

Abstract

The following thesis project investigated whether there is a need for change in organizational culture within the Canadian public sector in order to retain Millennials within the public service. Therefore the purpose of this study was to explore why Millennials within the public service in Canada might stay in or leave their current positions within the public sector. A survey consisting of open-ended questions was conducted to elicit information on what aspects of organizational culture impact the retention of Millennials within the Canadian public sector. Nine major themes emerged from the findings: social responsibility, organizational structure/bureaucracy, opportunities, nature of work, leadership, people and relationships, work-life balance, commitment, and security. The thesis discusses these themes and comments on the significance of the findings as possible motivation for future investigations into the Human Resources succession planning needs of public sector institutions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Within the next twenty years, a large percentage of the Canadian workforce will be retiring (Martel, Caron-Malenfant, Vezina & Belanger, 2007). With this retirement population being so vast, it will be crucial to the sustainability of any organization that they have a human resources succession plan in place to retain current talent and the next wave of leaders, specifically those individuals belonging to the Millennial generation (those born between 1982 and 2000). In order to do this, however, organizations must understand this next generation of employees, a generation that is known for their “job-changing tendencies” (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011, p. 24). Although there is a significant amount of research regarding Millennials within the workplace, there is a dearth of research studying Millennials within the Canadian public sector, and in particular, retention of this group within an organizational culture that does not appear to meet many of this generation’s needs, interests and expectations. Public sector organizations in Canada continue to uphold a reputation as being organizations that can offer stability, secure benefits, a generous pension plan and a life-long career within the public service. However, is security for example, enough to retain this group within the public sector that is customarily bureaucratic, traditional and slow to adopt change? Research has indicated that Millennials are expecting more from their organizations (Espinoza, Ukleja & Rusch, 2010) but this research has not focused on Millennials within Canadian public sector organizations. Therefore, in my study I will explore the reasons why Millennials within the public service in Canada might remain in or leave their current positions within the public sector.

The results of my study will contribute to an existing and evolving body of literature related to organizational culture and the public sector, workforce crisis and employee retention,

however, in particular, the findings will contribute to a growing interest in, and understanding of, retaining Millennials in the workplace and more specifically in the public sector. The qualitative study, guided by the interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009), applied grounded theory (Creswell, 2005) to explore the reasons for the Millennial generation to stay in or leave the public sector and the changes in organizational culture that are necessary to retain this group.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

Millennials in the workplace is a pertinent topic today with extensive literature flooding the Human Resources/Business Communications' section at the local Chapters bookstore. However, regardless of its popularity within nonacademic media, this topic is less prevalent within scholarly discourses. Although limited, academic sources highlighting aspects of my argument exist. Current scholarly literature within the business and professional sectors has discussed the demographic issue of baby boomers leaving the workforce. For example, Duchscher & Cowin (2004) refer to the Registered Nurses' aging workforce and its negative influence on the sustainability of a quality nursing profession. The researchers also discuss the effects of this tremendous exit of baby boomers on the labour market and how the introduction of Millennials into the workplace presents many challenges, such as multiple generations working alongside one another (Duchscher & Cowin, 2004). There is even literature regarding public sector organizational culture as it pertains to labour market shifts and demands, however, there is no research exploring the issue of retaining Millennials in the Canadian public sector. Subsequently, I have devised a review of literature relating to workforce crisis, organizational culture and the private and public sectors, to offer context with this issue. Previous research has studied relevant topics such as organizational commitment, organizational climate, and job satisfaction in relation to turnover and retention (Aarons & Sawitsky, 2006; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2000).

Workforce Crisis

According to Willow Jacobson (2010), the “impending exodus of the baby boomers from the nation’s workforce” sets the stage for a workforce crisis, in which government organizations will be forced to compete with “private and nonprofit organizations...for talented workers” (p. 353). Since the public sector is more likely to be affected by this demographic shift, due to “their high proportion of older employees” (p. 353), Jacobson argues that it is crucial that governments implement strategic workforce plans that prepare them for their “present and future needs” (p. 354). Armstrong-Strassen and Templer (2006) suggest that the way to minimize the impacts of this workforce crisis is to engage “in human resource practices that promote the recruitment and retention of older employees,” specifically targeting employees “aged 50 and older” (p. 247). They argue that “organizations will have no choice but to employ and develop older workers” (p. 247). Although this proposal is an excellent strategy for short-term employment needs, organizations must consider their pending long-term problem, in which almost 50% of previously filled positions will be vacant. Armstrong-Strassen and Templer address a problem similar to the one I have presented, however their study offers an extremely narrow and shortsighted solution to a much bigger and more expansive issue. In recognizing this solution’s shortcomings, I was able to build a study that will offer suggestions to a much more proactive approach that focuses on retaining Millennials rather than retaining retirees.

The Millennial Generation

The Pew Research Center reports that “nearly 57% of younger workers say it is not very likely or not likely at all that they will stay with their current employer” (Bannon, Ford & Meltzer, 2011, p. 61). This exodus of workers will become a significant problem for organizations that have become dependent on loyal employees, such as government

organizations within Canada. With Millennials numbering in the millions, it will be crucial that public service organizations consider long-term employee retention strategies, that involve Millennial retention, in order to maintain a sustainable workforce.

Current scholarly literature offers significant contributions to the study of Millennials, “those individuals born between 1980 and 2000” (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011, p. 22), highlighting their preferences, expectations and interests within the workplace. Hartman and McCambridge (2011) identify the millennial generation’s need for on-going, two-way communication, commitment to social responsibility and desire for work-life balance (p. 24). Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2012) recognize Millennials’ desire for “strong relationships with their superiors” and preference “to work in teams” (p. 61). Both sources offer greater insight into this group’s behaviour within the workplace, but present this information in a way that perpetrates already prevalent stereotypes of Millennials that do not include any findings involving Millennials within Canadian public sector organizations. There is a gap in scholarly literature which neglects the preferences and needs of Millennials in the public sector and ways to further the relationship between these elements and Millennial retention within the public sector. My study addresses this literature gap by focusing on Millennials, providing insight into their reasons for staying in or leaving the public sector, and by making recommendations for change within their organizational culture. It expands and enriches the body of existing literature on organizational culture, commitment, job satisfaction and retention.

Organizational Culture

The culture of an organization is significant to the retention of all employees, but even more significant to the retention of the Millennial generation who seems to have a culture of its own. In order to explore the reasons for retention and/or departure of this group from the public

sector, an investigation of how this generation fits within the current organizational culture is necessary. Although there is no universally accepted definition of the term, organizational culture, there is a generally accepted view. Meyer and Topolnytsky (2000) define it as “a shared set of beliefs and values, reinforced by an organization’s symbols and structures, and manifested in the way people think and act” (p. 9.1). An organization’s culture is formed through the combining of core values based on firm beliefs and underlying assumptions, and may be visible through artifacts such as members’ dress that are representative of the culture. The ways in which its members think, believe, act and behave indicate the culture of their organization and tend to reflect the founders’ or leaders’ core values and underlying assumptions of the organization (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010). Cultural values relating to relationship-oriented values, task-oriented values and change-related values assist in defining a particular organizational culture (Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2000).

