UNDERSTANDING HOW MILLENNIAL TEACHERS MAKE SENSE OF

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXHIBITED BY ADMINISTRATION

A doctoral thesis presented

by

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to the

Graduate School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in the field of

Education

College of Professional Studies

Northeastern University

Boston, Massachusetts

March 2020

ProQuest Number: 27828917

ProQuest.

ProQuest 27828917

ProQuest LLC
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P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Quannah Parker-McGowan, and my thesis committee members, Dr. Shannon Alpert, and Dr. Wojtek Waliszewski, for their support and knowledge during the thesis preparation and defense. I would like to thank the College of Professional Studies faculty at Northeastern University who assisted me during my doctoral journey. I am also thankful for the support and guidance of my Northeastern University classmates during the past several years.

I would like to express deep gratitude to Dr. Joseph Nagy for his support and confidence as a friend, colleague, and mentor. I would not be in the position to earn this degree without his influence in my life. I would also like to thank my sister-in-law, Dr. Jackie Shannon, for her influence on my enrollment at Northeastern University and her sound advice during my years in the program. Finally, I would like to thank my parents and family for their unconditional support with everything in my life.

Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to understand how millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of administrative leadership in an educational setting. By 2022, millennials will compose nearly half of the global workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012). As a result, educational leaders need to understand the leadership style preferences of this new generation of teachers in order to provide the appropriate support and ensure high performance in an educational community. This research is the result of a focus on two areas: the leadership style preferences of millennials and the characteristics of the millennial workforce. Based on current leadership research and identified characteristics of millennial workers, this study was intended to understand the perceptions of leadership and the leadership style preferences of millennial teachers at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. Using an interpretive phenomenology analysis (IPA), three themes emerged that included: (a) breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders; (b) gaining confidence through reassurance; and (c) seeing behind the curtain. These themes led to three findings that included: (a) positive, personal relationships between millennial teachers and educational leaders resulted in teachers having personal and professional satisfaction, (b) millennial teachers feel valued as an individual when they are recognized and appreciated by their leaders, and (c) millennial teachers want leaders who exhibit transparency and trust, and have clear expectations and direction to meet institutional goals. These findings lead to recommendations for practice for leaders working with millennials.

Keywords: leadership styles, leadership preferences, millennials, millennial teachers, teacher performance

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

This chapter is an introduction to the research on how millennial teachers perceive leadership. The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study is to understand how millennial teachers make sense of educational leadership exhibited by educational leaders at an international, U.S.-style, K-12 school in Colombia, South America. To explore the perceptions of millennial teachers, a general understanding of the research on millennials will be introduced. Millennials, individuals born between 1980 and 2000, have been stereotyped as self-centered, unmotivated, and disloyal (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). This stereotype has resulted in concerns from leaders and apprehension about this growing population in the workforce (Downing, 2006; Huyler, Ding, Norelus, & Pierre, 2015). However, leaders need to recognize that not all individuals fit a particular stereotype and that millennials have many positive characteristics that are highly beneficial in the workplace (Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003). Howe and Strauss (2003) developed a unique profile of millennials with seven distinguishing traits that include:

- Millennials are special. They have always been treated as important and therefore, they crave attention.

- Millennials are sheltered. They have been protected for their entire lives and, therefore, they often seek others to resolve their conflicts.

- Millennials are confident. They are highly motivated and expect to have personal success.

- Millennials are team oriented. They like being part of the group and prefer democratic leadership.

- Millennials are achieving. They are committed to working, particularly in the pursuit of continuous success.

- Millennials are pressured. They have difficulty managing time and responsibilities due to their heavily structured upbringing.

- Millennials are conventional. They greatly respect authority and are inviting to rules and regulations.

The identified characteristics of millennials are diverse. There is a wealth of data regarding the characteristics of millennials and their behaviors in the workplace, but there is little research on followership styles and leadership preferences of millennials (Chou, 2012; Harris-Boundy & Flatt, 2010; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). The workforce is shifting dramatically due to the influx of millennial employees and the introduction of their values and ideals (Huyler et al., 2015). These values and ideals are different from previous generations (Chou, 2012). Knowledge generated from this research is expected to inform educational leaders of how their leadership styles are perceived by millennial teachers.

