In literature, Millennials are stereotyped as *job-hoppers*. Findings suggest that Millennials learn from their relationships with prior employers and view frequent changes in employment as a new challenge with an opportunity to learn. The knowledge acquired helped with current and future organizational performance.

Sub Question 1c

Sub question 1c: How do Millennials describe leader-to-employee social exchanges within task delegation practices? Millennials described leader-to-employee social exchanges within task delegation practices as direct communications to guide and support organizational role development. Direct communications empower innovation. Innovative social interactions provide an opportunity to brainstorm new strategies on current issues affecting the organization. In high-quality social exchanges, leaders provide constructive criticism to authorize employee organizational performance. Data analysis of participant transcripts described constructive criticism as leaders explaining issues with performance, in a manner that renders alternatives and encourages employee suggestions.

Sub Question 1d

How do Millennials describe high-quality relationships? Based on the information provided by participants, Millennials described high-quality relationships as collaborative work environments with direct and explicit communications. Participants explained that leaders should develop direct communication skills to promote effective relationship development. Managers

should trust employees with new job roles. Participants view micromanaging as a deterrent to relationship efficiency. Participants suggest that managers embrace employee creativity. Employees with creative ideas may present new methods to solve or complete tasks to boost collaborative performance. In conclusion, high-quality relationship development is a social exchange platform where both leaders and employees receive mutual benefits.

Chapter 4 contained the research design and methods that helped attain purposeful samples to explore Millennials shared experiences within leader-to-employee relationship development. Current research proposed that Millennial's prefer participative leader-to-employee social exchanges to build relationships (Chou, 2012; Day, 2014). According to Hines and Carbone (2013), Millennials prefer a decentralized approach to communication with frequent feedback as opposed to the traditional top-down knowledge filtration systems established within management. However, minimal information was found in the current literature to assist with understanding Millennials' concept of effective leader-to-employee relationship development. In this research study, participants shared experiences to broaden management's body of knowledge with regard to the retention and learning of Millennial employees. In Chapter 5, I expound on research findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and the implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative interpretative phenomenological study required the exploration of Millennial employees' experiences within leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The interpretative phenomenological research design helped collect and analyze data from 20 participants' experiences to understand leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The information broadens management knowledge within the retention and learning of Millennial employees. Emerging themes described Millennials' perceptions of relationship development as a relational process that incorporates both leader and employee attributes. Reciprocity developed because of an increased sense of obligation toward leaders who provided an empowering and collaborative work environment.

Discussion

The research finding determined that Millennial employees perceive effective leader-to-employee relationship development as social exchanges that empower individual development. As a result, both leader and employee reciprocate with personal knowledge and resources to assist with mutual goal achievement. Empowerment behaviors were described as providing (a) opportunities to learn, (b) mentoring, (c) collaborative environment, (d) open communications, (e) direct communications, and (f) constructive criticism. Employee reciprocity is an effect of leader empowerment behaviors. Millennials perceive reciprocity as an increased sense of obligation in response to leader trust and mutual respect developed through daily social exchanges that enable and sustains high-quality relationship development. Figure 12 is a model I constructed for the purpose of this study to provide an understanding of my respondents' perceptions of effective leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development.
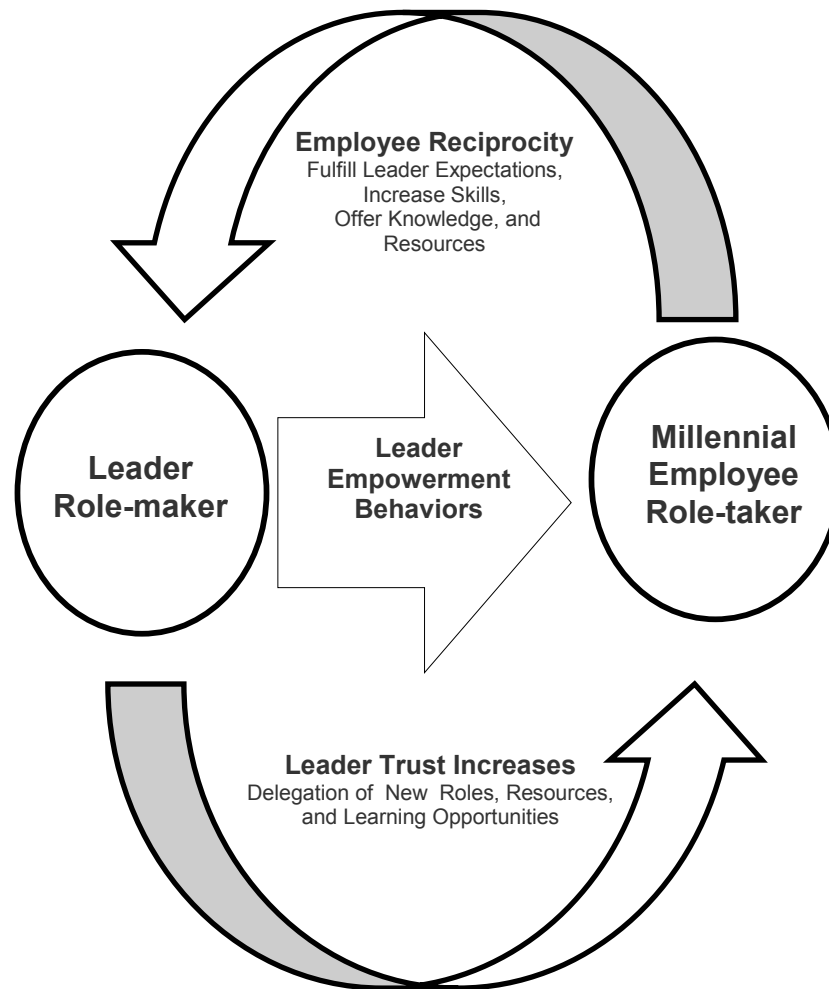
Figure 12. Effective leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development model. The leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development includes the leader as the role-maker and Millennial employee as the role-taker. The leader initiates the relationship development process. Leader delegation of task with the support of empowerment behaviors aid in the creation of Millennial learning and reciprocity. As Millennial employees fulfill role expectations, leaders increase trust needed to assign new challenges. As the relationship matures, the leader relinquishes more control to the Millennial employee.

