



**Beyond Boomer Benefits: Examining How Millennial Identity Influences Career Benefit Expectations**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

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Previous research has focused on work-life values of the Millennial generation and compared these values to the generations that have preceded them. This study investigates the impact this shift in values will have on career benefit expectations of the Millennial generation. A sample of 178 participants between the ages of 18 and 35 completed an online survey in order to collect information about their career benefit expectations. The *Lyons Work Values Survey (LWVS)*, Likert scales measuring new benefit offerings, Likert scales measuring Millennial Identity, and an open-ended question regarding career benefit offerings were used to determine the possibility of a relationship between Millennial work-life values and career benefit expectations. The results implied that although there was a correlation between Millennial Identity and new benefit expectations, the correlation was relatively weak. However, the results provide statistical significance that Millennials desire new and unique benefit package offerings that include flexible work arrangements, modified work environments and personal wellness opportunities.

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**INTRODUCTION**

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With the arrival of Millennials in the workforce, there is an expected shift in attitudes and behaviours differing from those presented by past generations (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012). We expect this shift in behaviours to have an influence on career benefit expectations. To engage employees of different generations with varying life stage needs and interests, organizations have been implementing new policies and programs that offer more flexibility and choices to attract new workers. (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012).

“With traits and workplace expectations that differ from those observed in other generations, and with a size that threatens to overtake the total number of baby boomers, generation Yers are positioned to influence (if not drastically change) current leadership approaches” (Piper, 2012)

Due to the generational influence presented in the above quotation, it is critical employers know what motivates Millennials, intrinsically and extrinsically, and how to adapt their benefit packages and leadership environments to fit these new motivators and behaviours. Research on work-life values and millennial career benefit expectations will help corporations improve and develop new benefit packages that increase retention specifically regarding their millennial workforce. . Research suggests that Millennials value supportive work environments and stress the importance of work-life balance (Sturges & Guest, 2004). There has also been evidence that indicates significant generational differences in world views, attitudes toward authority, and perspectives on work. Millennials expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotion, and pay; they want a life outside of work and are generally not likely to sacrifice it for their employers (Gursoy, Maier, & chi, 2008). Previous studies have assumed Millennials to respond similarly to career benefit offerings and have limited research about the variations within the generation. The goal of this study is to analyze Millennial Identity variances amongst the greater

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millennial generation and to determine millennial work-life values to discover attractive employer career benefit offerings. Using a medium sized sample of participants (generally from the University of Guelph and surrounding area), the purpose of this research is to analyze career benefit expectations and to provide insight for employers and recruiters as to why they need to either maintain or adapt current benefit offerings to attract the arrival of Millennials in the workforce.

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### LITERATURE REVIEW

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The Millennial generation refers to people who are currently between the ages of 18 to 35. According to previous research, Millennials are categorized as being needy, confident, entitled, and disloyal among many other labels (Meyers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Although these are some of the common stereotypes associated with Millennials, it is important to note that not all Millennials strongly identify with these characteristics. The entire population in this demographic should not be generalized as possessing these same traits. This study is designed to measure Millennial Identity: leading (completely associate with millennial stereotypes), lagging (associate with some millennial stereotypes), or opposing (do not associate with millennial stereotypes), in each participant and to then use that information to decipher the importance of specific career benefit expectations.

#### **Millennial Work-Life Values**

Work-life values are the “generalized beliefs about the relative desirability of various aspects of work (e.g., pay, autonomy and working conditions) and work-related outcomes (e.g., prestige, accomplishment and fulfillment)” (Lyons, Higgins & Duxbury, 2010).

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, Several Millennial values were found to be prevalent in the conduction of this literature review, these are: work environment, work-life balance, and recognition and feedback. Each of these values are discussed in turn below.

### *Emphasis on Work Environment/Culture (Nurturing Work Environment)*

Employers who provide a supportive culture of non-work activities reduce the amount of work/non-work conflicts (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Although this is somewhat dated research, “Manager Quality” was rated as a top motivational factor (after pay) for Millennials, since they want an atmosphere where supervisors and managers are constantly available for feedback (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). This research is still relevant and important to include as more recent research has proven the constant need for feedback from superior authorities displayed by the millennial generation. According to Ciocco & Holtzman (2008) millennial students are characterized by their need for timely feedback as they feel an impulsive need for acceptance and often work zealously to achieve that approval. This is one of the many aspects that related to manager quality desired by Millennials. This stereotype is expected to carry on to the younger age bracket within the larger millennial generation as characteristics and values tend to be shaped by their times. This means that Millennials have been programmed from the moment of birth and have been influenced by the social experiences created during their youth and adult development (Raines, 2002). Although there is an expected variance within the millennial generation, those rating high on the Millennial Identity scale are expected to fall into this need for approval and feedback stereotype. This idea will be discussed in more detail under the heading *Emphasis on Recognition/Feedback System*.