According to Meyer and Topolnytsky (2000), regardless of the research strategy used or the studies completed, evidence points to the fact that culture does matter and that employee commitment and retention is related to the perceived organizational values. Some cultural values have a fairly universal appeal that attract and keep employees-values that are universally attractive such as strong relationship-oriented values, and these particular values are also typically linked to commitment and retention (Meyer and Topolnytsky, 2000). Employees are attracted to organizations with values that are congruent with their own, or that match what they consider to be ideal organizational values and with underlying assumptions that “people are important” (e.g. treat people with dignity and respect). “There is no “best culture” but employee commitment and retention is greater in organizations where people are highly valued” (Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2000, p. 20). “A culture that promotes strong relationship values appears to

increase the retention of both strong and weak employees. That is, it reduces both dysfunctional and functional turnover” (p. 13). Therefore the importance public sector organizations place on people and relationships may affect retention of the Millennial generation and should be an area of study.

Organizational culture is a dynamic, multidimensional, complex and holistic phenomena (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010) that is historically determined and socially constructed (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, 2010). The shared values, beliefs and assumptions that exist among employees act as a system of social control and can influence employees’ attitudes and behaviours. Geert Hofstede (2010), renowned international researcher of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture, suggests that culture should be used as a tool for organizational change. He claims that culture hinders and/or enables change in several ways that are crucial to understand if creating tangible and lasting change is desired.

Organizational Culture, Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Retention

Meyer and Allen’s (1991; 1997) Three Component Model of organizational commitment has been applied to many studies over the years as the nature, development and consequences of organizational commitment, a construct, have been researched by both narrative review and statistical study. The model postulates that employees develop affective, normative, and continuance commitment to their organizations. Aday, Parboteeah and Velinor (2008) effectively define and summarize the effects of the three types of commitment in relation to retention:

Affective commitment is the extent to which employees are involved with and have emotional attachment to their organizations because they identify with the goals and values of their organizations. Thus, employees with high levels of affective commitment stay with their organizations because they want to. Normative commitment reflects employees’ sense of

obligation to their organizations. As such, employees with strong normative commitment remain with their organizations because they feel they ought to. In contrast, continuance commitment refers to commitment based on employees' recognition of the costs associated with leaving their organizations. Therefore, employees with strong continuance commitment remain with their organizations primarily to avoid costs of leaving. It should be noted that the different forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive as employees can experience varying degrees of affective, normative, and continuance commitment (p. 569).

Therefore, employees could be committed to their organization and still leave their jobs, thus suggesting that there are other reasons for employee turnover and retention. The findings of Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky's (2002) comprehensive meta-analysis study indicate that the three types of commitment (affective, normative and continuance) relate negatively to turnover, however, they relate positively to measures of other work-relevant behaviour such as attendance, in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviour. As well, other variables such as individual differences, work experience, and alternatives correlate with commitment, especially in relation to affective commitment. Findings also indicate that job satisfaction, job performance, job involvement, absenteeism, stress and family conflict, supervisor and self-ratings, and organizational citizenship behaviour all have a positive correlation with affective and normative commitment thus providing insight into the multidimensionality of commitment, satisfaction and employee retention. It is essential to understand relationships among organizational culture, commitment and job satisfaction, and other dimensions of culture that may be impacting Millennials' attitudes, beliefs and actions.

In MacIntosh and Doherty's (2010) study in the private sector, organizational culture was shown to have a direct influence on staff satisfaction and commitment and turnover intention.

Their findings contribute to our understanding of the nature and influence of organizational culture in general and lend support to the influence of organizational culture on job satisfaction and intention to leave the organization. Specifically, MacIntosh and Doherty (2010, p. 115) found that “the cultural dimension shown to impact job satisfaction most was “atmosphere”; the cultural dimension of “connectedness” had a significant influence only on the intention to leave, and a sense of belonging is a core value and will help combat retention problems.” Regardless of the research strategy used or studies completed, evidence points to the fact that culture does matter and that employee commitment and retention is related to the perceived organizational values. Millennials’ perceptions of cultural dimensions such as connectedness and atmosphere may influence their decision to remain or leave the public sector.

Public Sector Organizational Culture and Employee Retention

Organizational cultural within the public sector is typically viewed as bureaucratic, traditional and slow to adopt change, but due to recent demographic changes and infiltration of new technology, “public sector organizations are facing incredible pressures to adjust to the new, evolving demands” of their employees (Schraeder, Tears, & Jordan, 2005, p. 501). Does organizational culture play a role in employee retention? According to Hartman and McCambridge (2011), elements of organizational culture, such as internal communication practices, do play a role. For example, a survey conducted by Hewlett-Packard “found a strong correlation between improved two-way communication ... and employee retention” (Hartman & Cambridge, 2011, p. 25). Although this source offered an example of the relationship between organizational culture and employee retention, this example did not take place within the public sector, only explored one aspect of organizational culture, and did not focus specifically on Millennials. In order to fully understand the relationship between organizational culture and

employee retention, specifically within Canadian government organizations, a further investigation must take place that involves Canadian public servants, and more specifically, public servants under the age of 33.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This qualitative study sought to acquire meaning and understanding from the perspective of the research participants (Merriam, 2009) and thus emerged from within the interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009). My personal epistemological and ontological beliefs and assumptions, which can be understood to be social constructivist in nature (Guzzetti, 2002), helped to frame the study and shape the entire research process (Merriam, 1998). As the researcher, I recognized the existence of multiple realities and believed in the construction of meaning as a social process in which individuals co-create knowledge “out of what is experienced” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 271). I intended to find knowledge, understanding and meaning in the words of individuals and thus, in order to explore why Millennials within the public service in Canada might stay in or leave their current positions within the public sector, administered an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of open-ended questions that requested the responses of volunteer participants from the Institute of Public Administration Canada (IPAC)’s New Public Servants (NPS) membership, which represents Canada’s provinces/territories. Guided by the interpretivist paradigm, grounded theory was applied to code, sort, and categorize the data (Creswell, 2005; Charmaz, 2006). This process led to the production of an explanation and development of a broad theory for the kinds of change in organizational culture required within the Canadian public sector in order to retain Millennials within the public service.

Sample

The participant population included volunteers from the Institute of Public Administration Canada (IPAC)’s New Public Servants (NPS) membership from six provinces

across Canada. IPAC consists of a network of Canadians who are employed by municipal, provincial, and federal government and/or academic institutions. Within this membership, individuals self-identify as being a new public servant; also known as someone who has entered the public service no more than ten years ago. Subsequently, the NPS group consists of a large number of young public servants from across Canada.

There were four main reasons for the selection of this sample: NPS membership is comprised specifically of Canadian public servants, these public servants are employed at all levels of government, it is a large membership, and most importantly, approximately 90% of the NPS' membership falls within the Millennial age demographic. Another key reason for selecting this sample was that I have access to this group through the NPS national chair who supported members as a credible source.

