

Millennial employment choices, altruism, and
corporate social performance

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between Millennial employment choices, altruism, and corporate social performance. The authors wished to see how these variables interact and surmise how modern employers can tailor their companies to attract Millennial talent. A survey of 84 millennials between the ages of 16 to 34, 55% male and 45% female, was conducted. Results showed that while there was no large statistical significance between Millennial Identity and altruism and employer attractiveness, many smaller inferences could be made that could be studied further. The data did show that millennials value corporate social responsibility highly when looking for a job and that they also prefer to work for companies that have brand name recognition. This paper analysis the relationship between altruism levels, corporate social responsibility, and employee attractiveness for the Millennial generation.

Introduction

The Millennial generation now ranges approximately from the ages of 18 to 35. This means that the youngest members of the Millennial generation are starting to enter the full-time work force. Up until recent times, the workforce was largely composed of three generations including the Silent Generation (people born between 1925 and 1942), the Baby Boomers generation (people born between 1943 and 1960), and Generation X (people born between 1961 and 1981) (Howe & Strauss, 1991). This means that the most recent generation to enter the workforce is the Millennial generation (people born between 1982 and later) (Howe & Strauss, 2000). The entry of Millennials into the workforce and the exit of other generations out of the workforce, such as the Silent Generation and a large portion of the Baby Boomers generation, mean that a significantly larger portion of the current workforce is now composed of the

millennial generation. For this reason, organizations are interested in the best ways to attract and retain this new generation of workers. The media suggests that the Millennials are the generation who are least committed to work and to their employers (Brusilow, 2008). Organizations that have a better understanding of the Millennials' career expectations and priorities are able to create more engaging job offerings and helps them to retain Millennial workers (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons; 2010).

This research study strives to determine how altruistic Millennial participants are using the Altruistic Personality Scale proposed by Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken (1981) and whether or not their level of altruistic values have any impact on their interest in working for altruistic companies. To explore the altruistic attitudes of Millennials and to gauge the bases of their motivations, a question was raised by Eniko Eva Baranyi about why her participants volunteered. According to Baranyi, motivation can be altruistic, egoistic or communal. Altruistic motivation is considered the most pure way of giving, and can be defined as contributing time or resources without regard for any compensation or reward (Baranyi, 2011). This study also intends to explore the kind of motivation that Millennials are driven by when they are looking for work as well as what kind of company they would like to work for. The topic of altruism was chosen for this study because Millennials have reportedly scored higher on having a sense of community, feeling connectedness to society and the world, and they also find volunteering and helping others as very or somewhat important (Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008). Also, when various generations were studied and compared on their bases of motivations, the results showed that the predominant motivation for Millennials is to make the world a better place (Center for Philanthropy at Indiana University, 2008). Organizations who hire Millennials will

benefit from the results of this study because they will hopefully have greater insight into what attracts and retains a millennial workforce.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Millennials consider how socially responsible an organization is when looking for a job and also if their own altruistic tendencies have an impact on this consideration.

Literature Review

This literature review will examine a variety of scholarly articles which address millennial employer preferences based on an employer's adherence to a range of societal issues. These societal issues can range widely; they can vary from the employers' social responsibility, ethics, sustainability and environmental responsibility. Millennial employer preferences are important because employers may have to adapt their policies to attract the upcoming wave of new workers who are entering the workforce. In addition to attracting new workers, retaining current workers is also of prime importance for many firms. If employers have a better understanding of the preferences of the millennial workforce in terms of CSR, they can apply that knowledge to their business policy, which can impact employee absenteeism, turnover and productivity (Madison, 2012).

There is growing evidence to support that millennial workers espouse different values and attitudes and form different expectations about work. (Lyons et.al, 2010). More specifically, we are looking to identify the varying levels of altruism in the millennial generation, and trying to see how that relates with millennial decisions to choose employers based on their level of altruism. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine whether Millennials consider how

socially responsible an organization is when looking for a job and also if their own altruistic tendencies have an impact on this consideration. all of which will help them to achieve their goals.

Corporate Social Responsibility dimensions

There are a variety of factors that outline socially responsible companies. These responsibilities are outlined in (Chandler & Werther, 2014), which provides the framework of socially responsible corporations. Firstly, socially responsible companies exhibit economic responsibility. Economic responsibility refers to companies that “produce an acceptable return on the owner’s investment”. Next, socially responsible employer’s exhibit legal responsibility, more specifically, they “act within the legal framework drawn up by the judiciary and government”. Ethical responsibility is another factor that constitutes a socially responsible company. An ethically responsible employer “does no harm to its stakeholders and within its operating environment”. Lastly, socially responsible employers display discretionary responsibility, which “represents more proactive, strategic behaviors that can benefit the firm and society, or both”. While these are simply characteristics of social responsible companies, it is not exactly clear what the exact definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is. However, there is a set of consistent dimensions that are included in most definitions of CSR. These dimensions are: employee relations, product quality, treatment of women and minorities, community relations, and environmental. (Greening & Turban, 2000).