Millennials also want good employees to work with and a nurturing work environment, likely a

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result of how they have been raised at home and from working in teams at school (Lyons, Ng & Schweitzer, 2010). According to Dhevabanchachai & Muangasame (2013), this generation values a lifestyle that is focused and involves a relaxed and creative work place and a style of management that is not too autocratic.

, They value being goal and team oriented, placing a specific emphasis on social and community activities and in general want teammates and/or friends at work instead of colleagues.

### *Emphasis on Scheduling Flexibility (Work-Life Balance)*

According to Sturges & Guest (2004), Millennials value work-life balance and having that balance is more important than work itself often times. They value balance between their personal and family needs and the requirements of their careers. In terms of scheduling, Millennials expect employers to value this balance and to avoid any work/non-work conflicts through offering flexible scheduling. Millennials want to be in control, they want more work-life balance, flexibility in their schedules, and the option for telecommuting (Spiro, 2006). Millennials also seek rapid advancement while ensuring meaningful and satisfying life outside of work (Lyons, Ng &

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Schweitzer, 2010). Lastly, given higher education levels, Millennials are more likely to negotiate the terms under which they work and demand work-life balance at every stage of career (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005; McDonald & Hite, 2008).

### *Emphasis on Recognition/Feedback System*

According to Monaco & Martin (2007), In work and social environments, Millennials feel pressured to constantly perform well in the eyes of those judging them currently and in the future. Through this pressure, Millennials desire constant feedback. Millennials become paralyzed from this desire as they are often unable to proceed forward without constructive feedback and provided direction. In order for this feedback to be effective, it needs to be of high quality and timely.. Companies also need to offer Millennials ample recognition and opportunities to help them network and develop strong relationships with their superiors at work so they feel supported (relating to overall company culture/environment as discussed above). This includes mentorship relationships with Baby Boomers, pay and salary systems, and networking opportunities. (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012).

Additionally, Millennials expect work and the work environment to be fun and require constant and immediate communication, feedback and rewards regarding their work performance (Adams, 2000). Lastly, Millennials like work with immediate challenges, including clear work and career path planning, that they can work towards, and in return gain recognition and respect (Dhevabanchachai & Muangasame, 2013).

### **Millennial Career Benefit Expectations**

Millennial career benefit expectations tend to focus around the priorities and career expectations sought by the millennial generation (Lyons, Ng & Schweitzer, 2010).

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Millennials expect employers to offer benefits such as competitive compensation, thorough benefit packages, personal and professional growth/development programs and opportunities to do well (Maughan, 2014).

### *Emphasis on Personal and Professional Development*

Members of the millennial generation seem to seek challenges in the workplace and want an opportunity to excel in their careers (Spiro, 2006). Millennials tend to set goals for themselves and seek to build ownership of their own tasks, improving their personal and professional development (Spiro, 2006). They also seek out managers who work closely with employees and those that will assist in their professional development within the workplace (Spiro, 2006).

Millennials are achievement-oriented and expect employers to provide ways to become successful (Friedell, Puskala, Smith & Villa, 2011). They tend to build strong work ethic when the work they are completing sets them up for achievement (Friedell et al., 2011). Millennials do not want to spend years developing their careers as they wish to receive rapid promotion and recognition, while looking for immediate gratification (Dhevabanchachai & Muangasame, 2013).

### *Emphasis on Health Benefits and Employee Wellness Programs*

. Millennial respondents rated medical, dental, vision, and life-insurance as being non-negotiable benefits in an employment setting, with medical benefits being the most important (Rawlins, Indvik & Johnson, 2008). Other benefits Millennials value include childcare, maternity/paternity leave, paid sick days, paid vacation days, and a good



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retirement plan (Rawlins, Indvik & Johnson, 2008). Rawlins, Indvik, & Johnson (2008) conducted this study to develop a deeper understanding of the millennial generation and what they look for in employment benefits. They conducted a study of Millennials, asking 382 students at California State University enrolled in third and fourth year in Business Management, questions based on what they expect from employers in terms of benefit offerings. The employee wellness programs offered by employers could include fitness programs and gym memberships. According to Smola & Sutton (2002), in order for employers to positively respond to expectation changes from the millennial generation, employers should adapt their benefit packages to accommodate employee's desire for better balanced personal and work goals. Some of these accommodates may include: more cafeteria benefits, flexible work schedules, quality-of-life programs, on-site daycare, and elder care.