Empowerment Behaviors

Empowerment facilitates individual work satisfaction and increased performance (Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015). According to Li-wen (2014) manager empowerment behaviors help mediate employee values toward work autonomy, build the internal confidence needed within highly

competitive environments. In this research, Participants' sense of empowerment assisted with high-quality relationship development. Millennials described empowerment as managers' activities that provide a work culture that inspires learning. The evidence further suggests that managers' empowerment behaviors include task delegation practices that challenge employees' critical thinking abilities and skills.

Millennial participants explained that knowledge and hands-on experience helped build confidence. The delegation of new roles shows employees that managers trust their professional capabilities. Mentoring plays an executive role in ensuring that risks are minimized in that managers engage and guide Millennial employees during emergent challenges. Emergent challenges are incidents that occur that require an immediate response, critical thinking, and senior-level experience (Scarlet, 2013; Ulaga & Loveland, 2014).

Although managers' empowerment behaviors contribute to effective leader-to-Millennial relationship development, participants contend that employees must express and openness to learning. The research data showed that openness to learning is displayed when employees accept work challenges outside of their knowledge scope. Openness to learning was also described as administering honest self-assessments and ownership of mistakes. According to 30% of research participants, professional errors provide managers with an opportunity to offer constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is perceived by Millennials as a mentoring approach to help retain organizational knowledge. Managers, who use mistakes as an opportunity to guide, increase Millennial employee receptivity and respect. Effective employee relationships start with honest communications done through face-to-face meetings. Participants identified that an open-door policy helped build trust and increased collaborative performance. Consistent

collective behaviors that share knowledge and decision-making, increase employee commitment (Lam, Xu, and Chan, 2015). Managers' communications that inform and provide constructive criticism strengthen leader-to-employee allegiance (Michael, 2014; Gkorezis et al., 2015; Gallicano, 2013). Participants expressed that manager verbal communications can encourage independence. The dialogue that occurs after an error enables the learning process needed for organizational growth.

Results indicate that providing an efficient mentoring model and encouraging collective problem solving contribute to Millennial employee reciprocity. Managers' interest in Millennial organizational development enlivens employee accountability. Participants revealed that when managers shared knowledge, resources, and trust within task delegations, they were eager to take on future responsibilities. Managers' trusting behaviors helped with relationship maturation. Participants reported that acquiring more responsibilities supported organizational learning and performance. In response, leaders delegated challenging tasks and shared control in the execution of critical operational roles.

Manager and employee respect, support high-quality relationship development. Mangers' respect for employees' role and skills aid in goal achievement, organizational growth, and creativity (Carmeli et al., 2015). Millennial participants shared that they felt undervalued when managers delegated tasks neglecting employee current workload and skillset. Courteous interactions help gain trust needed to motivate high-quality relationship development (Saetren & Laumann, 2014). The relational process is interactive. Participants shared that employee reverence for managers' competency and decision-making could aid in effective social exchanges needed to drive innovation and problem solving. In agreement with Clarke and

Mahadi (2015), mutual respect enables psychological growth and self-worth required to increase organizational trust and commitment.

Reciprocity

Identified in the LMX theory, reciprocity of knowledge, resources, and skills is a product of high-quality relationship development (Aarons & Sommerfeld, 2012; Caimo & Lomi, 2014). According to Degado-Marquez, Hurtado-Torres, and Aragon-Correa (2012), trust aids in reciprocal behaviors. The authors affirmed that as a leader and employee increase trust within their relationship, expectations toward future roles and behaviors broaden. Individuals within the relationship interchange trustor and trustee social behaviors (Thielmann & Hilbig, 2014). A trustor is an individual with organizational expectations who guides risk-taking behaviors toward the trustee in a dyadic relationship (Jones & Shah, 2015). Jones and Shah further explained that a trustee is the individual responsible for upholding trustor's expectations and role fulfillment.