Millennials have often been looked as a homogeneous group based simply on their age. As multiple studies have shown, “there may be more variation among members within a generation than there is between generations” (Macky, Gardner, & Forsyth , 2008). Therefore,

our goal is to analyze the variations among millennials to see what will attract and retain millennial workers.

Importance of personality on workplace behaviour

An important aspect that influences work behaviors is personality. In fact, a worker's personality may be a more important factor that influences behavior in the workplace, compared to other factors such as an individual's values. As mentioned in the article, "while an individual's values are likely to influence behaviour in the workplace, personality is likely to be more direct measure of actual behavior" (Barrick, Stewart, & Piotrowski, n.d.). This point on personality is true across all generations according to the study.

Which factors influence millennials when choosing an employer

Many studies have been conducted that examine the motivations of millennials in the working world. Specifically, the 2014 millennial impact report outlines the most important factors the millennials consider when applying for a job. The study found that the most important factor that millennials considered when reviewing a potential employer was what business the company was involved in. More specifically, millennials placed a high value on what a company sells or produces when deciding on applying for a job. Next, the study found that millennials were drastically influenced by a company's work culture when deciding on an employer. The third most important factor for millennials was the company's involvement with various CSR causes. This shows that millennials are highly influenced to choose employers that not only focus on profits and regular business practices, but also various CSR dimensions. Additionally, Varying studies have helped to identify millennial preferences for corporate social responsibility when seeking a job. This may be as a result of many reasons, one of which is the education

sector. For instance, “The education sector is seen as playing a critical role in preparing the next generation of leaders both through research into CSR and by incorporating CSR-related subjects into their education and training programs (Kolodinsky, Madden, Zisk, & Henkel, 2009). Furthermore, education in CSR is seen as becoming an increasingly more important factor for the “development of a new generation of socially responsible leaders” (Persons, 2012). Additionally, “effective CSR strategies are increasingly recognized as good business practice” (Ducassy, 2012). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that “graduates who find the right CSR-organization “fit” tend to remain with their organization for longer” (Coldwell et al., 2008). Additionally, the study found which of the CSR dimensions previously mentioned were the most important for millennial job seekers. In this case, the study found that the most important CSR dimension for millennial job seekers was ‘workplace practices’ (Lynne, 2014). Alternately, the least important CSR dimension identified in the study was environmental impact (Lynne, 2014). The study also found that there was a difference between how students involved in different areas of study rated the importance of CSR when rating prospective employers. In particular, there was a strong distinction between business students, who placed less importance on CSR values in a company than humanities students, who placed more importance of CSR values in the workplace (Lynne, 2014).

Other reports have also examined millennial preferences for CSR values in a company. For instance, one report found that 70% of millennials would like to work for a firm that is committed to helping the community (Madison, 2012). Additionally, the Deloitte survey found that there was a strong connection between employee volunteerism and engagement in the workplace. This correlates to our study as it clearly shows that higher levels of altruism among millennials correspond to a higher degree of satisfaction for working for an employer who is

considerate of various CSR dimensions. In this case, millennials who have a higher rate of volunteering participation are shown to put more value on the implementation of CSR dimensions by their employers. This is further verified by a study which showed that those millennials who volunteered and donated more frequently in their personal lives, were more likely to spend time researching a company's CSR values when conducting a job search. (Scott, 2015). The same study suggests that companies that incorporate CSR policies into their culture, do better in attracting and retaining millennial workers (Scott, 2015). Moreover, another study of the millennial generation showed that millennials preferred employers whose CSR actions were closely related to their own values. (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). Additionally, the four millennial impact reports from 2010-2013 yielded a common trend of millennial actions and behaviours at the workplace. For instance, millennials were found to partake in causes in order to help other people, as opposed to helping institutions. (Millennial Impact Report, 2014).

Millennials and Altruism

As for altruistic values, millennials were found to have lower levels of altruism compared to other generations (Twenge, Campbell, & Hoffman, 2010). Moreover, research has reported that millennials are likely to favour extrinsic rewards at work at the expense of social responsibility interests (Leveson & Joiner, 2014).

