

ASPECTS OF JOB SATISFACTION IN FEMALE MILLENNIAL GENERATION RETAIL EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Since young adult female employees represent a sizeable portion of the retail workplace, particularly in clothing, shoes and jewelry, this study focused on aspects of job satisfaction of female Millennial generation (born between 1980 and 2000) retail stores employees. In-depth qualitative interviews regarding the workers' major values, concerns, and motivations were conducted during the Spring of 2016 in a Midwestern city in the United States of America. Participants indicated that camaraderie among coworkers and the team, and flexible scheduling practices were the most important values relating to job satisfaction. Work-life balance and maintaining a 40-hour work week or steady scheduled hours were also reported as important values relating to job satisfaction. The goal of the study was to gain female Millennial generation employees' perspectives to help employers counteract high turnover rates in the retail industry.

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INTRODUCTION

Statistics indicate that nearly 39% of the retail industry is comprised of Millennials (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013), also known as Generation Y, or those born between 1980 and the early 2000s (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014). Poll research suggests that 94% of total Millennial retail workers anticipate an eventual change of careers out of the retail sector (Kim, Knight, & Crutsinger, 2009, p. 548). The question arises as to what motivates that 6% to stay in retail? How can an industry with typically high turnover rates improve these statistics? Ultimately, what can retail managers do to better recruit and more importantly, retain their top talent in the workforce today?

The depth of research already available on this generation describes Millennial individuals as tech-savvy, ambitious, and confident (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). They desire instant gratification and recognition in the workplace, as well as proper compensation and a good work-life balance. They are often characterized as individuals who wish to change the world. They are more diverse than any previous generation, with 42% of Millennials identifying with a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic white (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014, p. 3).

Although Millennials have been heavily studied as a whole, differences that lie between the sexes of this generation have largely been unexplored. Particularly, in the retail industry, certain sectors, such as clothing, shoes, and jewelry, females comprise more than half of the workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). In considering all generations, “a general observation surfacing from studies examining the role of gender in managerial and marketing contexts is that men are more task- or goal-oriented, whereas women are more relationship-oriented” (Kim et al., 2009, p. 554). Women are entering the labor force in higher numbers, and the Millennial generation experiences higher levels of debt as a result of substantial student loans. Millennials, including women, tend to value income as a “very important” job characteristic now more than any previous generation (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014, p. 10).

Since females are a major part of retail establishments, “employers must commit to inclusive cultures and talent strategies that lean into the confidence and ambition of the female Millennial from day one of their career” (Corbett, 2015, para. 11), it is essential to understand what drives Millennial females’ job satisfaction. By more fully understanding this demographics’ career aspirations, motivations, values,

and what leads to job satisfaction, retailers with a largely female workforce will be able to better recruit and retain their most talented individuals.

The purpose of this study is to learn from female Millennial generation employees in the retail industry which aspects of job satisfaction are most important to them. Although previous studies regarding what specific workplace characteristics attract Millennials in general and lead them to higher job satisfaction have been completed, a specific focus on females in the retail sector will inform those with a primarily female workforce. Understanding the motivations and values of the female Millennial generation will help employers to recruit and retain the best employees, positively impacting their turnover rates and cost margins overall.

In this qualitative study, individual interviews of participants in the target demographic were conducted in order to learn what influences employees to commit to a retail employer long-term. The major research question is, "*What factors lead to increased job satisfaction for female Millennial generation employees in the retail industry?*" The study sought to learn what female employees identify as desirable characteristics of retail employers, and investigated how their values and beliefs influence job satisfaction. Questions for participants were developed from previous research on the Millennial generation as well as females in the workplace. An open discussion led to greater insight as to what is important to female Millennial employees in the retail industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For years, researchers, employers, and marketers focused their efforts on the “Baby Boomer” generation – the largest and most significant generation to date. Researchers understood how this generation valued concepts such as a healthy lifestyle, comfort and security. Capitalizing on this generation would surely lead to success, whether you were studying their motivations and attitudes, attempting to recruit them, or selling them a product. Today, researchers’, employers’, and marketers’ focus has shifted to the next sizeable generation – the Millennial generation – “the cohort of Americans born between 1980 and the mid-2000’s”. They “are the largest generation in the U.S., representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013” (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014, p. 3).

The Millennial Generation

“Each generation is defined by its years of birth; a generation typically is 20-25 years in length, or roughly the time it takes a person to grow up and have children” (Parment, 2013, p. 191). For the purpose of this study, Millennials are those individuals born between 1980 and 2000.

The “generational differences in people’s attitudes and values are the result of significant economic events that they experience during their formative years of childhood” (Benson & Brown, 2011, p. 1844), which in turn help create and form their individual ideologies, beliefs, and the integration of the generation as a whole. Millennials came of age during a period of economic growth and with strong influences from popular culture. The world saw the emergence of the Internet, social media, and reality television during their formative years. Millennials, as a result of living through 9/11 and witnessing the rise of government power, have an inherent trust and preference for large organizations and structural systems that support them. “Members of other generations, especially Gen X, who are acutely aware that life is rarely played on a level field, may describe them as entitled, but Millennials view themselves as pressured and high achieving. They have grown accustomed to supportive, nurturing environments that provide them with every opportunity to succeed” (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010, p. 215).

Job Satisfaction

With differences in the generations being apparent, there are factors that contribute to and foster a positive workplace environment and increased job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined as the extent

to which employees enjoy and are fulfilled by their work. Overall, “job satisfaction reflect(s) the degree to which general expectations concerning the job were met” (Benson & Brown, 2011, p. 1847).

Previous studies have linked job satisfaction to job commitment, or an employee’s intention to remain with an organization. “Extensive research, typically framed within the broad concept of person-environment fit, finds that a better fit, or a smaller discrepancy between personal work orientations (e.g. interests and values) and job characteristics (e.g. job rewards and demands) is predictive of subjective satisfaction and satisfactoriness, job tenure, and turnover intentions” (Porfeli & Mortimer, 2010, p. 508). It’s important employees find happiness in their workplace, because “low job satisfaction perpetuates negative feelings about the organization” (Kim et al., 2009, p. 551), ultimately influencing the employee to leave their current position for one that might offer a better fit.

With so many Millennial generation employees entering the workforce, the concept of job satisfaction becomes even more important to organizations wanting to attract these individuals and decrease turnover rates. “Losing high-potential employees is particularly troubling in the retail industry where the turnover rate is notoriously high. Since Gen Y employees comprise a substantial portion of the retail industry, recruiting and retaining them is extremely important” (Kim et al., 2009, p. 548). Millennials, like the generations before them, want to be successful in their professional endeavors, but dishearteningly, they “are less likely to report having an interesting job, or one where they can see results or have advancement opportunities,” (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014, p. 10). This could be the result of the younger working generation finding themselves in survival job mode as opposed to searching for long-term careers. “Youth often start off with ‘survival jobs’ while they are still attending school, ‘flounder’ between various short-term or other temporary jobs as they seek a better fit between their work orientations and the rewards that jobs have to offer, and eventually settle into ‘career jobs’ (Huiras, Uggen, & McMorris, 2000). Employers need to capture the necessary fit between personal work orientations, and job demands and rewards, in order to satisfy their Millennial generation employees from the very beginning of their career search.

Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

In this study, three overlying elements of job satisfaction that were identified by Bonte and Krabel (2014) were analyzed. They included extrinsic dimensions, intrinsic dimensions and work-life balance.

Extrinsic dimensions “focus on instrumental resources that are separable from the meaning of work” (Marini, Fan, Finley, & Beutel, 1996, p. 50). Extrinsic dimensions include income, good career opportunities, job security, and having a leadership role/prestige.

Intrinsic dimensions “attach importance to the work itself, valuing work for its inherent interest and importance” (Marini et. al, 1996, p. 50). Intrinsic dimensions include challenging tasks, interesting work content, and the ability to present one’s own ideas. Some intrinsic work-value items could be described as, “A chance to make my own decisions at work,” “A job where I have a lot of responsibility,” “A job that uses my skills and abilities,” and, “A chance to learn a lot of new things at work” (Porfeli & Mortimer, 2010, p. 512).