Accessing this participant population took place through the NPS' national chair, who distributed the online survey link to city chairs and who then distributed the survey to their local membership through email or an online membership newsletter. I did not have direct contact with the local chairs so the total number of surveys distributed, and thus, the response rate, is unknown. Potential participants had one week to complete the survey online with a reminder sent by the local chairs three days before the closing date. Prior close attention was given to how aspects of initial and follow-up contacts in electronic surveys affect survey response (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003). However, much more research is needed on aspects of email contact and communication such as using the potential respondent's name, whether or not the respondent was selected, and the level of authority of the request (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003). The written responses of the forty participants who completed the survey provided the data for this study. As this qualitative research methodology of collecting data through open-ended questions is

concerned with seeking depth of understanding and meaning (Merriam, 2009), the particular number of respondents is deemed appropriate provided the participant population has the ability to provide rich data from which a great deal can be learned (Patton, 2002).

Samples can be generated using probability sampling or nonprobability sampling (Creswell, 2009). For the purpose of this research, nonprobability sampling was utilized. Nonprobability sampling involves procedures “in which the researcher chooses participants because they are available, convenient and represent some of the characteristics the investigation seeks to study” (Creswell, 2005, p. 595). The participants in this study represented a relatively homogeneous sample as the reasons for their selection, as previously stated, allows for the ability of results and insights to be generalized to a population (Creswell, 2009). The participant sample was “purposefully selected” to “help understand the problem and the research question. This does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a large number of participants and sites” (p. 178). The sample included 23 males and 17 females, aged 22-33, with years of experience working for the public sector ranging from less than 4 years to over 10 years.

Data Collection

The method used to collect data was an online survey (Creswell, 2005). The electronic survey was selected as it provided easy access to a large number of research participants, reduction in costs and time, complex data gathering from the source, and potential for projectability (Pocknee & Robbie, 2002), which could be helpful in creating a theory. The tool, FluidSurveys, was specifically chosen because it is the preferred choice for academic research completed in Canada, as it is a Canadian online survey tool that guarantees that all data is hosted securely in Canada. Using this tool, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions was developed. Questions centered on several topics emergent from the review of related literature.

For example, previous studies had focused on commitment and turnover, job satisfaction and retention, organizational culture and intention to leave, and although not connected to Millennials or to the public sector, guided the development of the questions for my survey. Included in the questionnaire was an initial section strictly dedicated to demographics, such as participant characteristics such as: age, gender, geographic location and level of formal education. The second section of the questionnaire was comprised of a series of open-ended questions that allowed the researcher to gather the necessary qualitative data to employ grounded theory technique. As a FluidSurveys' user, all security options such as insuring that search engines cannot index the survey, were available to me and strictly implemented. As well, FluidSurveys guaranteed to securely house the data for twelve months.

Analytical Approach

Qualitative research is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Thus, it is qualitative research that best suits the intent of my research. In order to qualitatively analyze the data, I employed grounded theory. Grounded theory is used to generate a broad, macro explanation; also known as a “grounded theory” to explain a process, action or interaction among people (Creswell, 2005, p. 52). This rigorous, systematic, qualitative procedure uses active codes and emergent categories to capture the experiences, views and perspectives of participants.

Specifically I employed a constructivist design to capture these experiences, which focuses more on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions and ideologies of participants rather than on the gathering of facts (Creswell, 2005). The participants construct meanings for the many realities that they live and experience within the context of their working within the public sector. As Lincoln (1995) articulated, “constructivism’s particular contribution to eliciting and

creating student [Millennial] voices is its recognition of multiple realities” (p. 92). I chose this qualitative analytical approach because it is well suited to explore the research question and offers the possibility of discovering something unexpected. It is an exciting approach that does not restrict one’s findings to a predetermined theory. My study was designed to explore a novel research question and create an emergent theory (Glaser, 2002).

Data Analysis

This study applied a form of inquiry that “honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The inquiry process allowed me to actively engage in constant comparative data analysis, an inductive (from specific to broad) procedure intended to ground the categories of information, and the resultant theory, in the data. Preliminary and underdeveloped categories were continuously revisited in light of new information, while coding and labeling using exact words of the participants were revised. I asked many questions of the data throughout the analysis and interpretive processes (Glaser, 1992) as I tried to come to understand the intended meaning in the words of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I weaved back and forth between analyzing data and refining, interrelating, developing and clarifying meanings of categories and forming themes to generate the framework for my theory. However, as the researcher, I eventually made a decision to terminate these processes as the major themes appeared frequently in the data, presenting a framework for my theory. The emergent theory was intended to be a middle range explanation drawn from multiple individuals (Charmaz, 2006) and representing the views of the Millennial generation.

Methodological Limitations

The main limitation to conducting a survey is always the risk of not retrieving a representative sample. As the sample was generated from the NPS membership, this was not an issue. Although those who are involved in this particular group may exhibit a greater interest in Millennials and therefore may be more motivated to participate in research discussing Millennials within the public sector, their involvement arguably offers greater insight. Another major risk is that the sample size is not large enough and therefore cannot be deemed reliable. However, this was not a problem given the large population from which the sample was drawn. Finally, an online survey can be limiting to the depth of data that one retrieves, in comparison to the possibilities of other methods like conducting interviews or a focus group. However, by administering a questionnaire that was comprised of many broad and general open-ended questions, a wealth of data was gathered to overcome this potential limitation. According to Creswell (2009), the more open-ended the questions, the better the opportunity for the constructivist researcher to seek to understand the views of the participants.

Ethical Considerations

A key challenge throughout the research process was to minimize researcher bias. As a member of the Millennial generation, I have previously contrived opinions and perspectives regarding this generation's ambitions, expectations, strengths, and flaws, etcetera. I bring to the research my personal, cultural and historical experiences, education and background that not only helped to shape the purpose of my research but also provided an orientation toward the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2009). It was crucial, therefore, that I remained consciously aware of my biases while simultaneously maintaining an objective point of view when collecting and analyzing data, providing insights and explanations, and presenting

recommendations in making known the meanings of the participants. To mitigate this concern, I selected to use an online survey because it reduces the risk of researcher bias. The researcher does not have the arena to ask follow-up probing questions or influence responses through body language or voice tone. In addition, the online survey allows for the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' identity and for whom they work to be completely protected. These were two significant reasons why this method was selected over other methods involving in-person interviews or focus groups, for example.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The interpretivist paradigm is an approach, which relies heavily on “the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Grounded in these views, a theory was developed based on the themes revealed throughout the grounded theory process. These themes were analyzed and sorted into broad and sub-categories, which can be viewed in Figure 1 below. The categories are presented in order of frequency of the participants’ responses.