However, Millennials were found to be particularly altruistic, but still extrinsically driven, when it came to leadership roles. In an ever increasingly fast paced world, the list of problems for humanity does not seem to be getting shorter. Millennials will actively seek leadership opportunities, presumably because of the increasing demand of them, and they will communicate altruistic values while performing leadership roles. At the same time however, they

will continue to be extrinsically driven just like other generations (Sadaghiani & Myers, 2010). These results are supported by a number of others. For example, Twenge and Kasser (2013) found that Millennials report a high degree of preference for materialistic rewards. Sadaghiani and Myers (2009) found that the parents of Millennials encourage both egoism and valuing extrinsic benefits, as well as altruism (i.e., selflessness and a concern for followers).

Altruism and Volunteering

According to Debbie Haski-Leventhal (2009) “Not every act of volunteering is altruistic and not every altruistic act is volunteering, but the connection between the two concepts is so strong that one cannot speak of the one without the other.” Due to this connection between the two concepts, an individual’s level of volunteering involvement will likely provide some insight into their altruistic values as well. Volunteering was defined by Burns et al. (2008) as “a specific form of helping behaviour, involving a long-term commitment.” In that same study, Burns found that volunteering was considered important to the younger generation and that Millennials possess a particularly positive relationship towards volunteering. Additionally, their research showed that 95 percent of Millennials specified that volunteering and helping others is very or somewhat important. Ockenden and Hutin (2008) found that Millennials seek new volunteer and job opportunities “to help other people” but also for personal development (by enhancing their skills and employability).

Allison Fine (2008) found that Millennials believe they can make a difference in the world and that they are immersed in causes they believe in. Preston (2010) found that Millennials do want to be involved in causes they believe in. In 2010, Ng et al. found that Millennials have been said to be looking for meaningful and engaging work. These results support the claim that

the Millennial generation is interested in good causes, meaningful work, and helping out others. The results mentioned earlier suggest that although Millennials are higher in altruistic values, they are also higher in egoistic values and their value of materialistic, extrinsic rewards.

Methodology

Participants

The research sample for this study consisted of 84 participants all within the age range of 16-34, thus classifying as members of the “Millennial Generation”. As illustrated in Table 1, the sample consisted of a gender variation of 46 males and 34 female participants with an additional 4 participants electing to withhold their gender. The study’s participants were found via social media networks, specifically Facebook.

Measures

Information was gathered on the participants previous altruistic involvement and the impact it held on their attitudes towards working for a altruistic company. The information was collected by participants completing an anonymous online survey ran through “Qualtrics Survey Solutions”. Data was collected on four distinct categories using eight measures: The Millennial ID survey constructed by Dr. Sean Lyons, the Altruistic Self rating Scale, a survey on corporate social performance using the five dimensions as defined in Greening and Turban’s study “Corporate Social Performance as a Competitive Advantage in Attracting a Quality Workforce” (2000), and a survey consisting of questions used to measure an individual's level of selfishness. We also obtained demographic information relating to age, gender, and education.

The Millennial ID was provided by Dr. Sean Lyons as a result of previous data analysis to determine a base rating on common Millennial stereotypes and how strongly participants correlate to these stereotypes. The Altruistic Self-rating Scale was used to measure a participant's likelihood and frequency of altruistic tendencies such as charitable, empathetic, and selfless acts. It is a five point likert-scale with options ranging from “Never” to “Very Often” (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981). Our survey relating to employer attractiveness based on corporate social performances was designed by the researchers and was based off of the five dimensions of corporate social performance as defined in Greening and Turban’s study “Corporate Social Performance as a Competitive Advantage in Attracting a Quality Workforce” (Greening & Turban, 2000). It is a five point likert-scale ranging from “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”.

The selfishness study used questions created by the researchers and approved by Dr. Lyons. The questions were designed to determine how much a respondent’s possible personal gains influences their decision making in terms of employment. It is a five point likert-scale ranging from “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through Facebook. A convenience sample was collected from a total of 84 participants. The participants were first required to complete the “Informed Consent Information” form before proceeding to the survey hosted on “Qualtrics Survey Solutions”. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary with anonymity being stressed. Participants were informed there were no obligations and that they could withdraw at any point. Afterwards participants were given contact information for any further questions they had or if they wished to have a copy of the results.