By 2022, millennials will compose nearly half of the global workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012). The stereotypes and characteristics of millennials vary greatly (Raines, 2002). For example, with the immediacy in our society, millennials are accustomed to constant and consistent feedback and progress (Lewis & Sebert, 2011). They live in the moment and have daily expectations, rather than long-term outlooks (Martin, 2005). Additionally, millennials are commonly characterized for their altruistic mentality and willingness to support social causes (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). Millennials are less likely to continue working for a company they feel is not socially conscious in their practices

(Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). These depictions must be considered when characterizing millennial teachers.

This chapter begins with a statement of the problem with evidence from the literature supporting prior studies on millennials and their characteristics. The research purpose and the research question are presented next, followed by significance of the study drawing connections to potential beneficiaries. Finally, a theoretical framework that serves as a lens for this study is introduced and explained.

Statement of the Problem

With an increase of millennials in the workforce, the influx of workers from this generation signifies that the number of millennial teachers is also increasing, and educational institutions are being affected by this change. The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study is to understand how foreign-hired, millennial teachers make sense of their experiences working with educational administrators who exhibit varying leadership styles at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. Foreign-hired teachers are non-Colombian citizens that teach at the school. This study will focus on foreign-hired teachers for two major reasons. First, the population of foreign-hired teachers consistently rotates at the institution included in this study, and therefore, millennial teachers will soon be the dominant population of teachers. Approximately 10% of foreign-hired teachers rotate out of the faculty on an annual basis and this will result in a change of demographics. Second, data observed from school records and trends indicates there will be a major turnover of local teachers in the next 5-7 years at the school included in this investigation. The anticipated turnover of local teachers will result in a need to hire more millennial teachers at the institution in this study. Due to the unfamiliarity that educational leaders have in working with this new generation of teachers, the transition to

understand and connect with these teachers will be a challenge (Brack & Kelly, 2012).

This study is intended to provide educational leaders with insights on how leadership styles

are perceived by millennial teachers and how leaders can interact and work more

effectively with these individuals.

The global teacher population is undergoing a transformation, and the number of

millennial teachers is starting to increase in most schools around the world (Brack & Kelly,

2012; Greenebaum, 2009). At the institution included in this study, this change has been

particularly notable with the foreign-hired teaching staff. With the impending shift in the

teacher population, it is imperative an understanding of leadership style preferences of

millennial teachers is developed to improve overall performance at any educational

institution that employs millennials. Satisfied and supported teachers typically have a high

level of performance and are more effective in the classroom than teachers who do not feel

supported by leadership (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Additionally, teachers' performance

levels can have a major impact on learning and educators have a critical responsibility and

influence on students and on the classroom environment (Kocabaş, 2009). Educational

leaders need to identify the needs of this new generation of teachers and adapt their

approaches to their expectations to promote a high level of performance in their work.

Understanding how millennial teachers perceive leadership styles is critical for

educational decisions and the implementation of appropriate leadership styles. Millennials

have different perspectives and expectations of leaders than previous generations (Meister

& Willyerd, 2010). Educational leaders need to recognize the characteristics of millennials

and analyze their practices to ensure they are aligned to the beliefs and values of the

millennial generation. Therefore, based on current research related to millennial workers

along with research on leadership styles, this study seeks to understand how millennial

teachers make sense of educational leadership exhibited at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America.

Research Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this research is to understand how foreign-hired, millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by leaders at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America, in order to identify leadership characteristics that they prefer. This research could enable educational leaders to understand expectations of millennial teachers to maximize teacher performance and student learning at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. Educational leaders need to strategically adapt to the changing workforce that will see millennials in the majority. To help support educational leaders and provide a concise, research-based understanding of millennial teachers through shared experiences of this new generation of teachers, the following research question will be addressed: How do millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America?