Finally, work-life balance refers to the ability to combine both professional and personal life successfully. In the discussion of work-life balance, researchers suggest that life-friendly policies and practices (such as flexible scheduling) are keys to reducing “work-family conflicts and personal stress” (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Part-time work could also be a positive solution to work-life balance. “Non-standard employment such as part-time offers the best of both worlds and enables employees to pursue their career interests while still affording time to be with their families” (Higgins, Duxbury, and Johnson, 2000). Furthermore, “women working part-time were only half as likely as those working full time to report high time stress” (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 20). Barker (1993) found that “women who worked part-time reported greater happiness at home and greater satisfaction with their children than women who worked full time” (p. Higgins, et al., 2000, p. 20).

The downside to part-time work, however, includes low or the complete absence of benefits, limited career advancement opportunities and more mundane or routine tasks. Also, research has indicated that women in managerial roles, who have higher involvement within the workplace, tend to experience equal levels of stress and inadequate work-life balances regardless of full or part-time status. Specifically, “part-time career women felt ‘out of the loop’” (Higgins, et al., 2000, p. 29) and were excluded from the organizational culture when only employed part-time.

Millennials and the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

There are several factors that point to greater job satisfaction for the Millennial generation. First, Millennials deeply value relationships at work, preferring leaders who act as mentors and coworkers who

act as friends. It's these relationships that motivate them to become involved. Therefore, "the formal bureaucracies in which open communication, collaboration and teamwork are non-existent will not meet the needs of Millennials serving on teams, where they expect open communication" (Graybill, 2013, p. 11). The employees all need to be equally involved in their organization, as Millennials also thrive off the energy created by those who are dedicated to their jobs. "In fact, employees working with motivated and dedicated co-workers tend to experience less stress and are more satisfied with their own jobs" (Kim et al., 2009, p. 550).

Second, as shown by Kim et al. (2009), Millennials desire high levels of accomplishment and quick promotions, seeking more advanced career opportunities that will challenge them and come with inherent rewards (monetary, responsibility, career development, etc.). Kim et al., utilized the job satisfaction model (Brown & Peterson, 1993,1994), which "traditionally suggests that work experiences are directly related to employees' job outcomes" (2009, p. 549). Therefore, if an employee has a positive outcome, such as a raise, they will attribute that to a positive work environment and a higher level of job satisfaction.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Millennials place work-life balance very high on their list of desired workplace attributes. "It is argued that, as a cohort, young people wish to develop and manage their careers on their own terms, with an important part of this career individualism being the achievement of balance between the work and non-work aspects of their lives (Loughlin and Barling, 2001). They are reluctant to sacrifice their personal lives for their professional success, and personal hobbies and families are typically valued more than managerial or leadership positions (Graybill, 2014, p. 11). It's important to note that in this generational cohort, children and family may or may not play a role in work-life balance. A broader definition of work-life balance is essential in understanding the Millennial generation, as personal hobbies and friendships are also of significance. Actually, "quality of life appears to be the focus of this generation: Millennials value staying close to family and friends, (and) having free time for recreation" (White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2014, p. 11). A study by Sturges & Guest (2004) did reveal, however, that recent "graduates anticipated that the desire to lead a balanced life would become more pronounced as their family responsibilities increased" (p. 11).

Female Perspective

Very limited discussions focusing on job satisfaction for female Millennials have been presented, and even less so for those working within the retail industry, where females represent about half (49.8%) of employed individuals (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, p. 40). Specifically, females are largely represented in niche sectors of retail such as clothing stores (76.9%), shoe stores (56.5%), and jewelers (68%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, p. 54).

What is known about female job satisfaction is that, “females possess higher levels of job satisfaction compared to males, a puzzling outcome when one considers the existence of gender wage differentials in favor of males, as well as occupational segregation by gender, with women occupying jobs with ‘lower’ prestige” (Kifle, Kler, & Shankar, 2014, p. 686). Research also indicates that what leads to increased job satisfaction in women are attributes other than income and advancement, such as interesting work content or flexible work schedules, as well as supervisory support, which has been proven to lead to “positive perceptions of job characteristics” (Kim et al., 2009, p. 554).

Dating back to the 1930s, “men were more likely to express concern with pay and working conditions as key aspects of work, whereas women emphasized social relations with colleagues” (Tolbert & Moen, 1998, p. 170). As research was conducted a few generations later, women continued to indicate a “stronger preference for having pleasant coworkers than did men, whereas men attached more importance to having opportunities to increase earnings and to influence important organizational decisions” (Tolbert & Moen, 1998, p. 170). Even into the 1980s, men continued to be most concerned with income, security and advancement while women placed emphasis on having opportunities to use special skills and work with people (Tolbert & Moen, 1998, p. 170). Indeed, Bonte & Krabel (2014) suggest:

“Women’s level of importance attached to work attributes may not be systematically lower, but center on other job dimensions than men’s expectations. Empirical evidence suggests that women tend to attach greater importance to both the intrinsic dimension of a job and work-life balance – whereas men tend to attach greater importance to extrinsic dimension related to financial benefits and career opportunities.” (p. 2480).

What this suggests is that the relationship aspects of the job are increasingly important when it comes to female job satisfaction.

A limitation of Bonte & Krabel's research on female's job satisfaction, however, lies in the fact that the individuals studied are often older and further along in their career development, as well as their personal lives. It is important that influences such as gender and family roles be considered as women get married and have children. "As adults establish family roles and feel the pressure associated with these roles, their work satisfaction may increasingly depend on the extent to which their work can support a family rather than the satisfaction of their personal values. As a result, extrinsic work values increase in importance as men become fathers and as unmarried women, who must shoulder the burden of child care, become mothers" (Porfeli & Mortimer, 2010, p. 510). Indeed, "work attitudes and values... are more apt to shift over time" (Tolbert & Moen, 1998, p. 172). It is imperative for employers to understand whether generational cohort differences are the root source of individual values and attitudes or if specific life stages and gender roles present a larger influence on job satisfaction.

Marini, Fan, Finley & Beutel (1996) conducted a study among high school seniors examining gender differences in job values. They noted that the last study regarding gender differences in job values took place in 1980, and they sought to determine if values had changed for high school seniors since that initial research was conducted. What they found was that "almost all respondents of both sexes reported that 'a job which is interesting to do' is 'very important'" (Marini et. al, 1996, p. 55). This reward was listed as the most important job attributed for both sexes. While female respondents gave intrinsic values (and social rewards) greater emphasis, male respondents indicated extrinsic rewards more influential, which is consistent with the majority of other research on job satisfaction. Marini and colleagues concluded, "there is a high degree of similarity in the job values of young women and young men, and that similarity has increased in recent decades" (Marini et. al, 1996, p. 62). Furthermore, their study indicated that, "Both sexes also attach importance to the intrinsic, altruistic, and social rewards of work, but these rewards are valued more highly by young women than by young men" (Marini et. al, 1996, p. 62).

A more recent study by Price Waterhouse Coopers (2015) presented detailed demographic and career information on the female Millennial generation employee. The top five characteristics determined as the most important for this group in terms of job satisfaction are: Opportunities for career progression (53%), competitive wages and other financial incentives (52%), flexible working arrangements available

(35%), good benefits packages including pensions, healthcare and other benefits (33%), and excellent training and development programs (27%).

Furthermore, the primary reasons female Millennial generation employees would leave their current employers are: finding a job that pays more elsewhere (43%), an imbalance in work and personal life (37%), an imbalance in difficulty of work and compensation (36%), lack of opportunities for career progression (32%), and work that is not interesting or meaningful (28%) (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2015).