Results

Table 2 contains the classification of our participants based on age. 82.1% of our participants are between the ages of 20 to 24, with 9.5% between the ages of 16 to 19 and 6% between the ages of 25 to 34. Further to this, 77.4% of our total respondents are currently enrolled in post-secondary education, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 4 represents the correlations between each of our measures, ranging from -1, which is a perfect negative correlation, to 1, which is a perfectly positive correlation. Correlations were measured at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. The millennial identity measure failed to produce any statistically significant results. However, it did provide some interesting insights. The millennial identity had minor negative correlations with the environment, products and services, women and minorities, and community relations aspects of employer relations. The SRA provided a significant positive correlation with the community relations measure of employer attractiveness. Even though the correlations between the SRA and the employer attractiveness measures are not statistically significant for all measures, it is still interesting to note that the employee relations, environment, and products and services aspects of employer attractiveness had a minor negative correlation.

Each of the six aspects of employer attractiveness, that were measured, has a positive correlation with one another. This suggests that millennial job seekers are influenced by selfish behaviours as well as altruistic ones. More specifically, there is a strong positive correlation between employer attractiveness, due to selfish reasons and due to their product and service offerings. Other strong correlations include: employer attractiveness, due to their treatment of women and minorities and employee relations; as well as employer attractiveness, due to their treatment of women and minorities and community relations.

Table 5 contains a breakdown of participant's responses based on gender. During the analysis of the data it was determined, as shown in the table, that there is a significant difference in the way men (M=3.07) and women (M=3.30) answered the millennial identity questions. Thus, we are able to determine that women tend to be more "millennial". Although not statistically significant, there is a noticeable trend where women also scored higher on the SRA and CSP elements of employer attractiveness while men scored higher on the selfish element of employer attractiveness. This may be due to having more male participants. It would be interesting to explore this trend further with a larger sample size, half of which is male and half is female.

Table 6 contains a breakdown of participant's responses based on age. There are significant differences between the three age groups: 16 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 34, which are:

1. Employer Attractiveness – Employee Relations
 - a) 16 to 19 (M=3.17)
 - b) 25 to 34 (M=4.53)
2. Employer Attractiveness – Products and Services
 - a) 16 to 19 (M=3.42)
 - b) 25 to 34 (M=4.53)
3. Employer Attractiveness – Women and Minorities
 - a) 16 to 19 (M=3.42)
 - b) 25 to 34 (M=4.53)
4. Employer Attractiveness – Selfish Reasons
 - a) 16 to 19 (M=3.30)
 - b) 20 to 24 (M=4.11)

However, there is no statistical significance in the difference in responses between age groups for the millennial identity, SRA, and the environment and community relations elements of employer attractiveness.

Discussion

Successfully attracting and retaining millennial talent is becoming increasingly important for businesses as baby boomers continue to retire. According to an analysis of U.S. Census data, in 2015, millennials became the largest share of the American workforce (Fry, 2015).

The main purpose of the study is to determine whether the elements of CSP have an impact on employer attractiveness and thus, an impact on the behaviour of job seekers. From the data we collected, as shown in Table 4, it is evident that each element of employer attractiveness that was measured, does factor into job seekers' behaviour. Millennials want to work for companies that have strong employee relations, care about the environment, offer unique and industry-leading products and services, provide equal opportunities for women and minorities, and are engaged with their local communities. It is more complex than that as millennials also want to be able to brag about the companies they work for. They want their friends and family to react positively when they mention the company name.

As mentioned in the "results" section, there is a trend where women scored higher than men on all of the measures except for the selfish element of employer attractiveness. Management looking to increase diversity in the workplace through hiring more women may have an added interest in developing company initiatives to improve employee relations, opportunities for women and minorities, organizational environment policies, processes for creating their products or delivering their services, and community involvement programs.

Conclusion

As determined by the mean scores, shown in Table 7, each element of employer attractiveness had at least a small level of influence on millennial decisions when evaluating job offers and/or potential employers. Millennials want to have pride in the company they work for. Employers should evaluate their corporate social performance plans and/or strategies to ensure their strategic goals align with what millennials are seeking.

The literature review yielded mixed results in measuring the altruism levels of millennials. Some studies found that millennials were less altruistic than other generations as they valued extrinsic rewards over social responsibility (Twenge et., al, 2010). Contrastly, other studies had different findings in the altruism levels of millennials. More specifically, when it came to leadership roles, millennials were observed to have particularly high levels of altruism. In other studies, such as the 2014 Millennial Impact Report, it was found that millennials found that CSR causes were particularly important for them when they were conducting a job search. All in all, the various literature on the altruism levels of millennials found that millennials did seek out socially responsible firms when choosing an employer. This highlights the importance of incorporating more CSR policies in order to attract and retain millennial talent.