As individuals within organizational relations observe and experience trust, they respond in a similar manner (Liu & Wang, 2013). Berneth, Walker, and Harris (2015) determined that feelings of obligation occur as trustee fulfills reciprocity demands. The trustor provides resources to satisfy and complete the reciprocal process (Jones & Shah, 2015). Relationship quality influences the reciprocity process in that high-quality relationships positively affect both trustor and trustee behaviors (Casimir et al., 2014). As the dyadic relationship matures, reciprocity behaviors provide mutual benefits to both leader and employee.

Reciprocity behaviors appeared within Millennial participants' descriptions of high-quality relationship elements. Participants revealed trustworthiness as an essential component within manager's risk-taking within task delegations. Because of effective relationship

development, individuals disbursed time and knowledge to assist with collective goal achievement. Aligned with LMX literature, participants shared that as the relationship matured; leaders delegated challenging roles with increased autonomy. Participants felt compelled to complete assigned tasks with hopes of obtaining challenging roles to reinforce learning.

The research findings established that reciprocity behaviors are a result of effective relationship development. Informal social interactions assisted in the reciprocity process. Leader-to-employee relationships that allowed the Millennials to share issues, where the managers provided counsel and resources for personal growth, facilitated the reciprocity process. Employees were compelled to take on differing roles to assist managers. Participant expressed that they took the initiative to support managers during strenuous and adverse circumstances.

Millennials Shared Experiences of Relationship Development

The leader-to-Millennial relationship development process includes (a) role-making, (b) role-taking, and (c) role routinization. Participants communicated that manager's ability to share knowledge through guidance and support help meet organizational challenges. The relationship development process enabled employee learning and professional confidence.

Role-making. The LMX was significant in providing the foundation for qualitative analysis of leader as role-maker. Research findings identified that leaders provide job criteria, strategies, and guidance for employee role development. Participants' esteem of managers' knowledge and experience, as an essential component of job performance, inspired the demand for face-to-face communications. Leader-to-employee communication helped build an understanding of individual role placement within the overall success of the organization.

Role-taking. Participants revealed that comprehension of job criteria, skill, and leader empowerment behaviors resulted in employee's openness to acquire challenging tasks. Leader-to-Millennial social interactions that provide constructive criticism and guidance helped build employee confidence. Kelly and Bisel (2014) affirmed that consistent social exchanges between leader and employee build trust needed for high-risk task delegations. Millennial participants perceived that leader risk-taking, through delegating challenging tasks outside of current role, provides an opportunity for personal development and organizational growth.

Role routinization. Role routinization occurs throughout role development (Kelley & Bisel, 2014). In the role routinization stage, leader and employee engage purposely for organizational goal achievement (Osman & Nahar, 2015). The findings of this study identified that Millennials responded to leader mentorship and empowerment during role routinization. Leadership behaviors stimulate interdependence and reciprocity in that participants expressed an increased sense of responsibility and eagerness to work toward organizational success. Results support collaboration and goal sharing as possible components of job satisfaction. Shared organizational goals are the foundation for increased performance and retention (Berson, Da'as, & Waldman, 2015).

Analysis of Gap Found in Literature Review

The themes in shared participants' experiences warrant a deeper understanding of effective leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Evaluation of study results and current research within the literature review, help minimize the gap in managements' conceptualization of Millennials in the workplace to promote learning and retention. Research rigor enriches meaning with regard to the relational process of employee development. Study results from in-

depth interviews incorporate elements to minimize leadership concerns towards implementing organizational change in the multigenerational workplace. The following will evaluate results of this study and literature reviewed regarding (a) Millennials and traditional hierarchical structures, (b) communications and socialization skills, (c) learning and knowledge acquirement, (d) leadership preferences, and (e) Millennials and retention.

Millennials and traditional hierarchical structures. Eversole et al. (2012) proposed that developing leader-to-Millennial relationships challenge traditional hierarchical systems. Traditional hierarchical systems incorporate top-down filtration of information and power distance that hinder the flow of knowledge needed for Millennial learning (Brown et al., 2015). Participants shared that managers who incorporate an "open-door" policy, established a culture for knowledge acquirement and interactive engagement. Workplace environments that allow employees to interact and observe managers behaviors, encourage Millennial organizational contribution (Graybill, 2014). Research findings disconfirm seminal research theorist who claims that the cohort prefers digital and technological social platforms for workplace engagement (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Qualitative analysis shows that Millennial employees demand relational connections to assist with learning and commitment.