It's interesting to note that the factors listed in the Price Waterhouse Cooper study are primarily extrinsic in nature, when the majority of research already conducted suggested that women primarily value intrinsic dimensions. What this may be suggesting is that the "gap (that) may have once existed in men's and women's job preferences has narrowed considerably over time " (Tolbert & Moen, 1998, p. 175) as the Millennial generation has entered the workforce with new attitudes, values and ideals. "Social change occurs when cohorts experience life differently and new generations hold dissimilar life values from previous generations" (Marini et. al, 1996, p. 51).

The discrepancy in studies regarding men's and women's values relating to career satisfaction illustrates the need for a study on the subject of job satisfaction for female Millennial employees that will probe more deeply into the values important to this particular segment of the population. A deeper understanding will give retail managers information about this population so that they will be able to better cater to the needs and desires of their female Millennial employees, positively impacting their retention and turnover rates.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In this qualitative study, individual interviews were conducted with participants that met the necessary demographic standards. This method was selected because interviews allowed for a gathering of opinions and attitudes about job satisfaction, encouraged additional discussion and provided an opportunity to learn more about aspects relating to job satisfaction of Millennial female retail employees. Interviews allowed participants to discuss the concept of job satisfaction at a deeper level, allowing new ideas and deeper concepts to emerge organically.

The researcher asked questions of female Millennial participants to determine what leads to job satisfaction. The participants were born between 1980 and 2000 and actively work in the field of retail. Because the selection criteria for this study are somewhat broad, participants recruited were of a voluntary (convenience) sample. Snowball sampling methods were also utilized, where participants were asked to nominate other participants. Participants were of different employment levels, including sales positions, visual/sales support positions and management positions. Women in both full-time and part-time positions were included. Twenty women were interviewed on an individual basis. Participant demographics are detailed in the results section of the study.

General questions regarding job satisfaction, in relation to extrinsic and intrinsic values and work-life balance, were utilized to promote discussion. Each interview session was approximately 30-60 minutes led by the researcher asking a series of engagement, exploration and exit questions related to the subject matter.

Initially, participants were asked to describe their current position at their retailer and explain why they chose this job/career. Participants were asked to list the pros and cons of a career in the general retail field, analyze their job duties and describe what leads to their own job satisfaction. They were also asked to list general qualities they believe are associated with job satisfaction without prompts from the researcher.

Participants were then asked to rank qualities related to job satisfaction that were gleaned from previous research. The ranking was completed after a series of open-ended questions, in order to provide further in-depth analysis of job satisfaction values. Participants then analyzed which of the aspects listed

in the ranking were present or missing from their current employer, and any values that were not mentioned that could have been included in the overall ranking.

Participants were asked what they believe the Millennial generation values in an employer, what work-life balance means to them and to tell if it is present or not present at their current employer. Finally, participants were asked which values keep them from leaving their current employer, and ultimately, which ones would force them to leave their position.

Sessions were recorded, and detailed notes taken. These were transcribed and coded to determine themes, concepts, and key items. Coding included highlighting and labeling the raw data with each value mentioned or chosen in the ranking by the participant, then categorizing that value into an extrinsic, intrinsic, or work-life balance value. For example, if a participant paid leave as an important value, it would fall under the extrinsic value category. Patterns and themes regarding correlations between values, age, relationship status, years working in retail, etc. were journaled.

Written informed consent was obtained prior to the start of the questioning sessions.

FINDINGS

Interviews were conducted between March and April 2016. Thirteen participants met with the researcher at various public locations such as food courts, cafés and restaurants, as well as in private meeting rooms inside a mall in a Midwestern city in the United States of America, provided by mall management. Seven interviews were conducted over the phone, as those participants did not live in the immediate area. For all participants, informed consent was sent and received prior to the interview via email or postal mail. Phone interview participants were emailed the ranking list during the interview, which they accessed using their smart phones or computers, to reference during discussion.

Demographics

Of the 20 participants in the study, nine were between the ages of 20-24, three were between the ages of 25-28, six were between the ages of 29-31, and two were between the ages of 31-36.

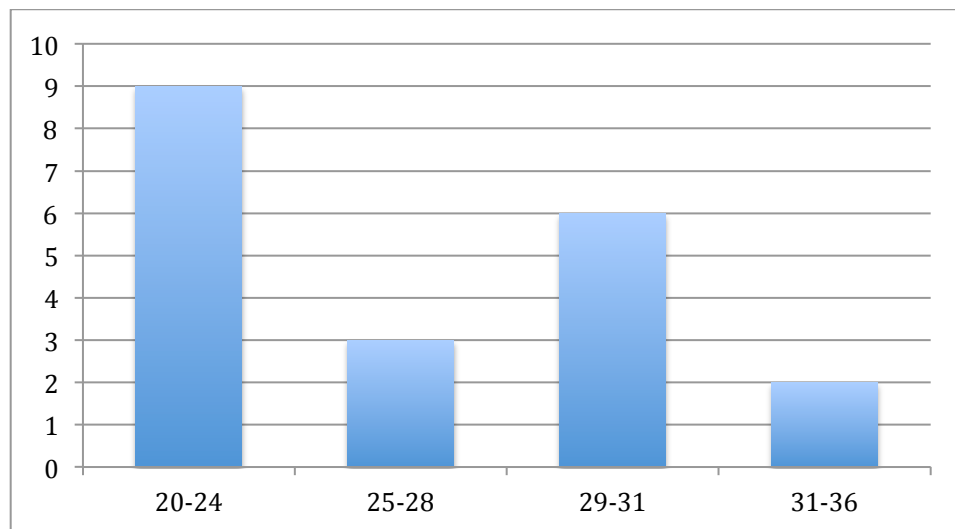


Figure 1. Participant Ages

More than half of the participants were full-time managers (12). Of the remaining participants, four were part-time managers, one was full-time sales/visual support, one was a full-time sales associate, and two were part-time sales associates.

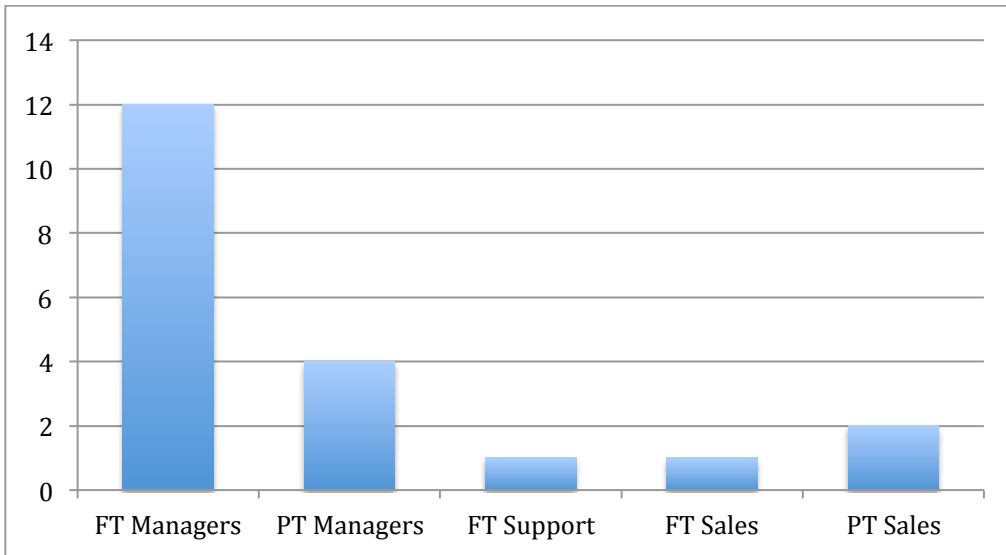


Figure 2. Participant Retail Positions

Nearly all of the participants had some higher education (9) or had graduated from college with an associate's (3), bachelor's (6), or master's degree (1). One participant was a high school graduate only. All participants identified as white/Caucasian.