Figure 1: A Summary of Themes Related to Millennial Retention within the Public Sector

Core Categories	
Category	Indicators (Sub-categories)
Social Responsibility	Responsibility to the community/public Public Service Values
Organizational Structure / Bureaucracy	Bureaucratic Red-Tape / Challenges Innovation
Opportunities	Learning Opportunities Horizontal Movement – opportunities for change Vertical Movement – opportunities for advancement
Nature of the Work	Challenging / Stimulating Work Collaborative Work Meaningful Work
Leadership	Empowering and Supportive Supervisor Giving Voice and Engagement Opportunities Independence and Autonomy Recognition and Utilization of Skills Empowerment
People and Relationships	Supervisory Relationships Co-worker Relationships
Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance Giving Back / Volunteer time
Commitment	Commitment Career vs. Job
Security	Economic Factors / Situation - fear Financial Security (Pay) Pension Benefits

In the sections that follow, each of the categories will be discussed in such a manner as to capture the experiences, values, views, feelings and assumptions of the participants as well as to present the implications of these insights. Qualitative theorists suggest a variety of ways to appropriately present and discuss the results of a study. In this study the results garnered from the survey responses will provide explanations and conceptual insights, supported and enriched by direct quotes from the participants (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1984). To complement the written explanation and to assist in finding meaning in the data, percentages of participants' responses will sometimes be included (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Social responsibility

There was an overwhelming sense that this group of participants is dedicated to giving back to the public with a majority of respondents indicating that their responsibility to society was a big motivator for staying within the public sector. Although many participants mentioned leaving their current position for new opportunities, these moves were likely to be within their current organization or within another public sector organization. For example, one participant stated, "while I expect to work for the public good for most of my professional life, it need not always be within a government organization -- I could work in the non-profit sector, or even private sector in a CSR or community development role. In fact, I welcome the opportunity to move between sectors throughout my career and hope to." Many participants even mentioned that volunteering outside of work is a big part of their lives and the fact that the public service as an employer gives a day off to volunteer, is a pro as it connects with their value system.

According to the results of this study, some cultural values seem to have a fairly universal appeal that attract and keep employees. Meyer and Topolnytsky (2000) agree, arguing that values that are universally attractive, such as strong relationship-oriented values are typically

linked to commitment and retention. Employees are “attracted to organizations with values that are congruent with their own, or that match what they consider to be ideal organizational values” (p. 9.14). Based on the data from my study, many Canadian public servants under the age of 33 are attracted to the public sector due to their shared value system. This commitment to social responsibility represented the dominant reason why many participants began working within the public sector and why they plan on staying within the public sector in the future. As one participant stated, “I see the value of public service and know I am making a difference.” Another reiterated, “I am passionate about improving the lives of citizens through the work I do and helping to shape its future”.

Organizational structure / bureaucracy

Although participants’ commitment to giving back to society was very strong, their frustrations sprouting from the red tape of bureaucracy, was the number one reason for participants to consider leaving the public sector. Eighty-two percent of them reported that in order to retain the Millennial generation, change was required within the public sector. When asked what needs to change, the majority of the responses were related to the burdens of bureaucracy, specifically highlighting the slow pace at which processes take within the public sector. As one participant stated, “it can be very frustrating for young people who are used to the rapid pace of technology and information, to work within government approval processes” that are slow. Also, many participants indicated that the reason they entered the public sector was to be able to make positive change to the status quo and to benefit society, however many individuals’ expectations were not met due to the slow processes of the public sector, subsequently leaving them to feel unfulfilled. One participant stated, “I want to work somewhere that anticipates change and adapts. I also want to work somewhere that provides

excellent client service on a social level. The government's process limits our ability to effectively serve clients, and outdated antiquated systems are a barrier. I find it incredibly frustrating and will seek other employment at some point if changes are not made." Many participants argued that the slow pace of change within a bureaucratic institution is the most critical factor that makes 'them' want to leave the public service.

Participants argued the need for breaking down silos, increasing the openness to taking risks, flattening organizational decision making to being more inclusive, and restricting red tape. Participants feel that by making these changes, innovation and creativity will be possible and will provide a platform towards positive change. Participants also mentioned technology surprisingly often, considering that in previous responses, they ranked this element rather low in terms of influencing their decision to stay. Participants, however, in response to this question, would like to see that technology is not only congruent with technology used outside of work but that it is used as an effective tool to make processes more efficient. One participant argued that these changes are necessary not to solely be in line with Millennials' preferences but to lead to "more effective organizations overall." He or she argued that "while these culture shifts are reflected in what Millennials are seeking, the benefit is more collective than this particular generation" and offers change that "would be mutually beneficial" for all generations.

A big part of this cultural shift that needs to take place according to participants, is the emphasis placed on innovation, and as one participant stated, "innovation in the true sense – rather than words." Often in the public sector, "innovation" is a departmental priority, however only in theory and not in practice. Although some argued that this element was not significant to their retention, the majority of participants indicated that if the public service does not come into the twenty-first century, they will not stay. "We need more out of the box thinkers," one

participant stated, arguing that the “public sector too often gets pigeon holed by bureaucracy and seniority entitlement.”

Opportunities

When participants were asked if they have considered leaving their current position in the public sector, 82% of participants responded yes. Although this number may seem high and in line with pre-established views of the job-hopping tendencies of Millennials, surprisingly only a few had plans to seek employment outside of the public sector. In fact the main reason why such a large percentage of participants were considering leaving their current positions was to explore other opportunities within the public sector. Even though opportunities for advancement were mentioned, as it is important for Millennials to see potential for growth and career advancement, it was not an overwhelming theme. More important was the opportunity for participants to learn new skills, pursue interests and to move horizontally. Participants truly valued the flexibility to try new positions and gain a variety of experiences without having to leave their organization. This “abundance of opportunities” was so important to participants that they named it as their second most significant influencer in their decision to stay within the public sector as well as the second most important element that they valued in their organization. Millennials are constantly seeking opportunities for self-improvement, change and learning. The commitment to learning was greatly valued.

Nature of work

The nature of Millennials’ work was a significant motivator for participants’ decision to stay within their current roles. Specifically, meaningful work, which is very closely tied to Millennials’ desire to contribute to society, was the number one motivator and a key influencer in their decision to stay within the public sector as a whole. Participants stated “I take pride in

my work” and it “gives my job a purpose... knowing that I am helping Canadians in various degrees.” Giving back to society seemed to be an overarching theme for why participants want to remain as public servants. For example some participants indicated that they feel fortunate to “work with public stakeholders and see the impact that [public sector] programs/services have on people” daily. These participants indicated that this reinforcement was a major contributor to their decision to stay in their current positions. Interesting to note is that when asked if ‘giving back to society’ was an influencer to stay, the response was mixed, but when asked what is the main reason you will stay, giving back to the public was the top answer as well as being given opportunities for movement within the organization.

Collaborative work was also a theme that surfaced. When asked what do you value most within your organization, many participants highlighted a positive and collegial work culture, which puts emphasis on community, collaboration, and cooperation as an extremely significant element of their work. On many occasions, participants indicated that an open decision-making platform that invites all levels and ages to collaborate was very important to them.