### *Emphasis on Employee Perks (Discounts)*

Millennials are looking for employers to offer more than just a well-paying job, but also are seeking good pay, along with comprehensive benefit packages and additional employee offerings (Howe, 2014). It has been suggested that Millennials value these perks in compensation packages that include memberships/discounts on recreational and professional clubs, cash bonuses and awards, and a cafeteria that is subsidized by the employer (Han & Su, 2011). Millennials also value savings in transportation costs and corporate discounts on mortgage rates and company vehicles (Sullivan, 2010).

***The fearlessness exhibited by Millennials demonstrates that they are willing to fight for their values and ensure a career that will not interfere with their personal lives. The existing research highlighted Millennial values but failed to fully investigate the connection between these values and career benefit expectations of Millennials. This research also assumes that all Millennials can be grouped together under the same stereotypes and values list. The hypotheses discussed below are used to fill in the current gaps regarding the limited research***

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*on varying degrees of Millennial Identity (how similar/dissimilar participants are to the millennial stereotypes discussed above) and Millennial Identity's influence on career benefit expectations. Hypotheses:*

**H1:** People who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire non-traditional benefits from employers

**H2:** People who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire opportunity for work-life balance

**H3:** People who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire a nurturing and supportive work environment

## METHODS

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### **Participants:**

The sample selected for this study comprised individuals within the millennial generation, in the specific age ranges of 18 to 35. The total number of respondents in this study is 178, roughly 23% male and 77% female. The majority of participants in this survey are either in their fourth year (30%) or fifth year (19%) of study or were not enrolled in university at all (23%) during participation. Participants were recruited primarily through an online process and were able to complete the survey from November 17 to November 24, 2015. Each researcher recruited individually through their social media accounts (*Facebook*) and social peer groups. The platform used for the survey was *Qualtrics Online Survey Software & Insight Platform*. Participants were required to consent to the survey before participating. It was stated under the consent form that participation was both completely voluntary and anonymous. The majority of the questions on the survey were asked using a five-point Likert scale with a few asking about demographics and one open-ended question.

### **Measures:**

#### *Millennial Identity*

The independent variable examined in this study is Millennial Identity. To measure this variable, each respondent was provided with a list of general statements and was asked to identify how representative each statement was regarding their own behaviour. This measure was developed through several steps by a group of 48 millennial-aged students enrolled in *Evidence-Based People Management (HROB\*4100)* at the University of Guelph. First, in groups of 5-7 students, lists of millennial stereotypes were brainstormed then refined through literature reviews and grouping stereotypes into overhead millennial stereotype themes. Then, a series of statements

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regarding these stereotypes were developed as a means to measure each stereotype theme.

Through combining the similar statements submitted by all groups, 69 statements were selected to be tested on a validation survey. This validation survey was distributed to the *HROB\*4100* students as well as their peers for a total of 150 complete responses. This allowed for identification of the most useful statements at connecting and analyzing Millennial Identity.

After this validation survey, a list of 30 statements was developed to measure Millennial Identity of the respondents. An example of a statement from this section is as follows: "I have a very hard time focusing on tasks if I do not check my phone/social media regularly." Participants were asked to identify the representativeness on a Likert scale ranging from 1= "not at all like me" to 5= "just like me." The 30 items in this section were averaged to create a single millennial identity score for each participant. Individual participant scores ranged from 1 to 5 in value.

### *Career Benefit Expectations*

The dependent variable examined in this study is Career Benefit Expectations. This area focused on measuring millennial career benefit expectations regarding some intrinsic and many extrinsic benefits. The questions were designed to gauge the level of importance and significance each benefit has on the millennial generation's decision to take a job. The dependent variable was measured using a Likert scale that asked participants to "Please read each of the following statements and indicate the degree of importance it has on making an employment decision". An example of a statement on this Likert scale is as follows: "Annual professional attire/uniform allowance". Participants were asked to identify the importance of each statement on a Likert scale ranging from 1= "not at all important" to 5= "extremely important". The 18 statements developed for this analysis were created through a detailed literature review which identified important career benefit offerings sought by Millennials. Some of the statements were created by the authors of this research study as benefits that are not currently offered by employers or included in past literature were also included to test their significance. The dependent variable will also be measured using one open-ended question that asks:

*"Typical employment benefits include paid vacation, dental, drug, vision, pension, life insurance and disability insurance. What other types of benefits could an employer offer you to make your life easier as a new employee? (list all that apply, use fields as required)".* This open-ended question

will provide participants with 8 separate category boxes to fill in a maximum of 8 additional benefit

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offerings. This measure will be used to provide researchers with insight into millennial expectations regarding benefit offerings. Although the literature review does not provide evidence that there should be a difference between men and women's preferences on career benefits, we expect gender to influence the dependent variable results. As such, included in the survey is a simple demographic question asking whether participants are male or female.