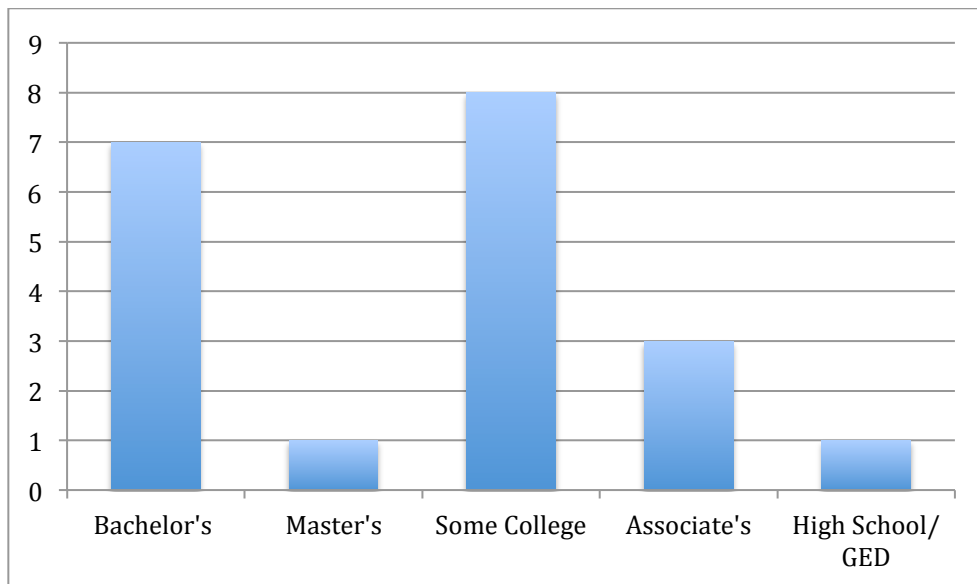


Figure 3. Participant Highest Achieved Education Level

The participants' relationship status levels were fairly even, with five being married, seven as single, and eight in a relationship. The majority of participants had (6) or planned to have children (8). Five were undecided on having children in the future. One participant did not plan to have children.

A range of participants' experience in the retail field was utilized. Five participants have worked in retail three or fewer years, seven had worked four to seven years, five had worked from eight to 11 years and three had worked 12 or more years.

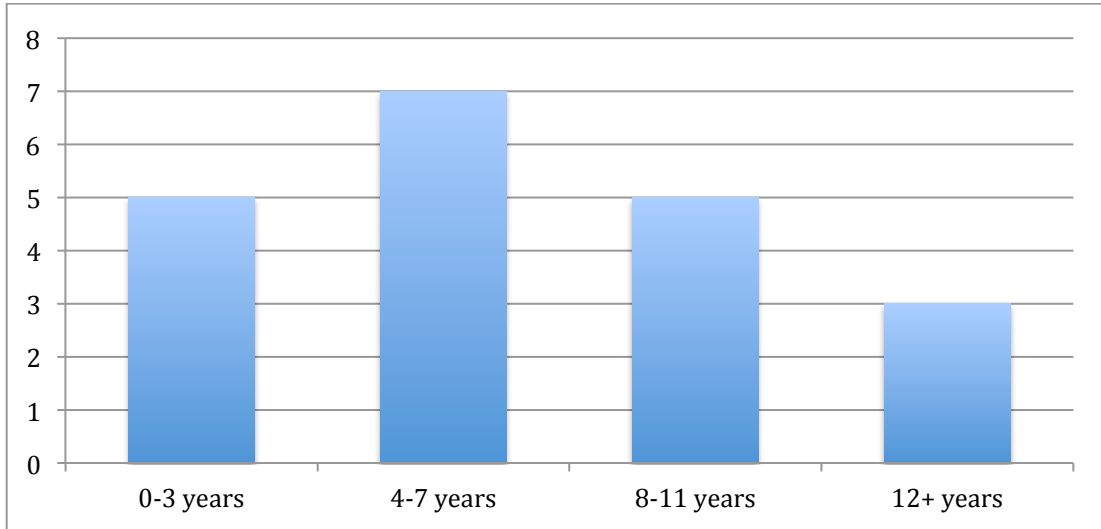


Figure 4. Participant Years in Retail Industry

Twelve participants have worked at their current employer for three or fewer years, five had been with their employer four to seven years, and three eight to 11 years. No participants have worked at their employers for 12 or more years.

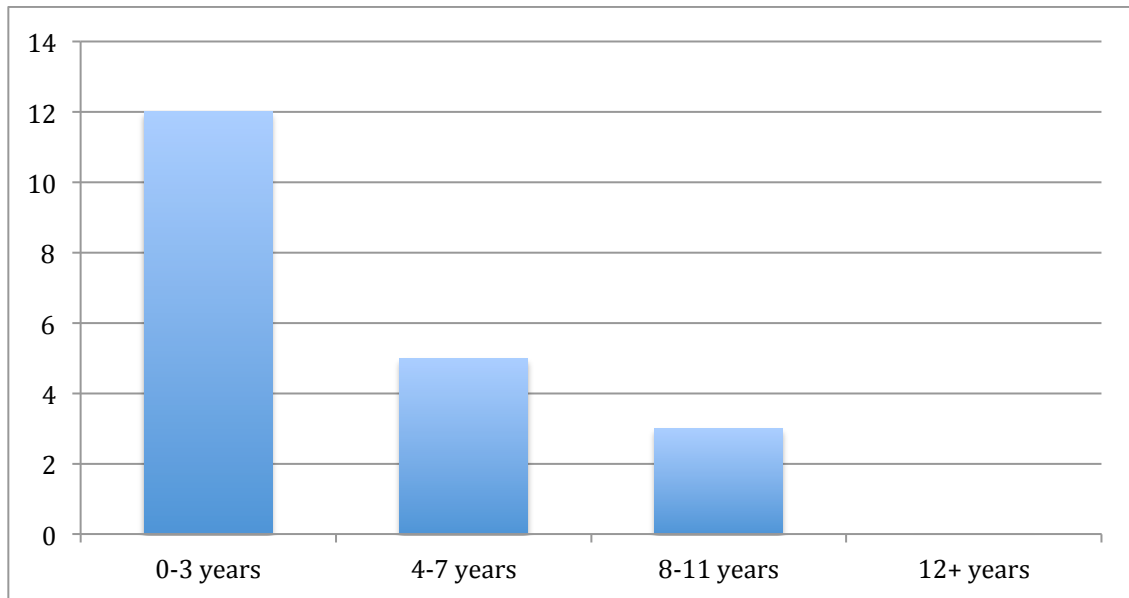


Figure 5. Participant Years at Current Retailer

Interview Responses

When asked to list the pros of working in the retail industry, nearly all of the participants mentioned building positive relationships with customers. A variety of other pros included working with the products, positive relationships with coworkers, flexible scheduling practices, challenging work, leadership development and training, job security, and advancement opportunities. The most frequently mentioned was the relationships and interactions with customers (19).

When asked to list the cons of working in the retail industry, 13 discussed negative interactions with upset customers, and 11 participants mentioned scheduling, in terms of working various shifts like nights, weekends and holidays, and unfair distribution of payroll hours. Participants spent the majority of discussion on these topics. Other cons listed included lack of supervisory support, lack of camaraderie among coworkers, absence of leadership development programs, and low job security/the feeling of being disposable.

When asked to rank and discuss the most important values for job satisfaction, 12 participants ranked four different intrinsic values as their top value. They included coworkers/camaraderie among team, recognition of accomplishments, opportunity to give back to the community, and leadership development. Eight participants listed four different extrinsic values as their top value relating to job satisfaction. These included compensation, benefits, advancement opportunities, and paid leave. Five participants listed work-life balance values as most important, specifically flexible scheduling practices. Nine participants listed a combination of two or more values. Some listed multiple values of the same category (e.g. two intrinsic values), while others listed values from different categories (e.g. one intrinsic and one extrinsic).

Overall, participants overwhelmingly mentioned camaraderie among coworkers and team, and flexible scheduling practices as key aspects of job satisfaction in the ranking exercise. Eighteen participants listed camaraderie and 16 listed flexible scheduling practices somewhere in their top five ranking. Eleven participants listed pay and recognition of accomplishments in the workplace. Eight listed paid leave most frequently, while 10 listed challenging and interesting work, nine listed supervisory support and eight listed leadership development most frequently.