Challenging and stimulating work is the most crucial aspect of their work. It was by far the most significant factor in regards to job satisfaction and when asked how a ‘challenging and learning work environment’ influences participants’ decision to stay within the public sector, participants responded by ranking this element as one of the top three motivators for staying. Participants indicated that they were satisfied in their current position if their work was stimulating, interesting, challenging and allowed them to take on great responsibility, employ many of their skills and accomplish a lot. Conversely, participants were not satisfied if they felt significantly underutilized and underemployed, as the work was not challenging enough. In addition, participants highlighted how having interesting, fresh, and constantly evolving work is

a significant reason why they stay. Seeing the “potential to take on more challenging projects is an incentive to stay.” Other participants stated, “without challenges and learning opportunities, I tend to move on.” A challenging, stimulating and learning environment was critical. Although most participants recognized the ability to move from position to position within the public sector if their current position is not fulfilling this requirement, a few individuals indicated that not having a challenging work environment “may [even] be the reason [they] choose to leave the public service” as a whole. Participants often used the word ‘need’ as apposed to ‘want’ when discussing this element of their work. For example, they stated, “I need to be challenged.” Millennials perceive that being challenged in their work is a must. One participant even argued that if Millennials are unable to find this within the public sector, it may be the reason why many young employees leave the public sector. Another participant reinforced this thought by adding that a challenging and learning work environment is so dependent on leadership.

Leadership

When asked what elements of your work influence your decision to stay in the public sector, participants named ‘managerial communication and leadership style’ as their number one influencer. Participants indicated that non-traditional, flexible, supportive, motivating, open and trusting were qualities that they appreciated in their manager’s leadership style. One participant stated, “nothing makes me want to change jobs more than a micro-managing, un-supportive supervisor.” Many participants also indicated their displeasure towards hierarchical, secretive, executive decision-making leadership. This is very important to note as it highlights the Millennials’ need to feel empowered. In many of the responses, participants are seeking a leader who gives them opportunities to be apart of discussions, to contribute to decisions, who acknowledge and utilizes their strengths, and who ultimately gives them a voice. Public sector

organizations are large and it is key that in order to retain Millennials, management must engage their younger staff by involving them in decision-making and giving them responsibilities that play to their strengths.

Participants were also asked how ‘recognition and feedback’ influences their decision to stay within the public sector. The consistent theme was that informal, consistent, regular feedback is very important to participants and a central to feeling noticed, appreciated and valued. Participants also argued that the public sector does this poorly, as a performance review is typically done only once a year and “people who do good work are ignored, and people who do poor work aren’t adequately given corrective feedback.” Also consistent was the feeling that large recognition events are unnecessary, and that day-to-day feedback is much more valued by this generation. Although constructive feedback was considered important to participants, only one individual identified that a lack of this element would be the core reason of why he or she would consider leaving the public sector.

Participants value a supervisor who has trust in their employees’ abilities and therefore gives the freedom and autonomy to work independently. Participants also greatly valued a manager that empowered and encouraged them to grow and flourish. Participants also greatly desired a supervisor who not only is aware of and acknowledges one’s skills but provides opportunities to use these skills. This was very important motivator for staying in their current positions and in the public sector as a whole. As well, giving the participant a voice or a platform to express ideas was especially important to them for remaining.

People and relationships

“My commitment is more towards the people I work with than to the public sector as a whole,” stated one participant. However, this sentiment was not held solely by one individual.

In fact, a collegial atmosphere, combined with friendly, respectful, fun, engaged and passionate coworkers, was identified as the element that participants valued most in their organizations. It is this element, for participants that created a positive work culture that emphasizing open communication, collaboration and a sense of community. This sense of culture however, was limited to specific work units. For example, a participant stated, “I feel committed to people and teams, not to organizations... when I feel that I am a member of a team and that I am valued and people are counting on me, I feel a strong sense of commitment and am less likely to leave.”

Work-Life balance

Work-life balance was significant to almost every participant’s decision to stay in the public sector, however it was not a huge motivator. Perhaps this is because this age demographic is likely to not yet have children. As one participant stated this is “not as important to me right now, as I don’t have children yet” but “in 3-5 years, this will be very important.” Many individuals did indicate, however that “it is a huge influence on why I stay within the public sector.” Another participant indicated that the ability to “take time off for family-related issues, medical leave, and so on” is a major influence to stay. Golden Fridays, flexible hours, and ability to travel were also mentioned as key motivators to stay in their current positions. Contrary to the previous generations, Millennials greatly value their quality of life outside of work and therefore will seek employment that is in-line with these values.

Commitment

Participants showed a high level of commitment towards the public sector. When asked if they felt committed to their organization, 65% said yes. Additionally 80% of participants planned on having a long-term career within the public sector. These results seem unusually high for a generation deemed uncommitted. So what were the main reasons for this allegiance?

Contributing to the lives of Canadians and giving back to the public was the number one reason. Participants truly feel a social responsibility to the betterment of society and feel that the public sector is an avenue where they can make the biggest impact. In congruence with Meyer and Allen's (1991) affective commitment, many participants are committed to their organizations because they share similar core values and believe in the objectives of the organization. Participants used phrases such as, "I care," "I believe," and "I am proud." One participant expressed, "I have chosen the civil service as a career because I believe it is a noble calling and I believe in serving society." In addition, a few participants also expressed their fears of leaving the public sector. In congruence with Meyers' continuance commitment, some participants feared that they would not find a better job, especially in the current economical climate, therefore recognizing the costs of leaving their current situations. Generally normative commitment did not play a role. Rather, many participants felt that the organization is not committed to them and would let them go if it was in their best interest. Subsequently, many participants expressed that this was a reason why they are not committed or feel an obligation to stay.

Although a large percentage (65%) of participants are committed to the public sector, commitment does not correlate with retention. One participant stated, "I do [feel committed] because I care about it, but it's not enough to make me stay. There are other governments that may value my experience more." Sixty-eight percent of participants stated that they have considered leaving their current employer. As well, job satisfaction does not correlate with retention. Even though 70% of participants were satisfied with their current employer, again 68% considered leaving. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002) suggest that some analysts have questioned whether organizational commitment is relevant any more. The

uncertainty that organizations currently face makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to guarantee lifetime employment. However, they also indicate that how time is spent leads to changes in the nature of commitment and has important implications for employee morale, motivation, performance and, ultimately, organizational success.

Security

Although this theme was not overwhelmingly visible throughout the data, when participants were specifically asked why they desire a career within the public sector, decent pay, good benefits, and pension were frequently mentioned.

Discussion

Although there are multiple elements that contribute to the reasons why Millennials will stay or leave the public sector, one key discovery emerged from the findings that was unexpected. The Millennials' overwhelming commitment to being socially responsible and their dedication to the public sector as a means of giving back to society, was strongly evident in almost every subcategory, subsequently presenting itself as an underlining theme. This discovery is in line with Meyer and Topolnytsky's (2000) argument that employees are attracted to organizations with values that are congruent with their own. However, according to Meyer and Topolnytsky (2000), this affective commitment does not correlate with retention. Subsequently there is a second piece to this discovery that must be addressed.

The results indicate that although Millennials share the core values of the public sector, the way in which these values are reinforced through structure and decision-making, for example, conflicts with their expectations and standards of a desirable organizational culture. So how does this conflict impact retention within the public sector? Will Millennials' dedication to contributing to society outweigh their frustrations of red tape and slow bureaucratic processes or

will these frustrations lead Millennials to leaving the public sector regardless of their value system? According to the research, the frustrations of bureaucratic structure have not yet conquered, however if any of the key elements to Millennials' current job satisfaction are removed, such as the opportunities to move within the public sector, Millennials will find another platform to give back, and therefore will leave the public sector.

