Technology, Learning Styles, Values, and Work Ethics of Millennials

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INTRODUCTION

Millennials represent people who were born between 1981 and 1997. In 2017, they are 20 to 36 years old. The Millennials are also called "Y" generation, digital natives, "net generation" or "me generation". At present, the Millennials are university students and are entering the work force. The evolving technology has shaped their learning styles, values and work ethics. This chapter summarizes the influence of technology on learning styles, values and work ethics of Millennials. Implications of the different learning styles of the Millennials for the instructors' teaching style, leadership style of university administrators and student services are discussed. The work ethics of Millennials are explored and implications for managerial and mentoring practices are discussed.

BACKGROUND

The entire adult population can be viewed as four generational cohorts – Silent (1928-1945), Baby Boomer (1946-1964), X (1965-1980), Y (1981-1997). The numbers in the parenthesis represent the range of birth years. There are slight variations in the birth years among different researchers (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Each generation has different values and viewpoints, which were shaped by their social, economic and political environment when they were growing up and their current level of responsibility. Different generational cohorts have different perceptions of each other and have different expectations. These perceptions are sometimes based on positive and negative stereotypes reported in the popular press. These views are often not subjected to objective empirical scrutiny and there are variations within a generation (Macky et al., 2008). This generation gap can be a source of conflict and misunderstanding at the work place (Meriac et al., 2010).

TECHNOLOGY, NARRATIVE ABOUT MILLENNIALS, AND THEIR VALUES

Some of the major influences in a person's development include peers, parents, popular culture, major political and social events. The differences in the social context and different shared life experiences of different generations lead to different beliefs, values and attitude towards work. The conventional view of the Millennials as narcissistic, self-absorbed, distrustful, anxious, cynical and lonely in the current competitive job-market may not be correct. There is no empirical evidence that the Millennials have a bad attitude. The Boomers' perception of Millennials may reflect the old guard's bias to new generations (Kowske, Rasch and Wiley, 2010). It may be that Millennials are adapting to the changing world that other generations are trying to resist (Ellin, 2014).

A lot of narratives about Millennials come from other generational cohorts and may reflect the biases of that generation (Twenge, 2009). The parenting styles, political events, social and cultural trends, technology and economic events during the time a generation is growing up contribute to the evolution of the psychosocial characteristics of a generation (Strauss and Howe, 1997; Howe

and Strauss, 2000). The differences in the social context and different shared life experiences of different generations lead to different beliefs, values, expectations, and attitude towards education and work. The popular press has both positive and negative stereotypes about Millennials, Table 1.

Millennials use texting more than e-mail as a regular mode of communication. They are comfortable with a wide variety of media including blogs, reviews and social networks to openly express their interests and feelings (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010). The Millennials watch less television and are not unduly influenced by the mainstream media. They are much more resistant to advertisements than previous generations (Ciminillo, 2005). Millennials are constantly adapting to the new forms of social media. The e-mail and Facebook may have become the grandpa's social media as the Millennials switch to Instagram. Millennials multitask using different technologies. Their multi-tasking behavior includes communicating with many people while playing Xbox (Putre, 2013; PwC, 2013). They are more connected digitally but may be socially isolated.

In today's hypermodern times, assembling sociality has become more challenging (Warde, 1999). The Millennials use social media to coordinate, stack or shift their social interactions to coordinate with personal schedules. Millennials migrate across a range of devices and platforms at on-line and off-line sites. Media are used for

Table 1. Positive and negative stereotypes of millennials (Source: Twenge and Campbell, 2008)

Positive Stereotypes	Technology and Social media savvy, Multi-tasking, Digitally connected, Confident, Self-expressive, Liberal, Upbeat and Open to change, Civic minded with a sense of both local and global community
Negative Stereotypes	Narcissistic, Sense of entitlement, Coddled, Self-promotional, Opinionated, Whiny and Needy, Seek constant feedback and immediate gratification, Lack of diligence, Poor task performance and shirking behaviors

entertainment and socializing (Botterill et al., 2015; Strauss and Howe, 2000; Hoover, 2009; PwC, 2008, Johnson Controls, 2010).

TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING STYLES OF MILLENNIALS

Incorporation of technology in the classroom does enhance learning and is moderated by the student characteristics (Krentler and Willis-Flurry, 2005). As an example, the model of social learning environment as inquiry-based on cloud technology is being applied for enhancing the critical thinking skills and collaborative learning (Meepian and Wannapiroon, 2013). Multimedia and hypermedia Technologies affects positively on both learning in a content area and learning to use technology itself (Kinzer and Leu 1997). Technology can enhance literacy development, impact language acquisition, provide greater access to information, support learning, motivate students, and enhance their self-esteem (Boster et al., 2004; Tracey & Young, 2006).

Millennial students are used to instantaneous answers without much deliberate thought. This hinders the development of critical thinking. They do not realize that their lack of attention span or ability prevents them from focusing and contemplating the material deeply. They think that that they are not able to think critically due to lack of time. Millennials are comfortable learning through webinars, social media and virtual meetings. They are proficient users of productivity software for increased productivity at the workplace. Millennials find the right information and eliminate the unnecessary information (Ellin, 2014).

Raised by the overly involved 'helicopter parents', Millennials crave for immediate feedback, praise, attention and guidance. Many Millennials students lack critical thinking skills required for inductive and deductive reasoning (Monaco and Martin, 2007). They lack the original thought due to excessive reliance on the Internet. There is lack of concern for accuracy and validity of their

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