Effect of Life Stage. There were no distinguishing differences in key values of job satisfaction among women with or without children, nor among women who were married, in a relationship, or single. Participants equally chose these values, but did mention different motivations as to why they were chosen. Specifically, healthcare benefits were mentioned nearly equally by women with (6) or without children (5). One woman detailed her own medical complications and how having adequate healthcare coverage is an important aspect to her job satisfaction, as she is single and caring for herself. Another participant, who was single and pregnant at the time of the research, indicated that healthcare benefits are a requirement for her at her employer in order to adequately care for her future child.

Three participants, who were married, discussed benefits as an important aspect for their entire family. Two of these women were currently married with children, the other was married with no plans to have children. In addition to healthcare benefits, work-life balance and flexible scheduling practices were also mentioned equally, where women with children emphasized childcare opportunities and challenges, attendance at sports or school events for their children, and the ability to participate in holidays and family parties, while women without children responded by emphasizing free time for vacations and social events, as well as the ability to be involved in their own activities surrounding their hobbies.

Years of Experience in Retail. Participants with less than three years of experience in retail were 20-28 years old. Four individuals in this category were 20-24 and one was 25-28 years old. These participants selected camaraderie most frequently ranked as a value related to job satisfaction. This was followed by recognition of accomplishments, challenging and interesting work, supervisory support, and leadership development. All of these are intrinsic values. Advancement opportunities was the only extrinsic value selected.

Participants who worked retail from four to seven years ranged from 20-36 years old. Four ranked intrinsic values, three extrinsic values, and one work-life balance as a first in their top five ranking. The values included pay, challenging work, opportunity to give back, benefits, paid leave, flexible scheduling, advancement opportunities, and camaraderie. The participant who mentioned work-life balance was actively enrolled in college, single with no children, age 20-24 and employed as a part-time sales associate.

Participants who had worked in retail eight to 11 years ranged from 20-31 years old. Four of the five had children. Three ranked flexible scheduling practices in their top five. Other items included paid leave, benefits, and leadership development.

Participants who had worked in retail 12 or more years ranged from 29-36 years old. They listed the intrinsic values of challenging and interesting work, camaraderie among coworkers, supervisory support and leadership development as most important. Extrinsic values ranked included benefits and advancement opportunities. Only one participant in this group had children. She chose benefits as the most important value.

Values Missing from Present Job. When participants were asked which values were missing from their present job, two listed supervisory support. Five participants mentioned compensation as a missing value, although they hadn't listed it as their top most value in their ranking. Three listed opportunities to give back to the community, but did not list this as their top most important. Other values missing from current employers included childcare support/opportunities, benefits, and camaraderie among coworkers and team.

Half of the participants who listed camaraderie as a missing value indicated it was their most important value. Part-time employees not eligible to enroll in company healthcare/retirement/etc. programs mentioned benefits as a missing value. When asked if there were any values to add to the ranking list, most participants did not add any items.

Values Important to Millennial Generation. When asked what values are important to the Millennial generation as a whole, participants mentioned intrinsic and extrinsic values equally. Four of the 20 participants mentioned work-life balance, specifically flexible scheduling practices, as important. The most important value mentioned by nine participants was pay. Overall, 11 participants ranked an extrinsic value as important and 13 participants listed an intrinsic value. Seven participants listed both an intrinsic and extrinsic value in their answer. The most common intrinsic values included camaraderie among coworkers and team. Five participants mentioned an "easy going" or "lax" environment or atmosphere at work. Three participants mentioned the company's values or mission statement as important, and two mentioned a company's reputation.

Views on Work-Life Balance. In determining how each participant viewed work-life balance, 16 indicated flexible scheduling practices as the defining factor. Eleven indicated a desire or ability to leave work at work and home at home – i.e. the ability to keep their professional and personal lives completely separate from one another – as an element of work-life balance. Two mentioned hourly wages as opposed to salaried positions as an element of work-life balance. Other work-life balance values mentioned were time of commute and paid leave.

What keeps you from leaving present job? Seventeen participants indicated an intrinsic value when asked what keeps them from leaving their current employer. Ten participants indicated they continue to stay at their current employer because of the camaraderie and good relations among their team members. Other responses included the time already invested in their career with their current employer, and leadership development and training opportunities available at their current employer.

Of the 11 participants who mentioned extrinsic values as a reason they stay at their current employer, advancement opportunities and pay were the most common responses. Seven participants indicated advancement opportunities. Four participants mentioned work-life balance, in the form of flexible scheduling practices and time of commute. Eleven participants described a combination of extrinsic, intrinsic and work-life balance values.

What would force you to leave present job? When asked what would force them to leave their current employer, seven participants said a cut in pay and five indicated lack of supervisory support. Some participants mentioned more than one item, including three saying both time of commute and lack of benefits and five indicating no advancement opportunities being available. When asked if a change of team members would cause the participant to search for a new position, the response was often that the participant would not quit, but rather, find ways to train the new team to be like the previous one.

Camaraderie and Relationships between Co-workers and Team Members

The majority of participants discussed a sense of camaraderie among coworkers and the team as a value they desire at work, as well as a value that keeps them from leaving their current employer. Interestingly, half of the participants in this study explained that a sense of camaraderie was a value missing at their current employer. So although camaraderie may not be something Millennials in the workplace currently experience, it is something they consider important. This finding correlates with the

existing research of Hershatter & Epstein (2010), where emphasis on a supportive, nurturing environment is discussed as an important aspect to Millennial lifestyle, as well as Graybill's theory (2013) that relationships at work are valuable to the Millennial generation. Many participants discussed their personal relationships with coworkers and how it had a positive effect on their work environment – when the team shares personal interests, excels at communication, and works together to achieve goals and accomplish tasks, participants described their job as “easier”. One participant said, “If you don't have good relationships with the people you work with every day, how can you look forward to work? Work is a place for work, but it's also a place where you can form bonds outside of your friend group and family. It brings the overall morale of the team up if you all get along and can go out for a drink after a long day or go out to dinner and enjoy your time.” Another explained, “If you start a job or walk into a workplace and notice tension, then you know those workers are not happy for one reason or another. If there is not good relations throughout, then you will not be happy going to work every day. You don't have to be someone's friend outside of work, but it does make the work life much easier, enjoying the people you are around.” These findings reinforce the research of Kim et al. (2009) that states employees experience lower stress levels when they work alongside motivated and dedicated coworkers. Additionally, participants mentioned the “atmosphere” of the store and how, if there was a strong sense of camaraderie on the team, it positively impacts profits and customer relations on the sales floor. A full-time assistant manager said, “When you have good relationships with workers on your team, you're able to enjoy going to work, and you're able to work better together to get the job done.”

While camaraderie was determined as important to the overall job satisfaction of the individual, participants did indicate that if they saw a large turnover in their existing staff, they would not necessarily leave their current retailer. When asked how a lack of camaraderie among coworkers or the exodus of existing coworkers would impact their overall job satisfaction, participants explained that a new staff could develop a sense of camaraderie much like a previous staff, and therefore, job satisfaction for the individual would not necessarily be affected because of turnover on the team. One participant explained, “It would definitely be a big transition because (the team) has such a good connection, but I would go into it level-headed. I wouldn't want their reasons for leaving to affect me unless it was a terrible situation. It would be hard to replace them, but it would be a good learning opportunity for me to train future

employees.” It was mentioned, however, that supervisory support, as well as leadership development and training programs, would become critical components of job satisfaction should camaraderie be lacking, in hopes of increasing camaraderie or turning the coworkers who did not contribute to a positive workplace environment. A part-time manager, who emphasized team camaraderie, said in response to a question of losing most of her existing team, “If my store manager didn’t continue to grow and my higher-ups weren’t willing to help fix a situation like that, that would make me leave. How do I know that if they aren’t there to help her, they aren’t going to be there for me?”

