

UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE

College of
Business +
Economics

**Investigating the correlation between millennial identity , community involvement
and attitudes towards corporate social responsibility**

HROB*4100
Evidence Based People Management
Department of Management
University of Guelph
December 4, 2015

Course Instructor

Dr. Sean Lyons

Student Investigators

Afra Mehwish

Priya Tanwar

Navdeep Sharma

Daniel Spivak

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to search for a correlation between millennial identity, community involvement and attitudes towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) . Millennial identity was measured in this study using a self-assessment scale developed by Professor Sean Lyons. Differently, measures for community involvement and attitudes towards CSR were adopted from recent studies in the field of management. Moreover, researchers have not developed a measure for millennial identity that evaluates its impact on community involvement and its subsequent impact on attitudes towards CSR. Hence, understanding how these variables interact with each other will help employers transform how they recruit, attract and retain millennials. Additionally, participants in the study were predominantly undergraduate students, who voluntarily completed an online questionnaire. . This study identified a moderate positive relationship between millennial identity, community involvement and attitudes towards CSR, Overall, this research offers future investigators an opportunity to examine the rate at which these variables correlate, and the how it can help the placement of millennials in business world.

Introduction

The demographics in a workplace environment are evolving due to a rise in the millennial population. “Millennials” are often defined as the younger generation of workers, who are slowly taking over the workplace. By 2014, 36 percent of the U.S. workforce will be comprised of this generation and by 2020, nearly half (46 percent) of all U.S. workers will be Millennials (Lynch, 2008). However, employers are unaware of the needs, wants and expectations a millennial has. Although, a review of popular literature suggests that Millennials “want it all” and “want it now,” in terms of good pay and benefits, rapid advancement, work/life balance, interesting and challenging work, and making a contribution to society (Lyons, Ng, & Schweitzer, 2010). However, there does not exist a current measure for millennial identity. Millennial identity is broadly defined as the degree to which a millennial relates to the millennial stereotypes. Thus, it is evident that quantifying millennial identity will help employers in creating an efficient workplace environment.

Additionally, many in the millennial population are said to have a desire to "save the world," and are likely to have high expectations for social responsibility and ethical behaviour on the part of their employers (Jackson, 2009). This creates a practical need to understand the constituents of millennial identity, and its effect on community involvement. Furthermore, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2009) reports that Millennials are volunteering at historically high rates. Hence, the interconnection between millennial identity and community involvement can create implications for the employers.

Moreover, millennials with a high level of community involvement often want their employers to be benevolent in giving back to the society. According to the 2006 Cone Millennial Cause Study, 78 percent of the youngest workers strongly feel their employers should be responsible for joining them in their altruistic, civic-minded pursuits. (Cone, Inc. 2006), Thus, it is imperative to study the theoretical relationship between community involvement in millennials and attitudes towards CSR because it helps employers in attracting millennials. In light of the projected shortage of workers over the next 25 years (Statistics Canada 2007), the Millennials will have a high degree of choice in selecting the organizations for which they want to work, based on the kind of working conditions, opportunities, and flexibility employers can offer. (Lyons, Ng, & Schweitzer, 2010). Other studies also indicate that Millennials are prepared to reward or punish a company based on its commitment to social causes (Cone, 2008a).

Most organizations have attempted to understand the millennial generation. It was found that companies that are successfully attracting millennials to the workplace have provided recommendations for changes within an organization. (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer 2011) However, there is a lack of evidence on the trifecta between millennial identity, community involvement and attitudes CSR. Understanding the intersection between these variables will provide organizations with a strong theoretical framework that supports changes to their strategic direction.

Specifically, this study aims to close the existing gap in the current literature by formulating a relationship between millennial community involvement and attitudes towards CSR. The key contributions to this study will include a measure for millennial identity that will help other researchers document correlations between millennial stereotypes. Secondly,

this study will examine variations between the level of community involvement in millennials. And finally, it will provide employers with evidence based research that will help them make decisions about managing millennials in the workplace.

Finally, “millennial identity” is essential to define because it is insufficient to treat all people between 1980 and 1995 as a single group. The notion of millennial identity suggests that people born in that time period will fit these characteristics to varying degrees. This is why it is important to study millennial identity independently, rather than just treating all people born between 1980 and 1995 the same.