The research findings broaden Hershatter and Epstein (2010) claims that Millennials will acquire information from members outside of their direct chain of command. Participants acknowledged that their relationships with their manager provided valuable information essential for organizational advancement. Aligned with Bremer et al. (2013) and Winter and Jackson (2014), daily social engagement in the workplace enable active role development. Participants understood that traditional hierarchical structures provide guidelines needed for organizational

cultural development and knowledge sharing. In-depth interviews revealed that as the manager to employee relationship matures, Millennials expect work autonomy required for professional confidence and growth.

Millennials' communication and socialization skills. Chou (2012) proposed that Millennial socializations influence organizational changes in leadership systems. The author proposed that communications within executive departments encourage systemic and transparent engagement policies. Hays (2014) affirmed that periodic meetings and open dialogue regarding business vision and mission contribute to organizational performance during rapid advancing markets and globalization. Participants identified that weekly face-to-face meetings and shared calendars provide a platform for transparent and direct communications regarding organizational challenges and goals.

Research findings and current literature are the basis for surmising that Millennial employees embrace constructive criticism and effective communications process. Mishra et al. (2014) proposed that employee perceptions of effective internal communications increase trust and organizational engagement. In addition, effective communications include authentic, relevant, and prompt, responsive behaviors. Mishra et al. research aligns with participants' perceptions of effective communications within leader-to-employee relationship development. Result analysis identified that communications within role development include timely and transparent conversations that aided in understanding employee mistakes and dilemmas. Millennials shared that empowering and supportive social exchanges build critical thinking skills needed to minimize redundant work errors.

Research results confirmed that leadership exchanges help with knowledge sharing and learning. Participants' perceived mentorship as a primary source of learning support that allowed a leader and employee to interact to build trust. As a result of ongoing communications within relationship development, employees commit to organizational goal and performance strategies. The study does not explore the type of dialogue or language shared within informal social interactions within relationship development. However, participants expressed those managers who provide a platform to exchange personal and professional information help build trust.

During interviews, participants shared that employee openness and honesty aid in effective relationship development. Aligned with LMX theory; results confirmed that employee behaviors influence leader's receptivity and eagerness to share organizational knowledge (Imran & Fatima, 2013; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014). Millennial work distress may contribute to the lack of honest communications regarding skill aptitude. Participants suggested that Millennial employees should immediately take responsibility for mistakes. Constructing a professional dialogue with leaders to share task dilemmas and comprehension difficulties build trust within relationship development.

The findings suggest that social intelligence may play an essential role needed to strengthen Millennial's skills within professional communications development. Social intelligence is an individual's ability to create a platform to communicate and express feelings and ideas with others within an intimate setting or group (Huvila, Ek, & Widén, 2014; Rahim, 2014). Social intelligence incorporates (a) confidence and self-respect, (b) clarity of expression, (c) awareness of social strategies (d) authenticity, and (e) empathy (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014). Researchers confirmed that social intelligence assists with knowledge absorption in that

organizational members retain information based on increased social awareness and resourcefulness to engage management for optimal learning (Nouri, Pourghaz, & Jenaabadi, 2015).

Millennials' learning and knowledge acquirement. Seminal generational researchers determined that technology performs a crucial role in Millennial learning and knowledge acquirement (Howe & Straus, 2009; Twenge, 2007). Social engagements within a professional setting fortify organizational learning and knowledge transfer (Hadar, 2013; Sung & Choi, 2014). Investigation of Millennial learning and knowledge process help understand components to assist leaders with providing resources to encourage employee organizational involvement (Trees, 2015). Leader-to-Millennial employee relative effectiveness contributes to the belief that the cohort prefers social learning. Day et al. (2014) contends that leaders, who incorporate robust social engagements with employees, provide the foundation for high-quality relationship development within distinct organizational groups.

In contrast to the researchers' belief that Millennials prefer technological methods for learning and knowledge acquirement, participants stressed that face-to-face interactions and constructive criticism provide the best methods for knowledge acquirement (Berman & Marshall, 2014; Jorgensen, 2003; Twenge, 2007). Participants, who experienced mentoring and empowering interactions with managers, found greater job satisfaction and express eagerness to accept additional roles to increase learning. Participant responses confirm Balda Mora (2011) and Gosh (2014) assertion that knowledge is relative. The authors explain that social exchanges found in mentorship underwrite learning advancement. Although this study does not explore or define the Millennial learning process, emerging themes provide a shared narrative explaining

relationship values that advance management research concerning the implementation of leader social skills to enable employee learning for job performance.

Millennials' leadership preferences. In seminal studies, researchers identified Millennial leadership preferences as a core component in the development of effective management systems (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Twenge, 2013). Further investigation in management literature established that Millennial employees prefer decentralized leaderships methods and subsequently, challenge traditional hierarchical internal communications structures. Johnston (2013) proposed that Millennial employees prefer guidance and mentorship in contrast to transactional and transformational methods of leadership. According to Bass and Bass (2009), transactional leaders encourage employees through tangible resources to complete organizational goals. Bass and Bass advised that transformational leaders encourage and enforce methods to help employees exceed organizational expectations.