Work-Life Balance – Flexible Scheduling and Hours Worked Per Week

In discussing work-life balance with participants, two themes emerged in almost all responses: flexible schedules and number of hours worked per week. Flexible scheduling practices are when employees work a mix of days, nights and weekends, as well as having the ability to request specific days and times off for personal reasons, without having to use paid leave. Scheduling practices were the second-most mentioned con of working in retail, but were also one of the top five most important values indicated. Participants expressed that they liked the fact they typically worked different shifts and could easily request certain days off. But, participants explained that they disliked the fact they have to work nights, weekends, and holidays more frequently than employees in other fields. A part-time assistant manager said, “You don’t have the same work hours every single week. Everything fluctuates. You open, you close, you work weekends and nights... Sometimes you think, ‘I wish I didn’t have to work this weekend or close this Saturday night’.”

For participants with children, flexible scheduling practices were mostly related to children’s extracurricular activities such as sports or school events, but also childcare opportunities and challenges. One participant detailed her typical schedule each week, explaining that certain days her husband watches their child, other days, her parents watch their child, and on her days off, she watches their child. She is still able to work a full 40-hour week as a manager, and not have to pay for professional childcare services. Flexible scheduling practices was her number one value in the ranking exercise, and she explained, “Being able to make my own schedule and being that my boss is OK with it, is important. I don’t have to pay for childcare, and I don’t have anyone besides my parents and husband to help care for my child. I wouldn’t be working if (my boss) wasn’t OK with (my schedule).”

Another participant explained that although flexible scheduling is a benefit to finding adequate childcare and not having to pay for professional services, she still missed out on a lot with her son, as well as her entire family. She explained she isn't able to attend all of her family parties or holidays because, as a retail manager, she often works weekends and higher traffic/higher volume days. "We do the schedule ahead of time, but sometimes things just come up. So sometimes, the scheduling can be kind of upsetting." The same participant, however, explained she could easily request off specific days, which made it easier to be with her family. She emphasized maintaining a balance between her job responsibilities and her home-life responsibilities.

Participants without children still emphasized work-life balance and flexible scheduling practices as important. One participant, who was enrolled in college, described the benefit of flexible scheduling practices. "I like to be able to have relationships in and out of work, and I am involved in a lot of things. I like to have the ability to get time off so I can do other things." Another participant, who was unmarried and without children, detailed her ability to travel, go on vacation and spend time with her boyfriend as important aspects to flexible scheduling practices as well. While the activities relating to work-life and flexible scheduling varied, they were valued by women with and without children.

The second aspect to work-life balance that participants discussed was the actual number of hours they work each week. Store managers are typically salaried employees and often find themselves working long hours during the busy holiday season. This affects their sense of work-life balance. One manager said, "During holiday and back-to-school, for a salaried store manager, I could spend 50 to 60 hours a week here, which is 50 to 60 hours a week I'm away from my son and I don't get paid for it. I don't get anything in return for it. I just put in a lot of work and I'm not getting much in return." The full-time managers and store managers that were paid as hourly employees, expressed very few qualms about the number of hours and days they are typically scheduled, which were typically five days, eight hours a day. One store manager said, "They've pretty much forced us to have work-life balance by not having overtime and only allowing us to work 40 hours a week."

Part-time employees experienced a dilemma with irregular hours bringing irregular paychecks. This factors into their work-life balance and job satisfaction. During the "slow times" of the year, when business and traffic is down, they are often the ones to lose hours when payroll allowance is low.

Conversely, their hours scheduled increased during holiday or if a store is short staffed. A part-time manager explained, “ This week I’m working 25 hours. My range is usually 15 to 20, but I know right now we are shorter staffed so I’m getting 30 hours some weeks.”

Twelve respondents indicated advancement opportunities as an important value of job satisfaction in the ranking exercise. One part-time participant said, “If I wouldn’t advance within a decent amount of time, like if I’ve been there a few years and didn’t get the chance to move up, then I would start to worry. I would need an increase in hours.”

Pay, advancement opportunities, challenging and interesting work, supervisory support, and recognition of accomplishments in the workplace were also significant in overall job satisfaction by the retail employees in this study. They collectively represent reoccurring themes among all participants.

Pay was mentioned by 11 of the 20 participants throughout discussion, but only one participant listed it as the most important value. That participant explained, “I didn’t get a pay raise to move into my new position. I have been doing it for over a year now. I got a raise at my annual review, but that wasn’t for changing jobs. I think, overall, it goes back to being paid what you think you’re worth, and that’s important.” Another store manager said, “At the end of the day, we don’t work for free and money talks. By no means do I expect to be paid more than what I’m worth, but I expect to be paid for the job I work hard to do. A bonus program is extremely enticing, especially when you know you have to try a little harder to get a lot more. If I didn’t feel like I was being paid for the job I do, I’d be looking elsewhere.”

Twelve participants, in a wide range of positions, listed advancement opportunities as important in their overall discussion. These participants included full-time store managers, full-time assistant managers, part-time assistant managers, and part-time sales associates. One full-time assistant manager explained, “To me, if there is not room to advance at some point, then you stop learning and being a key player in the company.” Participants also mentioned educational background, in relation to advancement opportunities. All but one participant had some college-level education or had completed a college degree. A part-time manager said, “I’m going into fashion marketing and management, so working at a store may not be what I want to stick with, but because I am able to advance with the company, that’s something very important. I want to know there are bigger and better things and be challenged.”

Challenging and interesting work was also a value mentioned by 10 of the participants. One participant said, “I love challenges and I love to compete. Right now, I love competing against myself. This is the first time I’ve been in a store for more than a year at a time, so I love competing against my own numbers from last year.” Another explained, “Challenging and interesting work allows you to enjoy going to work. If there’s not a challenge, work would be boring.”

Nine participants listed supervisory support in their ranking exercise, while four participants said lack of supervisory support was one of the biggest cons of working in retail. One participant said, “It definitely makes your work environment smoother, if you have a supervisor that you can go to and supports you and is encouraging.” Another participant, who listed supervisory support in her ranking, said, “(My supervisor) knows how hard we work and he appreciates it. We’ve never really had that before. It’s super great to have a support system.”

Recognition of accomplishments in the workplace was mentioned by 11 participants in the study, but only one participant listed it as a most important value. That participant tied her answer into both advancement opportunities, and camaraderie and good relations among coworkers and team. She explained, “I picked (recognition of accomplishments in the workplace) because you want to be recognized for doing something well, or getting promoted, and I think that sets the mood for morale on the team. You want to create a workspace where people want to come to work and want to perform.” In this participant’s discussion of camaraderie, she continued, “I think I touched on that with morale. You want to create an environment where you feel happy and you can work and perform with others you get along with.”

Millennials’ Values

When participants were asked to indicate what they believe Millennial generation employees value in an employer, they indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic values were important.

The most common intrinsic values mentioned were camaraderie among coworkers and team (discussed previously) and the company’s core values and mission statement. The response regarding a company’s core values and mission was mentioned by two participants during open-ended questioning earlier in the study. A company’s core values and mission statement emerged as a theme during the question about what Millennials value in an employer. This discussion lends itself to the idea that

Millennials look for an employer whose mission matches their own belief systems, unique to their generation. It also reinforces the concept of person-environment fit, as described by Porfeli & Mortimer (2010).

The most common extrinsic value discussed as important to Millennials was compensation and financial incentives. Participants mentioned this as frequently as camaraderie with coworkers. One full-time assistant manager said, "When I've sat in on interviews and done them myself, what I've heard from people is that they are looking for what their pay is going to be and what kind of discount they're going to get." In this study, 11 out of 20 participants mentioned pay in their top five ranking, but only one participant chose it as her most important value overall. This could be because "the impact of the recent recession has made jobs harder to find and left late Millennials with far less access to disposable income" (Keiser & Garner, 2012, p. 73).