Significance of the Research Question

The primary reason that researchers have focused on the values and beliefs of millennials is because these individuals differ from previous generations, which impacts the approach of leaders and their leadership styles in the workplace (Chou, 2012). The result is a search for leadership styles from researchers and leaders that will engage the differences presented by millennials and provide a clear direction for their professional success (Downing, 2006). There is a direct connection between effective educational leadership

and effective teaching practices (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Teachers who feel a connection with leadership and feel supported are more motivated while working with students (Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011). Motivated teachers are enthusiastic and instinctively make teaching as high quality as they possibly can (Sakui & Cowie, 2012). Therefore, leaders of millennials should recognize teachers who demonstrate self-confidence and job satisfaction to promote higher achievement and higher levels of job performance (Suwandi, 2014). Teachers who believe they have the ability to teach effectively perform at a high level and deliver quality instruction, and effective leaders need to be attuned to this detail, especially when working with millennials (Thoonen et al., 2011). Building and maintaining productive educational communities depends on the effects of leadership styles on the attitude and performance of millennial teachers.

Millennials and their unique characteristics are a major challenge for many educational leaders around the world (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). There are varying extremes to their characterization, from being labeled as attention seekers to being considered altruistic team players (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Millennials can have different views on job satisfaction than previous generations because they perceive themselves as special, and they are accustomed to getting positive feedback and attention (Downing, 2006; Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003). This desire for attention is different from the stereotypes that characterize previous generations, such as Generation X, who are typically characterized as more independent (Lewis & Sebert, 2011; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Generation X, individuals who were born between 1965 and 1980, have been noted by researchers for their preferences to be self-sufficient and work in structured environments that are individualistic (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012; Lewis & Sebert, 2011).

Individuals from Generation X have been portrayed in research as having a dislike for collaboration and group work (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). In contrast, millennials expect a collaborative work environment and an open relationship with their supervisors, with the ability to voice their opinions and ideas (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Millennials are not intimidated by leaders and want a relationship that is supportive and focused on their professional development (Chou, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). In many circumstances, the building of this relationship requires using a leadership style that involves delegation of responsibility and makes the work more meaningful and personally fulfilling (Chou, 2012). Educational leaders must develop an alternative understanding of millennial teachers' perspectives to successfully engage the future global workforce. If a contemporary model for millennial preferences of leadership styles can be established, this research can help improve leadership practices, promote greater job satisfaction with millennial teachers, and improve results in work performance.

Institution of Research

The school included in this investigation is a U.S.-style school in Cali, Colombia, with both non-Colombian and Colombian teachers. The term U.S.-style implies that the students will receive an education based on the curricular, logistical, and administrative requirements of a U.S. public school. The school offers a U.S. high school diploma to all students who complete the program, and the school is accredited by an organization called AdvancED. AdvancED is a global organization that provides school accreditation through a rigorous process of evidence review and on-site visits. As of 2020, AdvancED has changed the name of their organization to Cognia.

The average age of the faculty members is approximately 45 years old, but this average has decreased to below 40 years old with recent retirements of veteran staff

members and the entrance of younger teachers. As with global trends, the school included

in this investigation is hiring an increased number of millennial teachers (Brack & Kelly,

2012). The average annual number of millennial teachers hired is approximately 10% (13

of a total of 140 teachers) of the overall foreign-hired staff, and in 10 years, millennial

teachers will form the majority of the school's foreign-hired faculty. Educational leaders at

the school have recognized this progressive transition along with the change in

characteristics of the new workforce. Leaders at the school are attuned to the change and

are preparing for the challenge of leading millennial teachers.

Leadership is currently being guided by instinct and experience, not through a plan

based on research. Educational leaders at the school must embrace a research-based

understanding of millennial teachers and their sense-making and perceptions of

administration to implement effective leadership styles. This study is being implemented to

contribute to existing research on millennials and improve teacher performance through the

discovery of effective leadership styles embraced by millennial teachers.

Definitions of Key Terminology

This section will explain the key terms that are included in this study. This

information will provide context to the terminology in relation to the research on

millennials and their perceptions about leadership.

Millennials: Millennials are individuals who were born between 1980 and 2000

(Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials are the newest generation to enter the workforce

(Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010). Millennials are noted for demonstrating a different set of

values and beliefs compared with previous generations (Chou, 2012).

Generation X: Generation X includes individuals who were born between 1965 and 1980 (Kaifi et al., 2012). This generation currently represents the largest population in the workplace (Kowske et al., 2010). Members of generation X, or Gen Xers, are noted for being self-reliant, independent, and direct, and they have some characteristics that contrast with the characteristics of millennials (Kowske et al., 2010; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Leadership styles: Leadership styles are strategies and approaches used by leaders when interacting with subordinates. Leadership styles include approaches such as relational leadership, distributed leadership, situational leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership. There are prevailing variables that affect the rating and effectiveness of a leadership style (Carifio, 2010).