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### *Work-Life Values*

During the development of the study design, millennial work-life values were found to be expected to impact career benefit expectations. This variable was discussed in the literature review regarding millennial career benefit expectations and as such was collected by using the *LWVS* in the online administered survey. The *LWVS* focuses on measuring four distinct types of work-life values, these are: intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, and prestige (Lyons et al., 2010). Participants were asked to rate a series of statements to indicate the likelihood on their decision making regarding accepting or staying in a particular job. Participants were asked to identify the importance of each statement on a Likert scale ranging from 1= “highly unlikely” to 6= “highly likely”. An example of one of these statements is: “Working in an environment that allows you to balance your work life with your private life and family responsibilities” .

**RESULTS**

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***Hypothesis 1: Millennial Identity and Non-traditional Benefits***

To determine the validity and results of the hypotheses, a Pearson Correlation test was conducted for the answers to the online questionnaire. The first hypothesis stated that people who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire non-traditional benefits from employers. This hypothesis was tested by looking for statistically significant bivariate correlations between Millennial Identity and non-traditional benefits. Non-traditional benefits include but are not limited to the following: corporate discounts such as cellphone and internet allowances, cafeteria-styled benefit packages, additional health services including wellness coaches and nutritionists, and discounts on recreational flights. Although results did not prove strong correlations between Millennial Identity and non-traditional benefit offerings, they still provided useful results by being statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$  (99% accuracy). The results collected are weak to moderate positive correlations between Millennial Identity and non-traditional career benefit offerings. Of the 45 benefit offering variables measured, roughly half (21 exactly) had a statistical significance at  $p < 0.01$  and 10 had a statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ , the rest were statistically insignificant. The results for these 31 variables have been included in the table below.

**Table 1: Career Benefit Offering Correlations against Millennial Identity**

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Pearson Correlation	Correlations Against
Variables	Millennial Identity
Q32_5 Having internal food retailers (e.g. healthy options of food onsite)	0.189*
IMP Doing work that makes a SIGNIFICANT IMPACT on the organization	0.184*
FBK Having management that provides timely and constructive FEEDBACK about your performance	0.176*
COW Working with agreeable and friendly CO-WORKERS with whom you could form friendships	0.188*
FUN Working in an environment that is lively and FUN	0.188*
HRS Having HOURS OF WORK that are convenient to your life	0.158*
INT Doing work that you find INTERESTING, exciting and engaging	0.186*
ACH Doing work that provides you with a personal sense of ACHIEVEMENT in your accomplishments	0.194*
IFL Having the ability to INFLUENCE organizational outcomes	0.205*
Q27_3 Opportunities to offer a positive impact on society	0.190*
Q32_1 Having general BENEFITS (e.g. vacation pay, health/dental insurance, pension plan) that meet personal needs	0.288**
Q32_2 Having corporate discount BENEFITS (e.g. discounts at retail and food stores, car insurance, etc.)	0.254**
Q32_3 Having fitness BENEFITS (e.g. onsite gym, reduced gym membership fees, free fitness classes like yoga)	0.224**
Q32_4 Having recognition systems (e.g. bonuses, retreats, staff appreciation events, etc.)	0.239**
Q32_6 Aligning work with social life (e.g. making personal phone calls/e-mails during work-hours, etc.)	0.364**
PRE Doing work that is PRESTIGIOUS and regarded highly by others	0.334**
SAL Doing work that affords you a good SALARY	0.213**
Q13_4 Having higher SALARY than co-workers, friends and family	0.310**
VAR Doing work that provides change and VARIETY in work activities (eg. job sharing)	0.218**
REC Working where RECOGNITION is given for a job well done	0.371**
ADV Having the opportunity for ADVANCEMENT in your career	0.222**
SOC Doing work that allows for a lot of SOCIAL INTERACTION	0.320**
SSU Working for a SUPERVISOR who is considerate and SUPPORTIVE	0.313**
HLP Doing work that allows you to HELP PEOPLE	0.230**
Q27_2 Cafeteria-style benefits package (monetized benefits package with "menu-like" options where employees can pick their own benefits plan)	0.245**
Q27_4 Organization is a leader in its field/industry	0.204**
Q27_5 Opportunity to travel as a benefit or discounts on flights for recreational trips	0.201**
Q27_8 Cellular phone and/or internet allowances/discount plans	0.254**
Q27_10 Financial assistance for continuing education	0.198**
Q27_13 Additional health services including nutritionists, massage therapists, and wellness coaches	0.210**
Q27_14 Mentoring programs such as being paired with an experienced employee for the first month of employment	0.202**