One value that five participants believed to be desired by Millennials was having an "easy-going" or "lax environment" at work, however, the discussion provided by participants in this study and subsequent ranking exercise do not support this statement. Throughout the interviews, none indicated that they valued an easy work life, but it can be inferred that through camaraderie with coworkers their job would seem easier overall, as posited by Kim et al. (2009). One participant said, "I feel like our generation of workers and women want handouts they don't have to work for", while another participant explained, "I feel like generations have become a little more lazy, and have come to expect things to be handed to them. They want to be pitied for doing less." In contrast to this, however, half of the participants in this study mentioned challenging and interesting work as something they value in an employer. A full-time manager explained, "I like how every day is different in retail – there's always different people, different things to do. I love that it's challenging. I learn something new just about every day", while another participant said, "Challenging and interesting work keeps you on your toes and doesn't make you feel bored with your job. There's always new and exciting things... and I love doing stuff like that". Based on this information, there appears to be a disconnect between what Millennials are actually saying they value in an employer and what they assume others in their generation desire. It can be hypothesized that older Millennials are viewing the latter half of their generation as an entirely different cohort, with a different set

of values, where both halves of the Millennial generation assume there are vast differences in their desires for job satisfaction.

Customer Relations

Nearly all participants studied indicated that a positive aspect about working in the retail field was good relations among customers. Participants listed “interacting with people and making them feel good about themselves” as a pro of the job. Another explained, “I gained a lot of friendships both with coworkers and customers of mine.” Additionally, a manager said, “I’m really a people person. Even with difficult customers, I like solving problems. I like dealing with people. I like being able to interact with people and help them get what they need.” Good customer relations are extensions of the intrinsic value of camaraderie, as both elicit positive emotions from the worker. When workers get along with their customers, they feel a greater sense of person-environment fit, and overall, a greater sense of job satisfaction.

This qualitative study set out to answer the research question, “What factors lead to increased job satisfaction for female Millennial generation employees in the retail industry?” The study was conducted to provide information to retailers so they can better recruit and retain females of the Millennial generation. Of the 20 research participants, 12 had worked at their retailer three or fewer years. Turnover in retail is very real and very common - one that both human resource professionals and retail managers deal with every day.

For participants in this study, extrinsic values, such as pay, while important, did not reign supreme when it comes to values of job satisfaction for this group of female Millennial generation retail employees. The values of job satisfaction that participants ranked above the others included camaraderie and good relations among coworkers and team, and flexible scheduling practices as an element of work-life balance. To illustrate this point, one participant explained, “Hours is one thing, I do look at stuff like that, but mostly, it’s coworkers and how you get along with them. To me, it’s more about that. Even though I’m making nine dollars an hour, I enjoy my job, so I don’t worry about (pay) as much.”

CONCLUSIONS

The female retail employees interviewed in this study valued camaraderie among coworkers and work-life balance as important aspects of job satisfaction.

Participants in this study greatly emphasized intrinsic values overall, but specifically listed their interpersonal relationships at work as important. This research finding supports the importance of hiring the right person for the job and the team through analyzing person-environment fit. Not only should candidates have the necessary job skills, but their psychological and emotional needs, as well as goals and personality, must match the rest of the team so camaraderie develops. Retail coworkers rely on each other to complete tasks, as well as service customers. When camaraderie is present, those challenges become easier for the team as a whole. Fostering a positive teamwork environment with existing employees is essential in increasing job satisfaction among Millennial team members,

Respondents in this study who were paid an hourly wage and had a 40-hour work week had a greater sense of a healthy work-life balance, resulting in higher job satisfaction. Participants indicated they enjoy challenging and interesting work, but were unwilling to sacrifice their personal life for their careers. An assistant manager explained, "I just like that I'm not going to be working 50 or 55 hours a week when I could be home seeing my kid and still be getting paid the same." Reducing work-life conflicts and personal stress is important for the female Millennial employees in this study.

Finally, a theme emerging in this study, was customer relations as an important factor relating to job satisfaction. Employees at the field level represent the frontlines of the retail industry. While building positive relationships with customers was discussed as one the most rewarding aspects to working in retail, it was also cited as one of the most emotionally debilitating aspects of retail. One manager explained that the biggest con in retail is "the angry people and the people who are rude or disrespectful. They think that if they yell, they can get me to do more for them. That's definitely the worst part." Understanding customer relations as an important component to job satisfaction of retail workers is essential for employers and employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be inferred from the research that supervisors in the retail setting need to invest time and training into human resources and hiring practices, but also perhaps team building exercises for existing employees. The concept of person-job fit, as presented by Christiansen, Sliter & Frost (2014), becomes more important in this way. “The match between a person’s knowledge, skills, abilities, and the demands of the job” are important aspects to examine within initial interviews with candidates. Specifically, “it is not just the absence of opportunities for intrinsic and extrinsic rewards when employees’ personality traits are not congruent with demands that results in lower satisfaction, but also that this mismatch functions as a stressor that will result in a variety of psychological strains” (Christiansen et al., 2014, p. 25). Hiring the right employee eliminates the possibility of a negative impact on the overall team’s sense of camaraderie or losing a valued employee because an employer no longer meets their needs. In order to better understand and meet the needs of their employees, supervisors need to be equipped with the right training and resources so they are knowledgeable and prepared when it comes to hiring practices.

One suggestion for retailers is to invest money into workshops to train managers on hiring issues to circumvent hiring the wrong person. Or perhaps supervisors, such as district managers, should become more involved in the store hiring process, providing second or third interviews for eligible candidates. Creation of interview training materials that provide examples of behavioral questioning and probing, can assist managers in determining who the best candidate is for a position, as well as who will fit in with the existing team dynamic and the company’s mission and values.

Additionally, companies should place attention on team building exercises, providing the time and budget for organized activities, meetings and training, and emphasizing different elements of team dynamics such as communication, professionalism, accountability, and trust. Possibilities include allotting payroll hours for a store meeting with an organized activity, time for the team to volunteer with a local non-profit organization, or sending in an outside representative to act as coach in team building exercises while on the sales floor depending on the individual companies and their available budget. Strengthening the store team at a smaller, more grassroots level not only could help the team develop a bond between each other, but also help management more easily identify those not willing to contribute to the team environment. Managers can then follow up and address those issues with the individual employee. What

is important in this exercise is the ability to build a strong team as it exists in the present time, but to also introduce and acclimate new members to the team, quickly developing that sense of camaraderie among coworkers, which could lead to increased job satisfaction, increased loyalty to the retailer, and lower turnover rates overall.

In expanding on the idea of work-life balance, it is essential for companies to understand not just hours worked, but also workload in general. As employers increasingly look for ways to decrease expenditures and consolidate work roles in order to increase profits, workloads for current employees tend to increase. For salaried employees in particular, this could mean 50-60 hour work weeks without the extra compensation or recognition, and the overall feeling that work and life have become unbalanced. Reviewing and setting clear job expectations with all potential candidates from day one can prepare individuals for the position they are applying for. "It is... important for organizations to be honest and clear about the workloads and hours they expect (applicants) to encounter, both at the beginning of their career and during its early years" (Sturges & Guest, 2004, p. 18).

It is pivotal for employers to discuss the evolution of a position, particularly in managerial roles, as the employee gains skills and competence, particularly when markets/seasons change and the retail business fluctuates. Candidates need to be adequately informed and prepared for busy holiday seasons, slow business in the summer, etc. and how that can impact the challenge of their work, the hours allotted for payroll, scheduling expectations, and more.

A suggestion drawn from employees in this study would be to invest in employees' work-life balance and enforce a 40-hour workweek, including for those in upper management roles, creating an hourly wage policy for all individuals, without cutting items such as benefits, paid leave and earning potential. One store manager, when asked how work-life balance is present at her current employer, said, "Now that we are only allowed to work 40 hours, I think it's definitely much more balanced. I think telling us we can't work more than 40 hours has made a big difference." Overtime work and working on holidays would be paid with an extra incentive. With this policy in place, employees could more clearly see the connection between the hours they work and the paycheck they bring home. Extra work would be compensated with extra pay.