Appendix

Table 1

Q4 What is your gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	e Percent
Valid	Male	46	54.8	57.5	57.5
	Female	34	40.5	42.5	100.0
	Total	80	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.8		
Total		84	100.0		

Table 2

Q3 What is your current age?					
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	e Percent
Valid	16 to 19	8	9.5	9.8	9.8
	20 to 24	69	82.1	84.1	93.9
	25 to 34	5	6.0	6.1	100.0
	Total	82	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.4		
Total		84	100.0		

Table 3

		Frequency	Percent	Percent	e Percent
Valid	Yes	65	77.4	80.2	80.2
	No	16	19.0	19.8	100.0
	Total	81	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.6		
Total		84	100.0		

Table 4

	Millennial_ID	Altruism_SelfReport	EA_Employees	EA_Environment	EA_ProductsServices	EA_WomenMinorities	EA_CommunityRelations	EA_Selfish
Millennial_ID	1	.085	.010	-.004	-.016	-.054	-.082	.109
Altruism_SelfReport	.085	1	-.036	-.031	-.035	.055	.249*	.106
EA_Employees	.010	-.036	1	.531**	.662**	.704**	.585**	.572**
EA_Environment	-.004	-.031	.531**	1	.509**	.588**	.574**	.277*
EA_ProductsServices	-.016	-.035	.662**	.509**	1	.646**	.461**	.637**
EA_WomenMinorities	-.054	.055	.704**	.588**	.646**	1	.700**	.515**
EA_CommunityRelations	-.082	.249*	.585**	.574**	.461**	.700**	1	.389**
EA_Selfish	.109	.106	.572**	.277*	.637**	.515**	.389**	1

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

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

Table 5

	Q4 What is your gender								
	Male			Female			Total		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N
Millennial_ID	3.07 _a	.30	44	3.30 _b	.32	34	3.17	.33	78
Altruism_SelfReport	2.74 _a	.52	43	2.87 _a	.69	34	2.79	.60	77
EA_Employees	3.84 _a	.74	42	3.91 _a	1.08	32	3.87	.90	74
EA_Environment	3.63 _a	.88	42	3.85 _a	1.11	32	3.73	.98	74
EA_ProductsServices	4.06 _a	.64	42	4.07 _a	1.03	32	4.06	.82	74
EA_WomenMinorities	3.89 _a	.67	42	3.99 _a	.97	32	3.93	.81	74
EA_CommunityRelations	3.55 _a	.63	42	3.75 _a	1.18	32	3.64	.91	74
EA_Selfish	4.09 _a	.70	42	3.92 _a	1.00	32	4.01	.84	74

Note: Values in the same row and subtable not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column means. Cells with no subscript are not included in the test. Tests assume equal variances.²

1. This category is not used in comparisons because there are no other valid categories to compare

2. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 6

	Q3 What is your current age?											
	16 to 19			20 to 24			25 to 34			Total		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid N
Millennial_ID	3.22 _a	.48	8	3.17 _a	.31	67	3.23 _a	.33	5	3.18	.33	80
Altruism_SelfReport	2.52 _a	.44	8	2.82 _a	.58	66	3.01 _a	1.04	5	2.80	.60	79
EA_Employees	3.17 _a	1.36	8	3.91 _{ab}	.79	63	4.53 _b	.56	5	3.87	.89	76
EA_Environment	3.46 _a	1.60	8	3.75 _a	.90	63	4.20 _a	.84	5	3.75	.98	76
EA_ProductsServices	3.42 _a	1.52	8	4.12 _{ab}	.65	63	4.53 _b	.87	5	4.07	.82	76
EA_WomenMinorities	3.42 _a	1.57	8	3.96 _{ab}	.65	63	4.53 _b	.45	5	3.94	.80	76
EA_CommunityRelatio	3.17 _a	1.59	8	3.68 _a	.77	63	4.00 _a	.94	5	3.65	.90	76
EA_Selfish	3.30 _a	1.52	8	4.11 _b	.72	63	4.28 _{ab}	.30	5	4.04	.84	76

Note: Values in the same row and subtable not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column means.

1. This category is not used in comparisons because there are no other valid categories to compare

2. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Millennial_ID	80	2.53	3.93	3.1815	.32898
Altruism_SelfReport	79	1.95	4.75	2.8032	.60158
EA_Employees	76	1.00	5.00	3.8728	.88939
EA_Environment	76	1.00	5.00	3.7500	.98300
EA_ProductsServices	76	1.00	5.00	4.0746	.81939
EA_WomenMinorities	76	1.00	5.00	3.9386	.80131
EA_CommunityRelations	76	1.00	5.00	3.6491	.90086
EA_Selfish	76	1.00	5.00	4.0395	.84350
Valid N (listwise)	76				

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