Leadership style preferences: Leadership style preferences are the preferred leadership style of a subordinate. Leadership preferences will vary based on the characteristics and expectations of the follower (Moss & Ngu, 2006).

Teacher performance: Teacher performance is the overall productivity and impact of a teacher's ability to influence student learning. Teacher quality research supports the idea the most important factor of a high-performance teacher is the ability to improve student achievement (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010).

Foreign-hired teachers: For this study, foreign-hired teachers will refer to teachers who are not native to Colombia, South America. Foreign-hire teachers will be U.S. or Canadian citizens currently teaching in Colombia, South America.

Theoretical Framework

After a review of the literature related to leadership, the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) on relational leadership and the development of leader-member exchange

(LMX) theory of multiple domains, along with relational leadership theory, emerged as the most suitable theoretical frameworks for this investigation. Based on relational leadership theory research and identified characteristics of millennial workers, this investigation is intended to identify how millennial teachers make sense, through personal, shared experiences, of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. A qualitative interpretative phenomenological approach will be implemented by the researcher, which will complement the investigation of relational leadership theory due to the sense-making form of this research. By using the theory of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) as a theoretical framework, an accurate interpretation and analyses on millennial teachers' leadership style preferences can be made with the acquisition of data during the research process. The evidence gathered from the research can be compared to the characteristics of relational leadership to develop connections and correlations on the perceptions of millennial teachers.

Relational Leadership

Relational leadership is a form of leadership that is based on an emphasis on individuals in a group rather than the group as a whole (Boatwright, Lopez, Sauer, VanDerWege, & Huber, 2010; Schyns, 2006). This style of leadership is founded on a relationship between leaders and subordinates that are constantly changing and affected by a variety of external factors (Wood & Dibben, 2015). Leaders who implement this model use tact and interpersonal skills to develop and cultivate strong bonds with subordinates (Boatwright et al., 2010; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Wood & Dibben, 2015). Relational leadership differs from traditional leadership styles because it invites open dialogue and collaboration, whereas traditional leadership establishes a line of authority in the workplace with boundaries and limitations to the leader-subordinate relationship (Cunliffe & Eriksen,

2011; Harris, 2004; Raelin, 2011). Leaders who adhere to relational leadership must use their influence to gain knowledge about a situation and then continue to use this influence to help subordinates modify their attitudes and work toward organizational goals (Yukl, 2013). Relational leadership requires a leader to be informed and aware of individual conditions and attitudes and to cultivate collaboration and relationships (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004; Madlock, 2008). Uhl-Bien (2006) suggested relational leadership "is not formally designed . . . and depends upon task structure and individual characteristics of organizational members" (p. 234). Effective leaders recognize individuals respond positively when they feel a connection with a supervisor (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These individual characteristics are the foundation of relational leadership and are at the core of this research.

Background and Context of Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) investigated relationship-based leadership approaches using LMX, which has a significant connection to leadership preferences. The origins of LMX date back to the work of Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975) and their research on vertical dyad linkage (VDL). Dansereau et al. (1975) used VDL to emphasize the relationship of the leader and the amount of support given to subordinates and how this determined the subordinates' position in the workplace. Dansereau et al. (1975) analyzed the correlation between an exchange of support between leaders and followers; findings indicated strong relationships produced positive outcomes.

The fundamental discovery in VDL research was that two distinct groups were developed through the relationship-building process between leader and subordinate: the in-group and the out-group (Dansereau et al., 1975). The in-group reaped the benefits of the leader and received much support to meet institutional goals. The out-group did not receive

the necessary attention and support of the leader. While the researchers emphasized the relationships between leader and group, there was no indication or reference to a differentiation in the quality of relationships between leaders and individual followers (Naidoo, Scherbaum, Goldstein, & Graen, 2011). This lack of information on the quality of relationships led to further research on relational leadership.