Finally, retail workers are often met with angry or difficult customers, where quick decisions need to be made in order to satisfy the shopper or subdue an escalated situation. If retailers invest in ways to not only keep customers happy, but also train their employees to handle a variety of situations, both good and bad, it could lead to increased job satisfaction for their employees. Empowering employees to do whatever they need to in order to keep customers happy can help eliminate day-to-day stress at work, with very little cost to the company in the long run. Employees who can satisfy a customer's request on the spot, whether it be to honor a coupon or return a garment, help the company's overall image, but also find relief in knowing the company supports them in their everyday decisions. Equally, it is important for retailers to train employees on how to deal with such situations properly.

Overall, the findings of this study support the existing research, confirming that the values most important to Millennial women in the retail field are relationships at work and work-life balance (Bonte & Krabel, 2014; Graybill, 2013; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Kim et al., 2009; Marini, Fan, Finley, & Beutel, 1996; Tolbert & Moen, 1998;). Attention should be paid to building camaraderie and good relations among coworkers, customer relations, and flexible scheduling practices in particular, as they were determined to be the most important factors related to job satisfaction, and ultimately, employee retention in the retail workplace.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The basis of this study was formed on the assertion that men and women value different things in the workplace and have separate paths to job satisfaction. "All of us are subject to the effects of traditional gender-role socialization, which implies that women's work values necessarily differ from men's because women are obviously 'different'" (Rowe & Snizek, 1995, p. 227). Perhaps an examination of Millennials in the field of retail as an entire generation is needed. It's important for professionals to not assume the results of this study are only specific to the female gender. "An examination of earlier research reveals rather small differences between men's and women's work values", but "past researchers have tended to overemphasize the differences and underemphasize the similarities between men and women" (Rowe & Snizek, 1995, p. 227). Millennials are experiencing a time in history where traditional gender roles are being challenged every day: at home, at work, in the media, and beyond. Gender roles may impact job satisfaction and men and women may not necessarily be looking for something different in the workplace.

A larger sample of non full-time management positions would help understand the job satisfaction motivations of this group of Millennial generation female retail employees. Although similar values emerged from all participants in this study, this conflicts with findings from previous research on part-time workers and job satisfaction. Again, the consideration of the generational cohort and not traditional gender and family roles should be essential to such a study.

In future research, a focus of ideas relating to the different life stages of female Millennial retail workers could also be conducted. Expanding the research to focus on values specific to Millennial women with children versus Millennial women without children, or the difference in values for early and late Millennial women, could present different results. The small sample of participants limits the generalizability of results. A more specific or larger sample of Millennial women in these categories may highlight value differences not found in this study. Indeed, values relating to family, marriage, and financial status in relation to career aspirations were considered. A sample of female Millennial retail employees from a variety of organizational levels helped provide a wide range of responses.

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APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Age (range) (Select one):

16-20

20-24

25-28

29-31

32-36

Educational Level (Select one):

Less than/some high school

High school graduate/General Education Development (GED)

Vocational/trade school

Some college

Associate's 2-year degree

College graduate

Graduate studies/degree

Area of study after High School: _____

Race/ethnicity (Select one):

American Indian/Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White/Caucasian

Other: _____

Relationship status:

Married

In a relationship

Single

Number of Children: _____

If no children, do you plan to have children?

Yes

No

Undecided

Length of time working in retail (Select one):

0-3 years

4-7 years

8-11 years

12+ years

Name of Current Retail Employer: _____

Position in Company (Select one):

Part-Time Sales Associate

Full-Time Sales Associate

Part-Time Manager

Full-Time Manager

Part-Time Visual Support

Full-Time Visual Support

Other: _____

Length of Time at Present Company:

0-3 years

4-7 years

8-11 years

12+ years

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe your current position at your retail employer. Why did you choose this job/career?
- 2) What are the pros of working in the retail field?
- 3) What are the cons of working in the retail field?
- 4) When you think of the phrase “job satisfaction”, what qualities do you associate with the phrase?
- 5) (Participants will be given note cards with values associated with job satisfaction written on them - see a-m below- and asked the following question). Choose your top 5 most important values for job satisfaction and discuss why you chose the values you did:
 - a. Time of commute
 - b. Flexible scheduling practices
 - c. Competitive wages/financial incentives
 - d. Advancement opportunities
 - e. Childcare opportunities/support
 - f. Supervisory support
 - g. Camaraderie and good relations among coworkers and team
 - h. Challenging and interesting work
 - i. Leadership development and training programs
 - j. Good benefits (i.e. healthcare, retirement plans, etc.)
 - k. Paid leave (vacation, personal, sick, parental, etc.)
 - l. Opportunities to give back to the community
 - m. Recognition of your accomplishments in the workplace
- 6) What aspects of your values are present and/or missing in your present job as a retail employee?
- 7) Are there values that lead to job satisfaction that should be listed above?
- 8) What do you, as member of the Millennial generation, value in an employer?
- 9) Work-life balance is the ability to combine both professional and personal life. What does “work-life balance” mean to you? How is work-life balance present in your job?
- 10) What aspects or events would keep you from leaving your current retail employer?
- 11) What aspects or events would force you to leave your current retail employer?

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

NDSU - North Dakota State University

Department of Apparel, Design & Hospitality Management
1310 Centennial Boulevard, EML 178
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
701-231-7367

Title: Aspects of job satisfaction in female millennial generation retail employees

This study is being conducted by Victoria Frank, graduate student, tel. 330-987-1910, Email: VictoriaW.Frank@gmail.com under the direction of Ann W. Braaten, an Assistant Professor of Practice, Department of Apparel, Design & Hospitality Management, at North Dakota State University, tel. 701-231-7367, Email: ann.braaten@ndsu.edu.

You are asked to participate in this study because you are a female working in the retail industry, born between 1980 and 2000, the millennial generation.

The reason for doing the study is to learn from millennial female retail employees what leads to job satisfaction in the retail industry.

You will take part in an individual interview with the researcher because you actively work in retail. You will be asked your age, position in your company, length of time at your present company, educational level, race/ethnicity, relationship status, number of children you have or you plan to have children. You will be given a set of cards with values related to job satisfaction written on them and asked to rank them in the order of importance, and tell why you put them in that order. Additionally, you will be asked to describe your current position, why you chose to work at this employer, what pros and cons of working in retail are, qualities you associate with job satisfaction, what you value in an employer, what values are present or missing in your present employer, what work-life balance means to you and how work-life balance is present in your job, and what aspects or events would keep you from leaving a job or keep you at a job. You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time. Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous.

Participation will take between 30 and 60 minutes. The discussion will be captured via note taking and by audio recording. If you feel uncomfortable with the recorder, you may ask that it be turned off at any time.

There are no known risks or discomforts. The researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known risks to the participants.

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this research study. You will not receive compensation for taking part in this study.

The benefits to others include assisting employers in recruiting and retaining female employees.

Your participation in this research is your choice. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw, all information you provide (including recordings) will be destroyed.

We will keep private all research records that identify you. The files will be deleted once the final research study is read, approved and graded by the researcher's advisors.

Please contact the researchers at anytime at the e-mail address or telephone number provided above. Before you decide to take part in the research study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now.

You have rights as a participant in research. If you have questions about your rights, or complaints about this research you may talk to the researcher or contact the NDSU Human Research Protection Program by:

- Telephone: 701.231.8995 or toll-free 1.855.800.6717
- Email: ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu
- Mail: NDSU HRPP Office, NDSU Dept. 4000, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050.

The role of the Human Research Protection Program is to see that your rights are protected in this research; more information about your rights can be found at: www.ndsu.edu/irb .

Documentation of Informed Consent:

You are freely making a decision whether to be in this research study. Signing this form means that

1. you have read and understood this consent form
2. you have had your questions answered, and
3. you have decided to be in the study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Your signature

Date

Your printed name

Signature of researcher explaining study

Date

Printed name of researcher explaining study