So is there a need for change? These findings suggest that changes need to take place within the public sector culture involving shifts towards faster moving, innovative, and more flexible processes. According to the aforementioned discovery it is likely that Millennials will remain within a public sector organization, however, only until their frustrations with bureaucracy and lack of opportunities outweigh their commitment to social responsibility. Although I did not predict Millennials' strong pull towards social responsibility and ultimately their great allegiance to the public sector as a whole as a vehicle to better society, these results still support my original hypothesis that there is need for change within the public sector in order to retain this generation. Just as one would take an automobile to get somewhere, Millennials are using the public sector as a means to reach their ultimate destination. Although the vehicle may not run as smoothly as they would like, they are willing to put up with it as long as it gets them to where they want to be. But if the car is running so slowly that the destination does not seem within reach, they will get out and find another way to get there. Rather than wait for this threshold to take place, it is crucial that public sector organizations start making changes now.

CHAPTER 5: CONSIDERATIONS AND INSIGHTS

Overview

According to the data, a large percentage of Millennials are committed to their current employer and plan on staying within the public sector, however, intend on moving a lot within the sector and will ultimately leave if the traditional, slow-moving bureaucratic processes of this sector do not change. The core values of the current Millennials in the public sector and the sector as a whole are in alignment, however, it is the opposing attitudes regarding efficiency, creativity, and innovation that is frustrating for this generation. Although one participant argued that change will happen inherently, and that there is no need to make modifications since “a natural flow of generations moving in and out constantly” will ultimately influence organizational culture instinctively based on the employees’ attitudes and values at the time, I argue that by the time this natural evolution takes place, the next upcoming generation will be entering the public sector with a completely different set of values and expectations. Certain changes need to take place now in order to not only embrace the current generations, but also to prepare for the generations of the future. Creating a forward thinking succession plan that values foresight is key to an efficient and sustainable public sector that can retain current employees, recruit new ones and insure that the public sector does not lose their brightest people to the private sector. Now is the time for change. As influential players in business planning, human resources planning, and change management processes, communication professionals have a significant role in initiating and sustaining this change. Consider the possibilities of a redefined bureaucratic culture that nurtures Millennials’ desire to contribute and that continues to offer unique opportunities of movement and learning.

Redefining Bureaucracy

Millennials' feelings of frustration regarding slow bureaucratic public sector processes and traditional models that are bursting with red tape, was overwhelming. They expressed the need for change in many areas within the public sector, most specifically the need for more innovative platforms. Millennials value innovation and possess an appetite for change and creativity within their organization. They understand the challenges that the public sector faces due to its commitment to fairness and transparency, however, ask that their organizations be more open to change. It is a shift in attitude that puts emphasis on spaces that ignite new ideas with the hopes of creating positive change.

It is a cultural change towards defining bureaucracy. Although very rare within the public service, this shift in culture has been attempted and achieved by a few inspiring organizations. One federal department, for example, has created an organizational culture that values innovation, not just in the theoretical sense but is evident also in practice. One way they have been able to do this is through their 'tigers crew'. Tigers Crew is a network within the organization, made-up of employees from all levels, which come together monthly to discuss new ideas for the department. As one participant suggested, "every high-level decision-making body should have representation from every age demographic and class." Millennials want to have "a say in the change that happens" and "to be at the forefront of change." Subsequently many young public servants join networks, such as IPAC-NPS, as an outlet to be a part of something greater than what their current positions have to offer. If only public sector organizations valued these platforms more. This inability to react to rapidly changing conditions outside of the public sector in combination with this resistance to workplace modernization, may lead "cause talented prospective employees to seek out employment elsewhere."

Institutional entrepreneurship

Eighty-two percent of participants believe change is required within the public sector in order to retain the Millennial generation. When asked what needs to change, participants indicated a need for more opportunities and encouragement for true innovation and a greater support system and platform to cultivate young leaders. In order to tackle this challenge, an area of appropriate exploration and action is the implementation of Institutional Entrepreneurship. Institutional Entrepreneurship is “a complex political and cultural process” which encourages entrepreneurship within an organizational structure (Leca, Battilana & Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 9). Institutional entrepreneurs are encouraged to propose projects, “mobilize diverse social skills depending on the kind of institutional project [change] they wish to impose” (Leca et al, 2008, p. 9), and to design specific institutional arrangements to support and stabilize the implementation of these projects. Institutional entrepreneurs’ objective is to theorize the project (desired change) and generate discourse so that it will resonate with the interests, values and problems of potential allies. Creating an acceptance, space and platform for this type of innovative thinking and action is the future of organizational change and an excellent way to stimulate and challenge Millennials.

Leca, Battilana, and Boxenbaum (2008) analyzed the literature and the research results of 61 studies directly related to institutional entrepreneurship that have been published since Paul Dimaggio introduced the concept in 1988. They recognized some of the challenges of Institutional Entrepreneurship. They argued that the notion of institutional entrepreneurship is “problematic because it allows classical debate on structure versus agency, which implies that actors are somehow able to disengage from their social context and act to change it” (p. 4). Resolving this paradox of embedded agency is a key challenge; how can organizations change or

innovate if the individuals' beliefs and actions are determined and shaped by the institutional environment they wish to change?

There are two kinds of enabling conditions that influence the likelihood of employees becoming institutional entrepreneurs despite the institutional pressures on them: field-level conditions and the actors' position in the organizational field (Leca, Battilana & Boxenbaum, 2008). The different types of field-level conditions are often interrelated and researchers have approached the impact of these conditions on institutional change from diverse perspectives, indicating three that are prevalent. Firstly, "jolts in the form of social upheaval, technological disruption, competitive discontinuities, or regulatory changes might enable institutional entrepreneurs by disturbing the socially constructed field-level consensus and contributing to the introduction of new ideas" (Greenwood, 2002 as cited in Leca et al, 2008, p. 7). Secondly, the presence of acute, complex, multi-faceted problems that might precipitate crises. Thirdly, the organizational field characteristics, particularly the enabling role of the degree of heterogeneity and institutionalization, impact the ongoing field conditions. Variance in heterogeneity is likely to cause tension and give rise to institutional incompatibilities and internal contradictions that can cause a shift in collective consciousness and transform passive participants into institutional entrepreneurs. The degree of institutionalization that affects actors' agency and institutional entrepreneurship is unclear as uncertainty in the institutional organization or substantive institutionalization may create space and conditions for strategic agency, and thus, for institutional entrepreneurship.

The enabling role of the actors' social position and their specific personal characteristics impact interest in providing leadership and impetus for change. According to Leca, Battilana and Boxenbaum (2008) those persons on the periphery are more likely to act as institutional

entrepreneurs. Their formal position within the structure of social networks as well as their socially constructed position impact their perception of the field and also allow for access to necessary resources. Personal social skills revolving around empathy and being able to abstract from the concerns of others allow institutional entrepreneurs to cooperate with others and help to shape and maintain a collective identity which meets the interests of the group (Leca et al, 2008). Currently union leaders within the public sector do not play this role, however, perhaps their current role needs to change to be more entrepreneurial. A few participants recommended that Millennials need to be more involved in unions. Perhaps this is the perfect platform for Institutional Entrepreneurship to cultivate.