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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





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As the results show in Table 1, those identifying as Millennials have the highest positive correlations with non-traditional benefits that include: higher salary than others ( $r = 0.310$ ), corporate discounts/allowances including food, car insurance, retail, cellular phone, and internet ( $r = 0.254$ ), cafeteria-style benefit packages ( $r = 0.245$ ), staff appreciation events ( $r = 0.239$ ), onsite fitness benefits including gyms, fitness classes, and reduced membership fees ( $r = 0.224$ ), and career advancement including mentorship programs, additional training opportunities, workshops, and professional development opportunities ( $r = 0.222$ ). The questionnaire also asked participants about traditional benefits including vacation pay, health and dental, and pension plans and there was a positive correlation of  $r = 0.288$ . Also important to note are the benefits significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The two benefits we must include under this hypothesis are having internal food retailers ( $r = 0.189$ ) and having hours of work that are convenient to employee's lives ( $r = 0.158$ ). Based on these results, it can be concluded that Millennial Identity appears to be similarly correlated to various types of non-traditional and traditional career benefit offerings.

The results from the open-ended question provided to participants have been included in the Table below (Table 2). Roughly 128 participants out of 225 answered at least one response to this question. For this question, eight separate category boxes for participants to write in a maximum of 8 additional benefits they would like to be offered was included. Based off the assumption that participants filled out this question with a ranking mentality (listing benefits 1-8 based on their importance), an analysis of participants top 3 benefit listings was conducted. The results in Table 2 below show that flexible work arrangements (e.g. Telecommuting and flextime), more vacation time, access to company vehicles or reimbursement for transportation, alternative medical services (e.g. chiropractic, counsellors, dieticians, massage therapy, acupuncture, and orthotics), career development (e.g. additional training, recognition systems, mentorship programs, management support, and learning opportunities), and child care are the most important benefits to the millennial generation. In general, these benefits align with the results collected from the Likert scale testing career benefit expectations. The benefits listed by participants fall into both traditional and non-traditional benefit package offerings proving millennials desire both types of benefits.

**Table 2: Frequencies Regarding Millennial Career Benefit Offerings (Qualitative)**

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Qualitative Benefit Options	
Benefit Listed	Frequency (amount of occurrences in top 3 benefit category boxes)
Flexible Work Arrangements/Telecommuting	31
More Vacation Days/Personal Days	31
Company Vehicle/Gas/Transportation Allowance/Free Parking	28
Alternative Medical Practice Services	28
Career Development	24
Child Care	20
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>128</b>

### *Hypothesis 2: Millennial Identity and Work-Life Balance*

The next hypothesis tested stated that those who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire an opportunity for work-life balance. The results conclude there to be a weak positive correlation with Millennial Identity and a desire to work from home two of the five work days a week ( $r = 0.261$ ). It was also found that in a question of ability to align work with social life, for example being able to make personal phone calls or send personal emails during work, was positively correlated with Millennial Identity. The correlation here is also weak, at  $r = 0.364$  but has a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ . Based on these results, the hypothesis that people who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire opportunities for work-life balance is true.

### *Hypothesis 3: Millennial Identity and Work Environment*

The final hypothesis tested stated that those who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire a nurturing and supportive work environment. Overall, the results in this area demonstrated a positive correlation that was significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level. Essentially, as Millennial Identity increased, the desire for a nurturing and supportive work environment increased. In terms of recognition, two separate questions (Q32\_4 and REC in Table 1) were

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tested during the survey. The first question relating to bonuses, retreats, and staff appreciation events, had a positive correlation of  $r = 0.239$ , significant at  $p < 0.01$ . The second question relating to recognition for a job well done, had a positive correlation of  $r = 0.371$  that was also significant at  $p < 0.01$  between Millennial Identity and recognition.

The results showed that a positive correlation of  $r = 0.313$  exists between Millennial Identity and working for a supervisor who is considerate and supportive (SSU in Table 1). When

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testing the relationship between Millennial Identity and doing work that one finds interesting, exciting, and engaging, a weak positive correlation of  $r = 0.186$  was found alongside  $r = 0.188$  for working with agreeable and friendly co-workers. Though both of these items have weak relationships with Millennial Identity, their statistical significance proves that as Millennial Identity rises by one unit, the importance of each benefit rises by approximately 0.19 units. Meaning the importance of doing work that one finds interesting and working with agreeable co-workers both increase as Millennial Identity increases in participants. Overall, based on these results, the hypotheses that people who strongly identify with Millennial Identity will desire a nurturing and supportive work environment is true.