The research of Dansereau et al. (1975) evolved into the LMX theory through further investigations that shared a focus on the individual relationship between leaders and followers. The work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) emerged as a prominent study, furthering the development of LMX theory on relationships and leadership. They formalized LMX theory (see Figure 1) and created a comprehensive, balanced view of leadership. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explored the origins of LMX theory and outlined the most recent trends in the research to create a model for future leadership investigations. Specifically, their work focused on the relationship between a leader and a follower and not on the relationship between the leader and an entire group of individuals (Schyns, 2006). The research moved beyond the leader and focused on the combination of the three leadership domains: (a) leader, (b) follower, and (c) the relationship between them. By looking at the domains, researchers can validate leadership contributions in a more accurate way and provide a more comprehensive analysis of relational leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) intended to promote further studies on the relationship of the three domains, and they suggested their work as a starting point for multiple-domain research. Additionally, the research traces the development of the LMX theory through four stages that include (a) the discovery of differentiated dyads in leadership, (b) the focus

on relationships and results, (c) partnership building approaches, and (d) groups and

networks (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

In the field of leadership, the research of Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) helped to

categorize relational leadership in a new way by considering the individual domains of the

leader, the follower, and the relationship that exists between them. They moved beyond
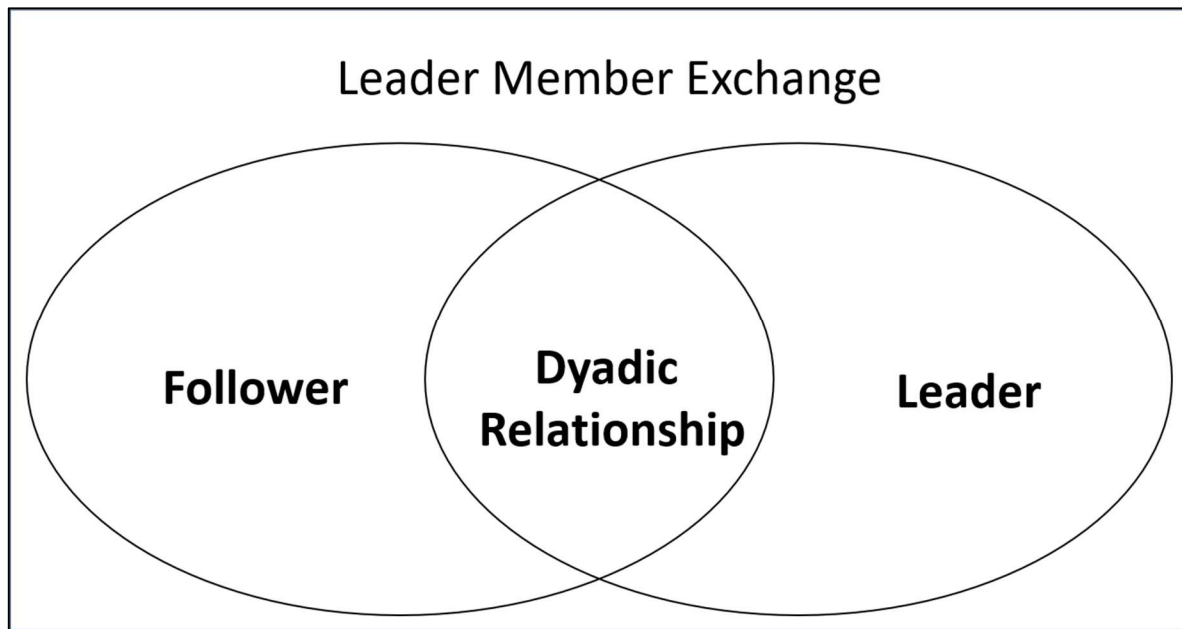
Figure 1. A model of the leader-member exchange and the resulting dyadic relationship.
Adapted from *LMX Theory* Illustration by G.B., Graen and M. Uhl-Bien, 1995.
Source: https://image.slidesharecdn.com/lmxandtransformationaltheories-101122183805-
phpapp01/95/lmx-and-transformational-theories-5-638.jpg?cb=1422554491

studying the domains in isolation and provided a taxonomy for analyzing the influence of

each domain on one another. Research on one domain may be useful but it is not

comprehensive and will not increase validity in interpretation or usefulness in research

(Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Additionally, this work provided a resource and guideline of

research related to LMX and paved the way for further studies in LMX.