Nurturing the Desire to Contribute

As highlighted previously, participants indicated on many occasions that contributing to society was a key factor in wanting to stay with their organization. As well, participants expressed the desire to be given opportunities to contribute within their work units, such as being given the chance to contribute to decision-making processes. In order to retain this generation, it is crucial that public sector organizations recognize and nurture this desire to contribute. Millennials understand the significant role that management plays in determining the opportunities that are available to them. As one participant stated, “I feel very fortunate to have a manager who recognizes and utilizes my abilities. I feel valued and empowered. It is rare within government that someone my age is given opportunities to be apart of making strategic decisions.”

Managerial leadership

According to the participants in this study, leadership style played a significant role in the their desire to stay within their current positions. These results indicate that Millennials strongly

value relationships at work, and more specifically relationships with their managers that are built on trust and open communication. One participant indicated that leadership style had had a huge influence on their personal experience, however, noted that there “is no consistency across the organization.” Although leadership was not a direct reason for participants staying within the public sector as a whole, it was a key factor for participants remaining within their current positions and subsequently positively impacting Millennials’ retention rates within the public sector.

It is a well-established fact that employees leave managers and not organizations and that effective managerial leaders are key to employee retention (Espinoza, Ukleja & Rusch, 2010). Managerial leaders have the greatest amount of responsibility and influence with respect to employee daily duties, responsibilities and interactions. A two-year study of managers within diverse organizations and businesses found that effective managers do not struggle with employee turnover, absenteeism or productivity (Espinoza et al, 2010). The single most important differentiator was that they were able to suspend the bias of their own experience. They were able to start with the Millennial’s experience and not their own and were able to ask themselves reflective questions such as: Why am I so bothered that my employee wants work-life balance? What threats do Millennial values represent? How will I need to change and adapt? Rapport and relationship building based on trust, caring and empathy were critical to managerial adaptation and connectedness. Likewise, Millennial participants in my study also valued an open and honest relationship with their managers and indicated this was a major reason for staying in their current positions.

According to Espinoza, Ukleja and Rusch (2010), unlike other generations, Millennials value the opportunity to participate in community or social responsibility projects during

working time rather than increases in pay or promotions. They want a voice and to feel empowered. Espinoza et al. report that the one artifact that stood out among the managers considered to be good at managing Millennial employees was that most of them had served as a volunteer in a youth organization such as Little League, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club Scouts, and youth church groups. These experiences helped successful managerial leaders to assist Millennial employees in finding meaning in what they do at the workplace and nurtured their desire to contribute.

In the field of education and schools, effective administrators have an exceptionally strong impact on teacher satisfaction and retention. A lack of administrative support has been identified as a key factor in teacher attrition (Greiner & Smith, 2009). According to teachers, those administrators that were considered effective are those that were supportive and accessible and who build positive relationships with staff, parents and students. They are those individuals who encourage open two-way communication, shared leadership and allow teachers to feel and experience a sense of empowerment. These findings reiterate and reinforce the views of the Millennials and thus provide insights into retaining this young workforce in the public sector through tailoring managerial style to match the needs of the current employees.

Offering Unique Opportunities

The opportunity to move not only within a public sector organization but also to be able to move across many public sector organizations is an extremely unique and attractive quality of the public sector to Millennials. It is an element of the public sector that represents one of the most significant reasons why Millennials plan on staying. However, participants mentioned on numerous occasions that if the frustrations of bureaucracy are too overwhelming, the benefits of movement, will not be enough for them to stay. Subsequently, it is crucial that the public sector

as a whole recognize this unique quality by continuing to offer easy movement between and within public sector organizations. Another element that makes the public sector unique is its wealth of soon-to-retire knowledgeable individuals. With an emphasis placed on sharing this knowledge, the possibilities for learning and progress are endless.

Opportunities for learning

When asked what needs to change in the public sector in order to retain Millennials, participants responded saying that “experienced public servants need to recognize the importance of mentorship and share their experience and expertise with junior staff.” In the public sector, however, there is no induction process in place, which is too often characteristic of traditional bureaucratic professions. Often in the public sector, a mentorship program will come and go. One day a top director will get the brilliant idea to initiate a mentorship pilot and it will quickly be put together for their departmental budget report purposes, last a few months - maybe a year, and then die off. I argue that mentoring does not need to be a pilot or a program, but there needs to be an attitude shift, a way of life, and an organizational norm that the entire organization adopts. With so many exceptional leaders leaving within the next ten to fifteen years, it should be a requirement that these leaders pass on their years of experience to the younger generation. It should be an understood part of succession planning in every organization. For example, in the teaching profession a variety of mentorship programs are offered with the intent of bridging the gap between student teaching and teaching or making the transition from beginning teacher to teacher; some of programs are established internationally; some are three years long (Conyers, Ewy & Vass (1999). The most successful programs include opportunities for experienced and beginning teachers to learn together in a supportive environment promoting time for collaboration, reflection and acculturation into the profession (Howe, 2006).

Within the teaching profession, mentorship support has shown to positively influence beginning teachers' satisfaction in the profession and in the workplace (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The mentoring relationships are more likely to be effective if they are voluntary and if the mentee and mentor have regular embedded professional development time to meet and work together (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Couture and Servage (2012) conclude that even more valuable than mentorship programs in a beginning teacher's first year are the various professional learning communities that are formed. Inexperienced teachers turn to collaborative professional development when a mentoring relationship is ineffective or non-existent (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Since Millennials work well in team situations (Duchscher & Cowin, 2004; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010), peer mentoring in groups or professional learning communities should be considered as possible alternatives that provide the collegial, creative learning opportunities and challenges that they seek.

Although mentorship programs have been attempted in the public sector, a reliable system such as the one inherent within the teaching profession has yet to be seen. Past attempts have been typically built-on trends that gain initial excitement for a few months and then quickly lose interest fast. The public sector is not dedicated to a long-term commitment to mentorship. In addition, one of the main problems with these programs is that all mentorship is expected to be on the side of one's desk with not enough importance placed on it by upper management. A shift in attitude and culture that supports the learning and development of Millennials through the implementation of a mentorship program must take place; a program that is necessary to an effortless transition of knowledge and retention of Millennials. As a matter of fact, even referring to it as a program is misleading as this implies that it is a separate entity detracted from one's regular work description, when in fact, mentorship should be a natural element within the

public sector that does not require the initiation of a program. However, in order to make the necessary culture shift happen, a strong push from upper management needs to take place. There needs to be a huge emphasis placed on the importance of mentorship within the public sector and this message needs to come from the top. If time was placed a side every month towards this cause, I am confident that senior employees and Millennials would enjoy, appreciate and learn from the mentorship process.