Literature Review

Millennial Identity

There are about 80 million Millennials, born between 1980 and 1995, and they are rapidly taking over from the baby boomers who are now pushing 60 (CBS News, 2007). Some say they are the next “Greatest Generation,” armed with the tools and inclination to drive toward a better future in a world facing economic, geopolitical, and environmental crises. (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). To others, they are “Generation Whine,” young people who have been so over-indulged and protected that they are incapable of handling the most mundane task without guidance or handholding. (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Although current literature presents Millennials in both positive and negative light, it can be said that Millennials differ greatly from the older generations. Members of Generation X and the millennial generation have been exposed to different historical, economic and social events

than older cohorts and therefore have different characteristics and expectations (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). In addition, Millennials are technology literate and are very comfortable with the internet world, as they have grown up in an environment of technology and thus, are familiar with mobile phones, laptop computers, real-time media and communications (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). The advent of the digital age has provided the millennial generation with technological skills, which have resulted in a competitive advantage over their predecessors. Researchers have developed theoretical models that have contrasted millennials with the older generation. (e.g., Dries et al. 2008 ; Lancaster and Stillman 2002 ; Lyons 2003). However, this research study hopes to focus on the independent study of the millennial generation, through constructs such as millennial identity that studies millennials on an individualistic premise.

Community Involvement

Millennials have been increasingly involved in the community. It was found that, “millennials lead the way in volunteering,” with 43% of Millennials (compared to 35% of Baby Boomers) participating in volunteer activities (Patusky, 2010). Millennials are volunteering in record numbers for various reasons. These include altruism, being influenced by family and friends, and wanting to pad resumes (Alsop, 2008). A high level of volunteerism shows that an individual is involved within the community. In recent years, political participation—specifically voting—has increased steadily among young people ages 18 to 29; voter turnout in 2008 was one of the highest recorded (Kirby & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2009). The current literature showcases that Millennials have been increasingly engaged in their communities. However, there is lack of evidence on the factors that motivate Millennials to show a high

level of civic engagement. Through this study, we hope to develop further insights on the motivational factors towards volunteerism in Millennials. This will be done using the items that are enlisted in the survey questions. Additionally, an increasing amount of extra curricular activities in school have motivated students to pursue community involvement. Students assumed that presenting such activities could help them to demonstrate specific skills or competencies they possess (Roulin & Bangerter, 2013). Community service and volunteering were areas, where Millennials scored higher than previous generations (Twenge et al., 2012).

Corporate Social Responsibility

Business corporations particularly have increasingly incorporated CSR initiatives into their operations to create awareness and good image (Co'rdoba and Campbell, 2008). Furthermore, Brown and Dacin (1997) found that consumers' attitudes towards firms are positive when they are aware of the firms CSR activities. Similar findings by Creyer and Ross (1997) support the notion that consumers have positive attitudes towards CSR, if firms uphold CSR activities. All these elements cause non-profit organizations to rethink their employee culture, especially regarding younger employees' input into how the organization interacts with its external stakeholders (Fine, 2008). Millennials are expected to impact the organization on two fronts: as consumers and as employees whose self-identification may be strongly impacted by the organization's CSR initiatives (Marin, Salvador, & Rubio, 2009). Social consciousness is considered to be an important factor in building a company's reputation, but research does not evaluate how millennial attitudes towards CSR are related to social consciousness.

Hypotheses

***H1:** Millennial identity will positively correlate with community involvement*

Millennials are often stereotyped to be extensively socially conscious. Moreover, since millennials have displayed increasing levels of community involvement, it can be argued that a higher level of millennial identity can be associated with a higher level of community involvement. Hence, millennial identity is hypothesized to yield a positive relationship with community involvement.

***H2:** Community Involvement will be positively correlated with attitudes towards corporate social responsibility*

Community involvement has become an integral part of several in-company CSR initiatives. These constructs constantly move together in the workplace, hence, it was predicted that community involvement and attitudes towards CSR would show a similar relationship within an individual. A higher degree of community involvement showcases that the individual highly values social responsibility. This type of positive thinking translates to create positive attitudes towards CSR

***H3:** Millennial identity will be positively correlated with attitudes towards corporate social responsibility*

This hypothesis proves the relationship between the 3 constructs: millennial identity, community involvement and attitudes towards CSR to be consistent. If millennial identity positively correlates with community involvement, and if community involvement has a

positive relationship with CSR, then millennial identity will also be positively correlated to CSR. An individual that highly relates to the millennial generation will have positive attitudes towards CSR, due to hypothesized positive relationship between millennial identity and community involvement

Methodology

Participants

The sampling frame consisted of both student and non-student participants. Participants who were not from millennial generation (not born between 1980-1997), were removed from the final sample. The final sample consisted of 94 respondents. However, only 75 of these responses were usable because some responses were incomplete, and provided limited information. The completed responses consisted of 33 (35.1 %) men and 38 (40.4 %) women. Additionally, 70 of these respondents were born between 1980 and 1997 and 45 of these respondents were University/College students.