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## DISCUSSIONS

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This study focused on examining Millennial Identity in relation to career benefit expectations.

After evaluating the data, the results of the survey demonstrate that, although a strong correlation does not exist between Millennial Identity and each of the stated hypotheses, each of the hypotheses do hold true. The results offer insight into Millennial career expectations that will be important for hiring managers and recruiters to understand. As was assumed in measures, some differences were found regarding men and women's preferences of different benefit offerings.

These differences are highlighted in Graph 1 and will be included in the discussion below.

The first hypothesis examined the correlation between Millennial Identity and non-traditional benefit offerings. Results proving Millennials desire non-traditional benefit packages

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over traditional benefit packages valued by past generations such as the Baby Boomers and Gen X was expected. The results however did not completely prove this notion. When compared against Millennial Identity, the traditional and non-traditional benefits measured in the Likert scale had similar relationships. This means that as Millennial Identity increased in participants, the desire for traditional and non-traditional benefit offerings increased by roughly the same rate. The results did not show a distinct difference in correlations between Millennial Identity and non-traditional benefits versus traditional benefits. Therefore, it can be concluded that Millennials' desire both non-traditional benefits and traditional benefits including: medical and dental, pension, childcare, high salary, corporate discounts/allowances (food, car insurance, retail, cellular phone, and internet), cafeteria-style benefit packages, staff appreciation events, onsite fitness benefits (gyms,

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fitness classes, and reduced membership fees), and career advancement programs (mentorship programs, additional training opportunities, workshops, and professional development opportunities). These results were consistent with the qualitative results found in the open-ended question. The benefits highlighted by participants fell into both traditional (vacation days, company transportation allowances, and child care) and non-traditional (flexible work arrangements, alternative medical services, and career development) benefits proving that millennials desire a combination of benefit offerings. As a hiring manager or recruiter, this means that in order to attract and retain the millennial generation, you need to include traditional benefits that have been valued for many years by the Boomers and Gen X's and should also include more non-traditional benefit offerings that incentivize employees to stay at your company. It is important to separate yourself apart from competition to attract and retain the millennial workforce. The best way to do this is to adapt current benefit packages to include both traditional and non-traditional benefits. A practical way to include these non-traditional benefits into your current offerings is to develop more cafeteria-style benefit packages that allow employees to choose their own benefit package structures which may include traditional and non-traditional offerings. In general, no major differences between men and women were found relating to traditional and non-traditional benefit offerings. The only options where women placed more importance on benefits are: benefits for elder dependents, travel discounts, and additional health benefit services.

The second hypothesis examined the correlation between Millennial Identity and the desire for work-life balance. Many participants indicated that working from home 2 out of 5 days a week would be very desirable for them. As shown in Graph 1 below, when separating men and

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women, women were found to be more interested in this type of work arrangement than men.

This could be largely due to gender-role theory being that women tend to assume the caregiver roles in a family environment, which makes it difficult for them to work the typical nine to five, five days a week work schedule. Men in this situation tend to take on more paid working hours to provide for their family, which with the women at home in the care taker position, can be completed at work or away from home (Konrad & Yang, 2012).

When analyzing the ability to align work with social life, there was not a significant difference between male and female preferences. Additionally, there was a weak positive correlation between Millennial Identity and having hours of work convenient to the respondents lives, however having the freedom to choose these hours themselves did not correlate significantly to Millennial Identity. Those two options did positively correlate quite strongly with each other though, meaning that as the desire for hours of work that are convenient