The central problem and purpose of this study did not assert Millennial leadership preferences as a key element within relationship development. Instead, the research required participants to describe the essence of relationship development. The research findings from in-depth interviews extend management knowledge concerning Millennial preferences of leadership methods for relationship development. Participants' responses suggest that Millennials prefer collaborative leadership systems. Participants described collaborative leadership systems as the involvement of employee ideas and concepts to manage and complete an organizational process. Participants agreed that teamwork is essential. In particular, managers should include employee skills, ideas, and feedback within change initiatives. Aligned with Payton (2015) and Braun et al.

(2013) studies, sharing and mutual engagement help in developing effective internal relationships needed to increase employee productivity.

Millennials and retention. Millennials perceive social interactions as a bi-directional pathway to share information of mutual benefit, defined within the employee's psychological contract (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015). A psychological contract is a dynamic mutual employment agreement that incorporates the perceptions and cognition of organizational role performance (Windle and von Treur, 2014). Researchers determined that the psychological contract eventuate during initial interaction and recruitment (Osman & Nahar, 2015). Managers' expectations influence the hiring process. Organizational goals provide managers with the guidelines to establish job descriptions and role demands during the interview process (Chien & Lin, 2012). Employee cognition of professional role and task associated with job placement helps build perceptions toward individual and organizational values (Mead & Manner, 2012).

The psychological contract is a predictor of manager satisfaction and employee retention (Ng et al., 2013). Manager and employee differences in perception, concerning performance quality, affect contract stability (Festings & Scahfer, 2014). Restubog, Zagenczyk, Bordia, Bordia, and Chapman (2015) proposed that a psychological contract breach occurs because of employee perceptions of instability. Restubog et al. affirmed that employee perception creates negative behaviors toward leaders and organizations. Understanding social changes within psychological contract expectations help broaden management knowledge. Feastings and Schaefer confirm that generational difference provides a new framework for defining psychological contract violations that may enable increased retention of young professionals in the workplace.

Direct evaluation of Millennials' perception of employee psychological contract phenomenon was not addressed in qualitative interviews. However, to access participants conceptualization of effective relationship development, Millennial expectations of social exchanges was an essential component in exploring and gathering themes for a shared narrative. Participants' expectations helped determine that leaders' empowerment behaviors provided components to support employee learning and reciprocity. In conclusion, learning opportunities are critical to role commitment in that social exchanges that promote knowledge transfer engage Millennial employees and assist with organizational development.

Increased retention of Millennials in the workplace aid in organizational learning and professional development in that the culture embraces activities to support the knowledge transfer process (Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015). In agreement with the current literature, Millennial retention is low compared to older generations in the workplace. The United States Department of Labor determined that the Millennial average tenure is 3.0 years compared to Boomer employee average of 10.4 years. The average tenure of Millennial participants in this study is 3.475 years. Although the average is slightly higher than the United States Labor Statistics, further studies within particular organizational fields should determine, given the market and growth potential, employee retention rates for performance measures.

Interview evaluations explored participants' feelings toward social exchanges and expectation involving task delegation and role development. Themes identified that Millennial employees desire advancement opportunities within organizations and embrace challenges to increase learning and self-reliance. Increased learning includes gaining information to help with professional growth and maturation. Activities associated with building skills inside and outside

of the organization shape the reciprocal relationship with managers. Participants expressed that managers' consideration of individual goals enabled informal and open exchanges. Manager social behaviors encouraged employee commitment and satisfaction.

Limitations of the Study

In the research proposal, I provided two limitations of the qualitative evaluation of Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development. The first limitation entailed the individual evaluation of Millennial employees' perceptions instead of both leader and Millennial employee responses to relationship development. The qualitative assessment of 20 Millennial participant experiences in leader-to-Millennial relationship development did not integrate the exploration of the managers' perspective. The sole evaluation of Millennials experience provided data on experiences and social exchanges needed for interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Incorporating the manager's perspective may validate or disconfirm Millennial perceptions of professional relationship development. Identification of similarity and differences may provide elements to enhance leadership style within the multigenerational workplace. Researcher's evaluations of the leader-to-member exchanges have examined employee's attitudes toward leaders as a key determinant of relationship development (Fisk & Friesen, 2012). The conceptual design is common when exploring employee perceptions within the workplace.