Finally, the respondents were recruited through scripted emails, social media platforms and peer group invitations for over a period of 12 days. In the recruitment process, an online link to the survey was given to the participants. The survey consisted of 8 questions, and several sub questions. However, the participants were also required to fill out a consent form before proceeding to the online survey, which was hosted on Qualtrics. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and it was stated that the information gathered would be anonymous. The participants were also debriefed on the aim of the study, and were provided with contact information, if any concerns or questions were to arise. Once the survey window was closed, the hypotheses were tested with the Pearson correlation analysis.

Measures

Millennial Identity

The independent variable in this research study is millennial identity, and it was measured using a construct developed by Professor Sean Lyons. Millennial stereotypes were utilized to create questions that related to millennial identity. These questions were formatted, so that respondents would be able to provide a response on the likert scale. This measure had a sample mean of 3.44, as it evaluated 66 responses on the millennial identity scale.

Community Involvement

The mediating independent variable is community involvement. The underlying stereotype used in the formulation of this measure is the notion that millennials are socially conscious. Moreover, the measure used to quantify community involvement was adapted from a recent study in the field of management. Specifically, the measure developed by Goldberg-Freeman to understand faculty beliefs, perceptions and level of community involvement was utilized to measure community involvement in millennials. However, changes were made to the original items that were designed by the researchers of this study. These changes were made to ensure that the items were relevant to our scope of study. The major alternation made to this survey was the inclusion of demographic specific survey items. Furthermore, since the majority of participants in our survey will be millennials, we removed survey items that involved questions relating to tenure, scientific research and level of education. Finally, the sample mean for this measure was 3.75, while 63 responses were evaluated on the community involvement scale.

Attitudes towards CSR

The dependent variable in this research study is attitudes towards CSR. The psychosocial corporate social responsibility scale (P-CSR) developed by D'Aprile and Talo was used to measure attitudes towards CSR in millennials. The participants were evaluated on CSR under 3 distinct variables: behavioural, cognitive and affective. However, changes were made to the original study items to ensure that they remained relevant to millennials in the workplace. Since, the original survey evaluated attitudes towards CSR in organizations, survey items were altered to accommodate for individual attitudes towards CSR. This was the most significant change that was made to the original scale. Lastly, the cumulative sample mean for cognitive, behavioural and affective CSR items was higher than 3.8, and it evaluated an average of 62 respondents on the psychosocial corporate social responsibility scale.

Results

Some responses were excluded by doing a list wise deletion based on all variables, and calculated the Cronbach's Alpha with the number of items specified. This showed between 58 and 61 respondents were valid in each category. The Cronbach Alpha or the intercorrelation was positive for millennial identity, CSR behavioural and CSR cognitive, while it was questionable for CSR affective and community involvement. Furthermore, the average mean for millennial identity, community involvement and CSR was 3.44, 3.85 and 3.75 respectively.

The Pearson coefficient correlation matrix (Figure 3) showcases the correlation between the constructs examined in the survey. All correlations except the relationship between Community Involvement and CSR affective was not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 1: *Millennial identity will positively correlate with community involvement*

Millennial identity and community involvement have a low positive level of correlation (0.286), and this relationship was statistically significant. Although this study contains a relatively small sample size, millennial identity was positively correlated with community involvement. Participants who attained a high level of millennial identity showed a higher level of community involvement. However, the correlation between the two variables is less than 0.6, which means that the rate at which these variables move together differed significantly. Yet, the correlation coefficient illustrated that there is a 95% probability that the coefficient could not be 0, no matter how many times it is sampled. Furthermore, a higher number of females in this survey did not impact the relationship between millennial identity and community involvement. Also, age and level of education did not affect this relationship. Future researchers can evaluate the rate at which millennial identity and community involvement move together.