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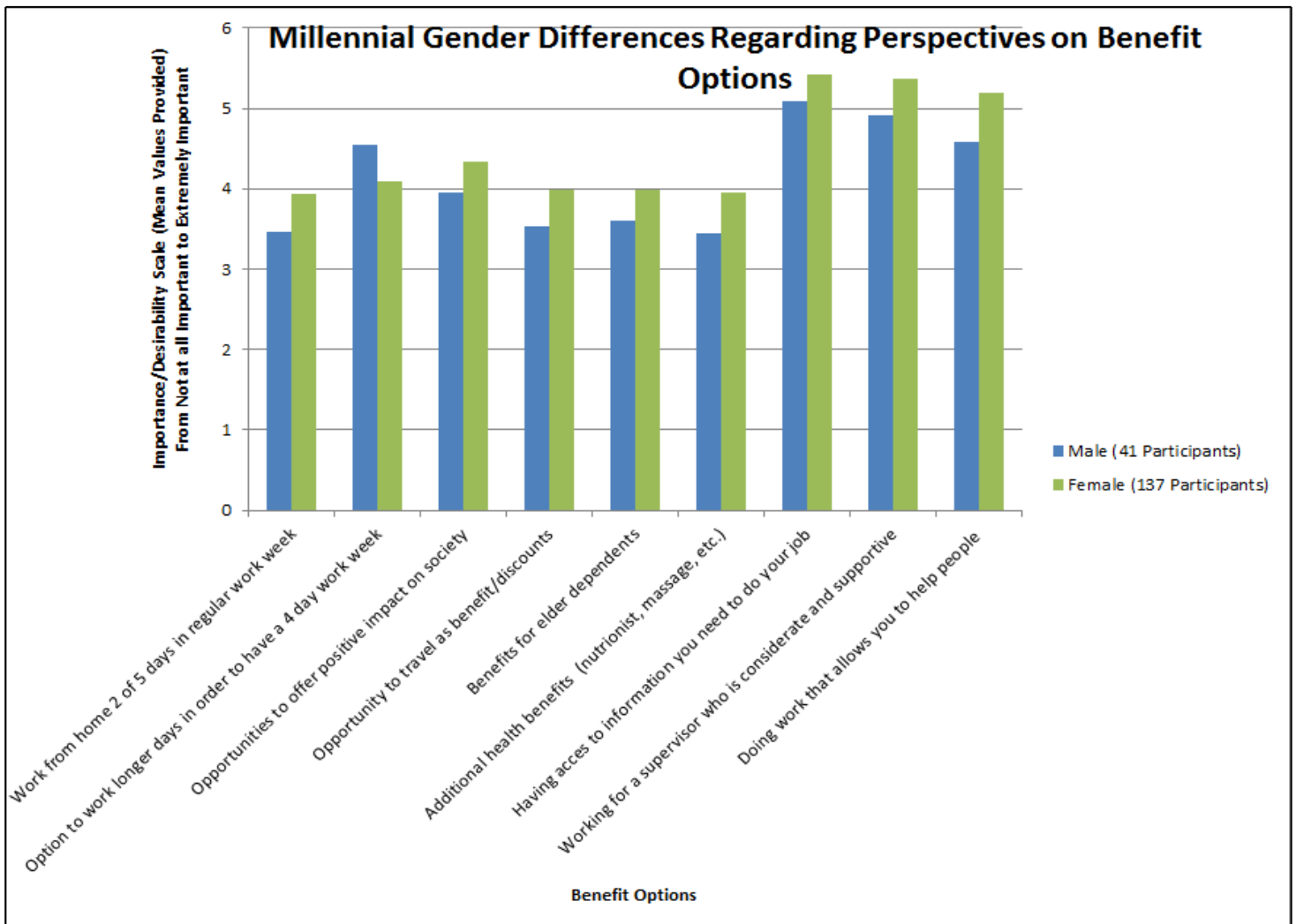
increased, so did the desire for the flexibility to choose these hours. This could be an indicator that flexible work arrangements were important to many respondents regardless of if they identified with Millennial stereotypes or not. These two questions did not have a significant difference in responses between males and females. For hiring managers and recruiters, this means they should consider flexible work arrangements including telecommuting and reduced work weeks to accommodate the personal and work lives of new employees. This is an additional option that could be included on a cafeteria-style benefits package. Employees should be offered the ability to decide whether they want to take advantage of certain flexible work arrangements. This is important as this research shows men and women value flexible work arrangements differently and both should be accommodated in order to retain both millennial genders in the workforce.

Lastly, the third hypothesis found a number of interesting ideas that will be explained below. The results show that as Millennial Identity increases, the desire for a nurturing and supportive work environment, recognition, and a manager that is considerate and supportive also increases. In the t-test that was conducted to compare genders responses on these items, it was found that there was not a significant difference between men and women's responses. Overall, both men and women equally desire recognition systems including recognition for a job well done. In terms of working for a supervisor that is considerate and supportive, the t-test found that women demonstrated a greater need for this support than men. This may be attributed to the fact that women are stereotyped as more sensitive and emotional than men (Brody, 1985). This result may also be explained through the stereotype that men typically do not express emotions. Another explanation could lie in the fact that men are generally accelerated into leadership roles more often than women, and therefore, are more likely providing support rather than seeking it (Haslam & Ryan, 2008). In regards to the work environment itself, there was not a significant difference between men and women's preference meaning both genders place equal importance

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on an interesting, fun, and friendly work environment. For hiring managers and recruiters trying to retain Millennials, this means that not only is it important to offer attractive benefit packages that include traditional, non-traditional, and work flexibility arrangements but also to create a work environment that is welcoming, supportive, and fun. This research shows Millennials value environments where they feel they can succeed. In order to establish this type of environment, employers need to provide more feedback and recognition to their workforce. It is also important to be aware of the gender differences that influence these values in the millennial generation. Employers need to consider the needs of their audience; as proven above those needs differ slightly based on gender. Women are more susceptible to supportive relationships with mentors, supervisors, and employers whereas men do not see the same reward in this type of relationship. It is important to keep this information in mind when building work relationships with new millennial employees.