The second limitation of the research study is professional experiences and biases may influence my attitude towards Millennial participants. According to Patton (2002), personal experience is a limitation and may hinder the efficacy of data collection and analysis of

participant experiences. As a small business consultant, I am often challenged with providing resources and knowledge to assist owners with managing the multigenerational workplace. In particular, developing work systems to attract and retain the youngest member of today's workforce. Experiences influenced my doctoral endeavor. The clients I have serviced had numerous issues with the socialization and retention of Millennials within their workplace. Procedures applied aligned with Berger (2015) reflexive approach for reducing bias. Developing a method early on in the research developmental stages helped to minimize preconceptions and judgments throughout the process. The reflexive strategy was critical to the credibility and dependability of data sampling and analysis.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include exploring dyadic dialogue that may provide a holistic perspective of leader and Millennial employee characteristics that contribute to effective relationship development. Research methods should include the exploration of all paths of daily communications. Daily communications within leader-to-Millennial employee dyads include verbal dialogue within task delegation, emails, text messages, and meeting recordings to examine the core of leadership communication concerning Millennial employee relationship development. Investigation of tone and word placement within an everyday conversation can expound on empowerment patterns that enable effective relationship development. Advancements in research should explore leader and Millennial employee assessments of dyadic behaviors to discern if commonalities or divergent perceptions exist. Evaluation of both leader and Millennials within relationships can help researchers access relational scenarios and terms to assist with the development of future relational leadership theories.

Researchers should evaluate if organizational size influence leader-to-Millennial relationship development. The small business internal structure provides accessibility of knowledge from a diversity of sections within the social system. Smaller social systems may assist with Millennial employee learning (Stam et al., 2014). Millennial perceptions of insufficiency in professional growth may contribute to the lack of retention within smaller businesses with limited resources. Large organizations have greater power distance with room for employee promotion, but lack leadership resources to empower Millennial employees for organizational advancement. Recommendations for future research should address business size within effective leader-to-Millennial employee relationship development.

Social Change Implications

The research findings helped with defining three implications for positive social change. The first is awareness of Millennial perceptions of leader-to-employee relationship development. Understanding the essence of Millennial experiences provides relational components for organizational learning and retention, whereas traditional leadership systems embrace transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership as key aspects of implementing organizational change initiatives. Information from participant interviews helped diminish stereotypes that may influence negative perceptions of millennial within an organizational social system (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015). Researchers contend that Millennial workers are job-hoppers and lack organizational commitment (Case et al., 2014). Research findings broaden management knowledge in that reports identified that Millennials are obliged to commit to leaders who provide opportunities to learn. In other words, Leader-to-Millennial employee relationships that contain a platform for organizational growth encourage retention.

Second, empowerment behaviors permit a deeper understanding of Millennial expectations within organizations. A magnified Millennial perspective aid in the retention of young professionals who provide valuable knowledge within today's hyper-changing work environment. Leadership empowerment behaviors provide (a) opportunities to learn, (b) mentoring, (c) a collaborative environment, (d) direct communication, and (e) constructive criticism. Participants revealed that Millennial social behaviors may also contribute to leaders' inclination to empower employees. Interview responses indicate that employee willingness to learn, openness to communicate, and respect for managers role, help build high-quality relationships. Shared participants' narratives suggest that Millennial employee's social intelligence may positively contribute to relationship quality. Social intelligence is an individual's ability to use knowledge and social skills to build authentic relationships (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014). Subsequently, a quantitative evaluative method is needed to assess if relationship quality is dependent on Millennial employee social intelligence.

Finally, the findings of this study proffer future researchers to glean and advance relational leadership styles and theories. Advancement of relational methods of leadership assists with rapidly changing multigenerational systems. Effective relationship development creates sustainable work cultures (Jones, 2016). Rapid change is incessant and the norm given technology, ethnic, environmental, and economic elements that affect organizations (Genovese, 2015; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Sarpong, Amstéus, & Amankwah-Amoah, 2015). Understanding and acknowledging social changes within the relational aspect of leadership elicits meaningful discussions to introduce innovative professional development resources. Advanced professional development resources, such as relational leadership education, and

Millennial social intelligence training within internship programs, assists with building strong organizational members to cultivate reciprocal relationships for economic survival.

Conclusion

Multi-generational social exchanges are imperative for the advancement of organizational systems. Knowledge transferred within social exchanges aid in the continuance and advancement of societal norms in the midst of rapid change (Genovese, 2015; Sorokin, 1959; Tams, 2013). The Collaboration of diverse generational perspectives helps meet the societal challenges (Mannheim, 1952). Mannheim further theorized, if generations cease to build robust relationships within organizational units, the effects could hinder innovation needed for social sustainability. Social interactions in the workplace are of particular concern in that it provides knowledge to meet social and global demands (Cummings et al., 2013; Jones, 2015). Social interactions also help in the transference of knowledge required for learning and job satisfaction (Howe & Jackson, 2012).

In current literature, researchers identified a gulf in older generations' perceptions of Millennial employees in the workplace that influence effective multigenerational social exchanges (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Lester et al., 2012). Stereotypes and misperceptions have affected the growth of high-quality relationships needed for organizational learning and retention of the Millennial employees (Graen & Schiemann, 2013). Although transformational and charismatic leadership methods are central to implementing organizational change strategies, researchers provide information to suggest that relational leadership systems aid in the management of generational diversity in the workplace (Choi et al., 2013; Chou, 2012).