CHAPTER 6: SIGNIFICANCE, CONCLUDING REMARKS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Significance of the Study

According to the data, opportunities to express one's commitment to being socially responsible, is the main reason why Millennials choose a career within the Public Sector. In fact, it is because of this reason why the majority of participants do not plan on leaving. They value the work they do by contributing positively to society and feel the opportunities that are available for movement and learning across the all levels of the sector will keep them challenged and intrigued throughout their career as public servants. It is important to recognize, however, that participants did not differentiate between their current organization and the public sector as a whole, which is comprised of many levels of government, non-profit and academic organizations. Participants on many occasions indicated that they would leave their current position or current employer (organization) for an opportunity with another public sector organization, however, leaving the public sector as a whole was less frequently stated. Since my hypothesis did not predict the Millennial generation's allegiance to the public sector as a whole, the survey questions did not ask participants leaving their current employer, if they planned to leave the public sector as whole or planned on finding employment with another public sector organization. Based on the results, the Millennials' altruistic tendencies imply that they are committed to the betterment of society and subsequently want to remain in the public sector. There was only one participant who made any reference to leaving for opportunities within the private sector. The data focuses on remaining in the public sector and not leaving it.

Concluding Remarks and Future Research

As a researcher engaged in grounded theory I found it intellectually stimulating to use my own concepts generated directly from the data rather than using the concepts of others. I appreciated the opportunity to attempt to transcend description and to enhance my ability to conceptualize, and thus, generate insightful propositions (Glaser, 2002). The purpose of grounded theory work is to create theory as a starting point for discussion, research and action. It is particularly helpful in areas where little research has taken place. This thesis brings to the forefront discussion about retaining Millennials in the Canadian public sector and explores why this generation within the public service in Canada might stay in or leave their current positions within the public sector. As well this thesis investigates whether there is a need for change in organizational culture within the Canadian public sector in order to retain Millennials within the public service.

The findings reveal that Millennials appear to be very well suited for careers in the public sector because of their personal altruistic beliefs and value system with a commitment to social responsibilities. Millennials are hopeful. They see the possibilities for change in the public service and they want to be an integral part of that transformation. As one individual expressed, “I hope to grow with the public sector.” According to the findings of Espinoza, Ukleja and Rusch (2010), the Harry Potter series is an excellent example of the differences between Millennials and previous generations. Harry Potter and his friends are intelligent, overachieving, innovative and self-possessed, doing their best to operate within the rules set forth for them while practicing their calling of saving the world. Their desire and willingness to serve others in the public (sector) override their frustration with bureaucracy and its slow adaptation to change. Eighty percent of the Millennials in this study indicated that they wanted a career in public

service. However, movement within the public sector was a requirement as well as a shift in attitude within the organization that focuses on innovation in practice.

To extend understanding of the pertinent issues surrounding Millennials working in the public sector and to complement the findings of this study, other types of qualitative research should be undertaken. Further research is needed to develop the concepts introduced in my theory and to fully investigate their implications for change in creating a human resources succession plan. It would be advantageous to investigate the implementation of particular aspects of this theory with Millennials within the public sector workplace and to involve a variety of different organizations. For example, a group comprised of leader(s) and Millennials could jointly plan specific work-related projects on an ongoing basis that provide opportunities for Millennials to directly see the results of their efforts and talents in serving the public. The implementation of such projects could then be studied. Other research projects could explore professional learning communities comprised of different generations of employees that reach beyond traditional mentorship programs and employ reverse mentoring.

The Millennial generation has much to offer the Canadian public sector and public service. Their voice, as expressed by the participants in this study, should be embraced, with inclusive, explicit action taken and innovative changes implemented to ensure their desire to remain as an integral part of the public sector workforce. Their unique perspectives, personal and professional qualities and skills are well suited to creating a challenging, collegial and productive environment appropriate for the current generation and future generations. Millennials are upbeat, determined and optimistic about their futures and are on their way to “becoming the most pluralistic, inclusive and integrated generation in the history of Western society” (Duchscher & Cowin, 2004, p. 497).

As influential leaders and correspondents for change within the public sector, communication professionals should play a vital role in retaining Millennials. It is crucial that we, as communication professionals, use this agency to appropriately represent Millennials and more importantly, to advocate for change within the public sector. With change brings an exciting shift in organizational culture that will not only retain Millennials but will also attract future generations to be apart of a socially responsible organization that continues to be dedicated to Canadians, offers unique movement and learning opportunities for employees, and that is committed to redefining and reshaping bureaucracy.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY PREAMBLE

My name is Natasha Melnychuk and this research project, Retaining the Millennial Generation within the Canadian Public Sector, is part of the requirement for a Masters of Arts in Professional Communication at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning Dr. J. Guilar at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

The research will consist of this survey and is foreseen to take twenty minutes to complete. The foreseen questions will relate to aspects of organizational culture that may impact the retention of Millennials within the public sector. In addition to submitting my final thesis to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Arts degree, I will share my research findings with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's New Public Servants group. Research participants will not receive a copy of the final thesis, however they will have access to the findings through a personal request to the researcher. It is important to note, that there is no conflict of interest involved.

The information you provide will be summarized in an anonymous format within the body of the final thesis. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. Using a Canadian host, FluidSurveys, the data will be stored for a period of twelve months, after which time all raw data will be destroyed. FluidSurveys apply the latest in firewall and encryption technology to protect private information and are dedicated to innovative trust solutions. The data pertaining to an individual who has withdrawn at any time will not be retained.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Your completion of this survey will constitute your informed consent. Thank you for your cooperation, time and consideration in regards to this research project.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

What do you value most within the culture of your organization? Why?

What aspects of your work motivate you to stay in your current position?

Are you planning a long-term career within the public sector? Why or why not?

Yes _____

No _____

Do you feel committed to your organization? Why? Why not?

Yes _____

No _____

Explain how your commitment influences your decision to stay or leave?

What do you believe is the most significant reason that you remain in the public sector?

What do you believe is the most significant reason why you would want to leave the public sector?

Do you believe change is required within the public sector in order to retain the Millennial generation?

Yes

No

What needs to change and in what ways?

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE CODING

Codes	Excerpts from survey responses	Themes/Ideas
<p>Making a difference</p> <p>Giving back to society</p> <p>Social responsibility</p> <p>Serving society</p>	<p>I am passionate about improving the lives of citizens through the work I do and making a difference.</p> <p>I like to help people through my work. I see the value of public service and know I am making a difference.</p> <p>I feel very fulfilled knowing that I work for the public good. I feel a social responsibility to better my province.</p> <p>I have chosen this career path because I believe it is a noble calling and I believe in servng society.</p>	<p>Social Responsibility</p>
<p>Growth opportunities</p> <p>Learning opportunities</p> <p>Movement opportunities</p>	<p>The growth opportunities are there, and the ability to switch jobs while still working for the sane employer is appealing.</p> <p>The ability to take on new roles and learn new skills. I like it since the job provides the opportunity grow and learn new skills that will be useful for future jobs.</p> <p>There are opportunities for horizontal and vertical movement. If these opportunities didn't exist, I would likely become frustrated enough to leave the public sector.</p>	<p>Opportunities</p>