**Graph 1: Millennial Gender Differences on Career Benefit Offerings**




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**LIMITATIONS & DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

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The following limitations are important to note when evaluating this research. Firstly, the length of time that the survey was available to participants was only 7 days, which is not ideal in receiving participant feedback. Given more time, a larger pool of participants could have been accumulated ultimately leading to more accurate results. In relation to the collection of data, the use of a convenience sample acted as a limitation as well, as the sample existed only of available

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networks and connections of the researchers. It was not possible to ensure simple random sampling techniques, such as going through a phone book to find participants, making it difficult to decipher the exact number of invitations offered to participants. This makes finding the overall response rate difficult. Each of the researchers involved belongs to the same University and the same program, allowing for greater overlap of available participants. Given both more time and a wider network of participants, a greater pool of data would have been collected and improved the accuracy of these results. Another limitation with participant collection was the method of recruitment. Recruitment was done primarily through online platforms (Facebook), and therefore the pool of participants was limited to only those who use Facebook and are in the social networks of the researchers. This recruitment method ultimately led to the majority of respondents being in their 4th year of University or above, which could have skewed the results. In the future it would be valuable to ensure that Millennials of all different ages and backgrounds are equally represented.

One final limitation to this research was the gender response rate. As mentioned in the *Introduction*, the sample of this survey involved a majority of participants attending the University of Guelph. As stated in a survey done in 2006, the percentage of woman compared to men at The University of Guelph is approximately 63% and 37% respectively (Intini, 2006). The participant response rate of our survey (77% female and 23% male) is representative of this demographic. However, if we wanted to generalize our results against the greater Millennial population within Canada or even within Ontario, we would need a more equal representation of males and females. In the future, it would be critical to ensure a more balanced response rate between genders to improve the validity of these results. It is important to note that the length of

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the survey also hindered participant's responses. As the survey went on, the response rates per question slowly diminished.

Future research should be conducted to explore whether or not there is a prioritizing preference regarding new and general benefit package offerings. This study researched the importance and desirability of specific benefit options in the eyes of Millennials but failed to collect data on benefit preferences. Although ranking is not an ideal method of data collection, we recommend future research to include this type of measure in their assessment of millennial preference on benefit offerings. This will show whether or not Millennials value new benefits over older/general benefits offered by employers. Further research should also be performed with larger, more representative samples in order to increase the external validity of these findings since our sample has potential limitations and biases as described above.

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## CONCLUSIONS

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As a result of this study, it was determined there are weak positive correlations between Millennial Identity and career benefit expectations. Although the relationships were not as strong as expected, results are still useful for employers who are interested in attracting and retaining a millennial workforce. The comparability between non-traditional and traditional benefit package offerings is more insignificant than expected. Millennials value both types of benefits and the limitations of this research do not allow for an in-depth analysis of which are more important, rather this research proves they are all important. This suggests that employers should not eliminate current benefit packages and should also offer more accommodating packages such as cafeteria-style packages that provide employees with more unique options. This study highlights different benefit options that Millennials desire when entering the workforce. These include a wide range of non-traditional and traditional benefits such as: more variety in medical and dental plans, childcare options, career advancement opportunities, and options to subsidize living costs

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for employees such as corporate discounts/allowances on cellphones,

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internet, transportation, and fitness memberships. The results show that Millennials value flexible work arrangement and opportunities to align their social lives with their work lives. This research also provided evidence that Millennials seek work environments that are supportive through management recognition and staff appreciation events. The results of this study are consistent with published literature on both the millennial generation and their expectations entering the workforce. In order for employers to compete in a highly saturated market and to minimize the possibility of high turnover rates due to an unsatisfied millennial workforce, it is recommended they use this research to adapt and create new benefit packages. Although there are similarities between Millennial and Baby Boomer work-life values and expectations, the differences provided in the research and literature review above prove that it is time for organizations to move beyond Boomer benefits and start satisfying the needs of the Millennial workforce.

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