The qualitative evaluation of real-life experiences of 20 Millennial employee participants working with their leader for one year or more explored social exchanges that build effective leader-to-Millennial relationships needed for positive social change. The information found broaden research knowledge on organizational social systems that can enable effective communications strategies that empower and engage employee learning. Millennials feel obligated towards leaders because of empowering connections established within professional role development. In current literature, employee obligation aid in performance and increased retention (Deo, 2014; Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). In conclusion, Understanding Millennials' perceptions of leader-to-employee relationships assist the development of relational contributions to leadership, to promote increased learning and retention of young professionals within multigenerational organizations.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Subject: Invitation to participate for research study

Study Title: A Qualitative Evaluation of Leader-to-Millennial Relationship Development

Dear XX,

My name is Tywana Williams, I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Management Department at Walden University. I am conducting a dissertation study as part of the requirements for my management degree specializing in Leadership and Organizational Change, and I would like to invite you to participate within the gathering of Millennial work experiences.

I am studying the Millennial generation's experiences within relationships with organizational leaders or managers. Participants selected must be 18 to 32 years of age and working with their current manager for one year or more. If you do not meet this age requirement, please feel free to recommend individuals who meet this criterion. The information provides a platform to learn and develop methods to assist with developing effective multi-generational work environments.

Organizations face a variety of internal challenges in today's workplace. Three generations working side by side with differing values and styles can deter traditional methods of leadership. This study is created to evaluate the perceptions of the youngest member of the organization to broaden management's understanding within the (a) retention of Millennials (b) development of effective multi-generational relationships, and (c) implementation of leadership relational interventions for effective knowledge sharing.

A presentation will be given to summarize the research finding. All information gathered from the participant is confidential. Information reported will provide common themes found from shared experiences. Recommendations will be given to assist with navigating leadership challenges within the development of high quality relationships with Millennials. The information may contribute to organizational change initiatives that may minimize the financial and intellectual expenses.

Please feel free to refer professionals, family, or friends who meet the criteria of the research study. Information can be forwarded to perspective participants. If the individual decides to participate they can contact me at (631) 647-4693 or email me at tywana.williams@waldenu.edu. Participants will receive an email explaining the research purpose, process, and participant rights. A consent form will be attached that must be signed before the interview appointment.

Thanking you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Tywana Williams

Appendix B: 1st Chamber of Commerce Letter of Cooperation

Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce
164 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743
631-423-6100
www.huntingtonchamber.com

Letter of Cooperation

May 5, 2014

Dear Ms. Williams,

Based on my review of your research and information provided regarding the studies purpose and proposal, I give permission for you to contact individuals within our membership regarding young professionals and leadership relationships. As part of this study, I understand that individual participation will be voluntary and at members own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the researcher without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Ellen O'Brien
Executive Director

Appendix C: 2ⁿᵈ Chamber of Commerce Letter of Cooperation

Melville Chamber of Commerce
585 Broadhollow Rd, Melville ,Y 11747
(631) 777-6260
www.melvillechamber.org
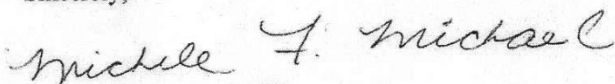
Letter of Cooperation

Date May 1, 2014

Dear Ms. Williams,

Based on my review of your research and information provided regarding the studies purpose and proposal, I give permission for you to contact individuals within our membership regarding young professionals and leadership relationships. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview members and staff. Individual participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the researcher without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Michele F. Michael

Michele F Michael
Chair Melville Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group

Appendix D: Qualitative Interview Protocol

Table A1

Interview Protocol

Questions

LMX and Relationship Development Practices
  1. Describe the relationship you have with your manager?
  2. What were your expectations toward your manager when you first started working at your company?
  3. In what ways did your manager exceed your expectations?
  4. Using your working experience as a reference, how would you describe the purpose of the manager-to-employee relationship?
  5. Identify the elements required for an effective manager to employee relationship development?

LMX and Role Development Practices
  6. Share an experience that may have assisted you with developing your role within the company?

LMX and Task Delegation Practices
  7. What is the nature of the procedure used by your manager to delegate tasks?
  8. Describe how you feel when your manager gives you a task that may be outside of your regular duties?
  9. What are some of the reasons you would volunteer to do tasks that may be outside of the scope of your normal duties?

Millennials and High-Quality Relationships
  10. What advice would you give managers to assist them with building a high-quality relationship with his or her employee?
  11. What advice would you give a new employee to assist them with building a high- quality relationship with his or her employee?
  12. Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed regarding your relationship with your manager?

Appendix E: Expert Panel Email Invitation

Study Title: A Qualitative Evaluation of Leader-to-Millennial Relationship Development

Dear XX,

My name is Tywana Williams, I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Management Department at Walden University. I am conducting a dissertation study as part of the requirements for my management degree specializing in Leadership and Organizational Change, and I would be honored if you could find the time to assist me with the evaluation and validation of my qualitative interview tool.