Hypothesis 2: *Community Involvement will be positively correlated with attitudes towards corporate social responsibility*

The relationship between Community Involvement and CSR has a low positive level of correlation (average of 0.309). Research demonstrated that community involvement has a positive relationship with attitudes towards corporate social responsibility. Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural attitudes towards CSR showcased a positive interaction with community involvement. \

Hypothesis 3: *Millennial identity will be positively correlated with attitudes towards corporate social responsibility*

Millennial identity and CSR have a moderate positive level of correlation (average of 0.439). Research proved that millennial identity is positively correlated to attitudes towards CSR, This correlation was statistically significant, as it has a 99% confidence interval. This proves the hypothesis because millennial identity has a direct connection with attitudes towards CSR.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

	Millennial identity	CSR Behavioural	CSR Affective	CSR Cognitive
CSR Behavioural	0.377**			
CSR Affective	0.506**	0.405**		
CSR Cognitive	0.434**	0.759**	0.515**	
Community Involvement	0.286*	0.362**	0.173	0.393**

Additional analyses based on Demographics

In Table 3, the differences in responses from men to women are examined. There were, on average 18, valid responses for males and 35 responses for females. The results showed that on average males had a lower mean score on the questions than females with exception of CSR cognitive. Males had a higher deviation for all except for CSR behaviour which could be explained by the sample size has males being around 1/3 of the valid respondents.

Table 3 : Results Based on Gender

	Yes			No			Total		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N
Millennial identity	3.58	0.49	45	3.41	0.29	11	3.55	0.46	56
CSR Behavioural	4.35	1.09	44	4.10	1.45	10	4.31	1.16	54
CSR Affective	4.02	0.71	44	3.60	1.06	11	3.94	0.80	55
CSR Cognitive	4.50	0.98	44	4.49	0.81	10	4.50	0.95	54
Community Involvement	3.89	0.74	44	3.65	0.62	11	3.84	0.72	55

Table 4 describes the differences between University and or College Students and non-students. There were approximately 44 students and 11 non-student valid respondents. On all except CSR cognitive the results showed that students had a significantly higher average score. In examining the standard deviation, non-students had a higher value on CSR behavioural and CSR affective. If done at a larger scale, with equal respondents this would show that students would score higher than non-students.

Table 4: Result Based on Student Status

	Male			Female			Total		
	Mean	Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Deviation	Valid N
Millennial identity	3.39	0.78	18	3.51	0.43	37	3.49	0.57	59
CSR Behavioural	4.20	0.99	17	4.26	1.19	34	4.32	1.14	54

CSR Affective	3.89	0.87	18	3.91	0.82	35	3.91	0.81	56
CSR Cognitive	4.56	1.03	17	4.42	0.92	34	4.51	0.95	54
Community Involvement	3.66	0.76	18	3.87	0.86	35	3.80	0.80	56

Discussion

The focus of our study was to evaluate how Millennials' community involvement can affect their attitude towards corporate social responsibility. The results showcased that there is a significant positive relationship between Millennial community involvement and attitudes towards CSR. Results show that Millennial community involvement positively affected their attitude towards corporate social responsibility. Millennial identity and community involvement have a low level of correlation (0.286). Community involvement has a low level of correlation with CSR (average of 0.309). This may be because the age of participants may have prevented them from exhibiting a high level of community involvement. However, millennial identity and CSR have a moderate level of correlation (average of 0.439), which shows that the Millennials understand the importance of the CSR and hope to contribute to it in future. It would have been interesting to compare these results over a larger range of participants, as well as other fields of study. On all except CSR cognitive the results showed that students had a significantly higher average score. The correlation between CSR Affective and community involvement needs to be re-examined to

conclude that those who are involved in the community have positive CSR attitudes. This concept requires future research to fully explore the relationship between these variables.

Furthermore, the positive correlation between millennial identity and community involvement implies that individuals, who have a higher level of millennial identity, are more involved in the community. These results from hypothesis 1 verify that millennials are socially conscious. Additionally, by separating constructs such as community involvement and attitudes towards CSR in hypothesis 2 and 3, it can be found that both the variables have been fully investigated in relation to millennial identity. The results from hypothesis 2 state that community involvement and attitudes towards CSR are positively correlated. Finally, hypothesis 1 and 2 prove that millennials care deeply about corporate social responsibility. Managers can use the results from this study to improve millennial attraction to their firm. Since, hypothesis 3 states that individuals who have a higher level of millennial identity have positive attitudes towards CSR, organizations can alter their CSR initiatives to attract likeminded millennials. Moreover, this research study is especially useful to non-profit organizations that want to attract socially conscious millennials. Lastly, this study can also be used by government agencies to understand the impact of community involvement on the corporate world.

