

Chapter 20

Virtual Leadership: How Millennials Perceive Leadership Attribution and Its Impact on Database System Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is an updated review of the results of a study completed in 2015 on leadership's impact on virtual team effectiveness and the quality of the completed virtual team project. Findings in 2015 suggested that leadership style and virtual team effectiveness did predict project quality, and specific leadership styles had a negative relationship with virtual team effectiveness. After summarizing the results of the studies purpose, methodology, and findings, the chapter concludes with a literature review of virtual team's leadership research between 2015 and present. It provides a discussion on the relationship between the previous studies' findings and what has been found since with recommendations on future research on shared leadership and relationship building in virtual teams.

INTRODUCTION

Virtual spaces continue to infiltrate themselves into various aspects of both our personal and professional lives. Millennials in particular know this having lived their whole lives immersed in the Internet. Some of the activities Millennials have done and continue to do include: social networking, synchronous real-time video gaming with friends who are geographically separated from them, and retrieving answers to every imaginable question they've ever had thanks to Internet search engines. Millennials have now reached

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the age in which they are graduating from colleges and joining the workforce. Giving the ubiquitous nature of the Internet as a platform to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, and share information the research reviewed in this chapter sought to answer the question: “what is the effect of three leadership types on the quality of virtual team projects and what is the effect of these same leadership types on virtual team effectiveness?” This chapter is a review of the original research done by Graham, Daniel, and Doore (2015) titled: *Millennial Leadership: The Oppositional Relationship between Leadership Type and the Quality of Database System’s Development in Virtual Environments*. The chapter also updates the literature review on the subject to better understand leadership types and its impact on database systems development and virtual team effectiveness in virtual environments.

The Millennial: The Net Generation

According to Williams and Chin (2009) Millennials, also referred to as “the Y generation” are those people who were born between 1977 and 2003. Another common term for Millennials is that they are the “net generation” (Tapscott 1998, 2008). Tapscott (2009) defined the net generation as:

- “People who grew up shaped fundamentally by technology and they are shaping it” (Tapscott, 2009);
- “People who use computer technology naturally and easily” (Tapscott, 2009);
- “People who prefer to learn and work collaboratively” (Tapscott, 2009);
- “People who anticipate fast and frequent communication” (Tapscott, 2009);
- People who judge corporations by their integrity, workplace practices, and concerns for the environment” (Tapscott, 2009);
- People who want to be evaluated on performance, not seniority or loyalty (Tapscott, 2009);
- People who don’t make sharp distinctions between work and play, or their public and private spheres” (Tapscott, 2009).

Jones, Ramanau, Cross, and Healing (2010) reported that previous generations such as baby boomers (individuals born between 1946 and 1964) were “at least one step behind using new technologies than Millennials” and “unable to reach the kinds of natural fluency that comes with having grown up with new digital technologies”.

Another interesting attribute of Millennials according to Bracey, Bevill, and Roach (2010) is that they have been discovered to be much more accepting of diversity and are more global-centric. All of this information demonstrates clear distinctions from previous generations. For example, Oblinger (2003) reported that while Millennials were more accepting diversity and global centric, baby boomers just beginning the civil rights movement and many were drafted into the Vietnam war. According to Billington and Billington (2010) in terms of working, baby boomers used experience and perspective to complete work or perform job tasks while Millennials who were more technically inclined preferred to use technology to complete tasks.

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