The purpose of the qualitative interview is to understand the experiences of Millennial employees to address the gap within the comprehension of the cohort's responses toward building high performing relationships with leadership. The leader-to-member exchange (LMX) theory provides the conceptual framework for qualitative inquiry. Seminal theorist of the relational leadership theory proposed that activities (communications, task delegation, and employee performance) contribute to the development of high quality relationships. High quality relationships are described as organizational social exchanges that influence employee behaviors toward extending resources (time, skills, and knowledge) outside his or her employee contractual obligations.

The qualitative interview is constructed to explore millennial experiences of organizational relationship development through questions that articulate the essence of social exchange performance. The interview questions are as follows:

1. Tell me about your experience working at your company?
2. Can you describe the relationship you have with your manager?
3. What were your expectations toward your manager when you started working for the company?
4. In what ways did your relationship with your manager meet your expectations?
5. In what ways did your relationship with your manager exceed your expectations?
6. Using your working experience as a reference; how would you define the purpose of the leader-to-employee relationship?
7. If you were comparing your relationship with your manager and your co-worker, what would be some of the differences?
8. If you were comparing your relationship with your manager and your co-worker, what would be some of the similarities?
9. Can you share an experience that may have assisted you with developing your role within the company?
10. What is the procedure used by your manager to delegate tasks?

11. Can you describe how you feel when your manager gives you a task that maybe outside of your regular duties?
12. What would be some of the reasons you would volunteer to do tasks that may be outside of the scope of your normal duties?
13. From your working experience what would you say is an important factor needed to establish a relationship with your manager or leader?
14. What advice would you give a college student that would help them build a relationship with their manager?
15. What advice would you give a manager that would help them build a relationship with their employee?

Expert panel validation of the interview items is critical for effective sampling. The qualitative interview analysis form attached assists with evaluating question content, clarity, and appropriateness. I will promptly review and revise interview questions. A second email correspondence will include edits for expert approval. If you have questions regarding my dissertation research please contact me at (631)647-4693 or email:tywana.williams@waldenu.edu.

Thank you in advance for the quality of your time and input.

Tywana Williams

Appendix F: IRB Forms and Approval

Dear Ms. Williams,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "A Qualitative Evaluation of Leader-to-Millennial Relationship Development."

Your approval # is 02-10-15-0230896. You will need to reference this number in your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on February 9, 2016. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 1 week of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained at the IRB section of the Walden website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Researchers are expected to keep detailed records of their research activities (i.e., participant log sheets, completed consent forms, etc.) for the same period of time they retain the original data. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKlmdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,
Libby Munson
Research Ethics Support Specialist
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance
Email: irb@waldenu.edu
Fax: 626-605-0472
Phone: 612-312-1283

Office address for Walden University:
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link:
http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix G: Informed Consent

You are invited to take part in a research study of the Millennial generation's responses toward current relationships with organizational leaders and managers. The researcher is inviting individuals between the ages of 18-33 working with his or her current manager for 1 year or more to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Tywana Williams, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to collect data regarding your working relationship with your manager or leader.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, the procedures are as follows:
- Meet for an interview at a mutually agreed upon time and place.
- Attend Interview that will take approximately 90.
- Agree to audio taping of interview for further analysis.
- Review interview transcripts to ensure that information is authentic
- Follow up meeting (face to face or telephone) to answer any questions regarding interview process and content.

Here are some sample questions:
__ Can you describe the relationship you have with your manager?
__ Can you describe how you feel when your manager gives you a task that may be outside of your regular duties?
__ What advice would you give a new employee to assist them with building a high quality relationship with his or her employee?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. The potential benefit of participating within this study is to provide a platform to express your experiences to assist with the implementation of future leadership and organizational initiatives. The information may contribute to building effective relationships within organizational communities.

Payment:

This is a voluntary activity to broaden management's knowledge within the evaluation and comprehension of leader-to-Millennial relationship development. Therefore, reimbursements or gifts will not be given in exchange for participation.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be stored within a secure external hard drive located in a locked filing cabinet. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone (631)647-4693 and/or email tywana.williams@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is _____ and it expires on _____.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Appendix H: Participant Inclusion/Exclusion Screening Questions

I'm calling because you expressed interest in my research study evaluating the experiences of Millennial employees within relationships with leaders. Can you please take a moment to answer the following questions?

Please be advised that all questions are to ensure that you fit the criteria for this research. Again I must stress that all information is confidential and for research participation purposes only.

1. **How old are you?**

2. **What is the name of your organization?**

3. **What is your organizations primary field of business or service?**

4. **How many years have you been with the organization/company?**

5. **How long have you worked with your current manager or leader?**

6. **Finally, this question is necessary, in that English is the primary language used in the development of the interview questions. Do you fluently speak and understand the English language?**

The information will assist in identifying if the individual fits the following criteria:

- Age (18-33)
- Type of organization
- Employed for one year or more.
- Worked with manager/leader one year or more
- Speak and understand English