Limitations/Directions for Future Research

There were a number of factors that limited the study and may have altered the results of the study. First of which, our surveys were handed out by undergraduate students at the

University of Guelph, so the sample size was biased to the general vicinity of the lower region of Ontario. More specifically, the major locations in which the survey was conducted included cities such as Guelph, Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Toronto. This is limiting as the survey was only conducted in a small area compared to conducting it nationwide. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small. The participants completed only 94 surveys. This approach excludes possible participants that do not have access to the technology necessary to complete the survey and only includes individuals who are linked to social media and/or part of the investigators social network. Thirdly, the wording in question 16 could possibly skew the results as it asks “are you a student”. It could be reworded more specifically by asking if the participant is enrolled or has completed post secondary education. The final limitation was the issue that the survey was conducted online. Due to the fact that this survey was conducted online, it is difficult to confirm whether individuals were being truthful about their answers.

This study could be improved by using a large sample size. Also, it could be furthered with an increased amount of participants who are not in university/college. Most of the participants in this study were students in a university or college, hence, being able to reach millennials who are not in school will help strengthen the foundation of this study. Furthermore, future researchers should recruit participants for a longer period of time, in order to ensure that a large sample size is obtained. This would include improving the social media campaign, and inviting both online and hardy copy surveys. This makes the survey more accessible, and results in a larger sample size. Finally, future researchers should quantify community involvement in specific numeric levels, based on the hours an individual has spent volunteering. This approach will provide a clearer relationship with millennial identity and attitudes towards CSR.

Conclusions

Due to the rise in the millennial population, workplace environments were pushed to evolve. However, employers were not aware of the needs and wants of millennials. By quantifying millennial identity, we were able to help employers understand the level of millennial identity between different individuals. This will not only help employers perceive the needs and wants of a millennial in the workplace, but will also act as a motivational program that connects millennials to jobs they desire. The aim of this study was to close the existing gap in literature by formulating a relationship between millennial community involvement and attitudes towards CSR. The positive correlation between millennial identity, attitudes towards CSR and community involvement demonstrates that millennial identity causes an individual to be involved in the community through personal initiatives, and socially active in the corporate world due to CSR programs.

Moreover, these results would also help the employers navigate through the millennial expectations in the workplace. Especially, employers will be able to understand how important CSR initiatives can be for millennial employees. Hence, it can be said that the data analyzed in this study can ultimately examine the behaviours and motivations millennials get acquainted with as they progress in their career. This information is valuable because millennials are constantly expanding in the workplace, and it will help understand the differences between millennials and the future generations to follow.

References

1. Ng, E. S. W., & Gossett, C. W. (2013, September). Career choice in Canadian public service: an exploration of fit with the millennial generation. *Public Personnel Management*, 42(3), 337+. Retrieved from <http://go.galegroup.com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA343944936&v=2.1&u=guel77241&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=191b981f07adc3fc081f0fe95842829f>
2. Glass, A. (2007). Understanding generational differences for competitive success. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 39(2), 98-103. doi:10.1108/00197850710732424
3. Myers, K., & Sadaghiani, K. (2010). Millennials in the workplace: A communication perspective on millennials' organizational relationships and performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 225-238. doi:10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7
4. McGlone, T., Spain, J. W., & McGlone, V. (2011). Corporate social responsibility and the millennials. *Journal of Education for Business*, 86(4), 195-200. doi:10.1080/08832323.2010.502912
5. Bannon, S., Ford, K., & Meltzer, L. (2011, November). Understanding Millennials in the workplace. *The CPA Journal*, 81(11), 61+. Retrieved from <http://go.galegroup.com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA276353695&v=2.1&u=guel77241&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=172392721b8cd4112d2d75f930c3a2e>

6. Özçelik, G. (2015). Engagement and retention of the millennial generation in the workplace through internal branding. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 10(3), 99-107. Retrieved from <http://sfx.scholarsportal.info/guelph/docview/1665115863?accountid=11233>
7. Maier, T., Tavanti, M., Bombard, P., Gentile, M., & Bradford, B. (2015). Millennial generation perceptions of value-centered leadership principles. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14(4), 382-397. doi:10.1080/15332845.2015.1008386
8. Hershatter, A., & Epstein, M. (2010). Millennials and the world of work: An organization and management perspective. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 211-223. doi:10.1007/s10869-010-9160
9. McGlone, T., Spain, J. W., & McGlone, V. (2011). Corporate social responsibility and the millennials. *Journal of Education for Business*, 86(4), 195-200. doi:10.1080/08832323.2010.502912
10. Chung, H. L., & Probert, S. (2011). Civic engagement in relation to outcome expectations among african american young adults. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 32(4), 227-234. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2011.02.009