Relational Leadership in Practice

Leaders that practice relational leadership make connections with individuals and help them feel confident and empowered in their work (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). Individuals who have a strong attachment for support have a strong preference for relational leadership behaviors and leadership styles that are personalized (Boatwright et al., 2010). An effective leader who uses relational leadership must identify how to help everyone achieve their goals (Naidoo et al., 2011), and evidence supports that high-quality, supportive relationships among leaders and followers result in an effective leadership process (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Neumerski, 2013; Van Uden, Ritzen, & Pieters, 2014). Through strong relationships, leaders gain knowledge of individual needs, along with the overall climate and feelings of the group (Neumerski, 2013). Leaders who adhere to relational leadership use their influence to gain knowledge about a situation and then continue to use this influence to help subordinates modify their attitudes and work towards organizational goals (Yukl, 2013).

Relational leadership requires a leader to be informed and aware of individual conditions and attitudes and this this style of leadership is tailored to the characteristics of the subordinate (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006). These individual differences are the foundation of relational leadership and result in leadership differentiation. Leadership differentiation is a contrasting notion from prevailing views of leadership that suggest leaders should treat all subordinates in the same way (Brower et al., 2000). Relational leadership is grounded on the concept that differentiated leadership among subordinates can improve performance and satisfaction in the workplace (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Naidoo et al., 2011; van Breukelen, Konst, & van der Vlist, 2002).

Relational Leadership in Education

While there is an abundance of situational and personal variables to examine in relational leadership, the fundamental element of relational leadership is the building of strong personal bonds between the leader and follower (Naidoo et al., 2011). Positive relationships yield motivated, satisfied subordinates (Naidoo et al., 2011; Stringer, 2006). Educational leaders who practice relational leadership invest much time and effort with each teacher to guide them to meet established goals and to build quality relationships (Madlock, 2008). Once this relationship is established, educational leaders have the opportunity to be effective in their roles working with teachers.

It is evident that "command and control leadership styles" (Stringer, 2006, p. 126) are an antiquated approach for a diverse and technological-based society. Leadership based on control and a fear of authority is not an effective strategy and leaders should avoid a temptation to be directive (Stringer, 2006). Being an effective educational leader requires tools and traits that include being a positive role model and serving the teachers, not serving edicts (Burke, 2013). The hierarchical leadership method originated in the military, and it was designed to confront conflict (Stringer, 2006). It is evident that this form of leadership is not conducive to an educational organization because the work environment is not typically conflictive.

In an educational organization, a strong leader should avoid authoritarian approaches (Harris, 2004; Stringer, 2006). Therefore, educational organizations must respond appropriately and embrace leadership styles that are inclusive and encourage collaboration (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010). When decisions are forced upon individuals, there is typically resistance and a lack of support towards new initiatives

(Levačić, 2009). Educational leaders should be attuned to this possibility and uncover strategies to ensure the development of positive relationships in the workplace.

An example of relational leadership in an educational setting was explained by a school administrator, John Davis (pseudonym), during a recent interview with the researcher. Mr. Davis referred to a situation from 2014. He was a high school principal in an international school at the time, and he worked with over 50 teachers, both foreign-hired and local. During his five years in this role, Mr. Davis developed a deep understanding of the emotional needs of each individual and particularly noted differences in cultures. He explained the local teachers were "always hesitant to react to change and needed much evidence to advance. By contrast, foreign-hired teachers were eager for change and often were frustrated by the lack of urgency to change from the locals" (J. Davis, personal communication, February 13, 2015). As the leader of the high school, Mr. Davis used varying strategies to satisfy the needs of both groups. With the local teachers, Mr. Davis explained he met with them on an individual basis, with more frequency, to explain specific details when making decisions. The process of direct communication with the local teachers reduced debate and discussion during faculty meetings and helped alleviate frustration with the foreign-hired staff members. Mr. Davis' approach is an example of relational leadership with a differentiated approach, and it proved to be highly effective. Mr. Davis was able to use this strategy throughout his time at this school to effectively lead teachers of different cultures and customs.

Educational leaders who are attentive to individual needs and values are more likely to offer the appropriate support to teachers (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Effective leaders analyze and adapt to subordinates to ensure effective guidance. Through valuable interactions with followers, leaders have opportunities to gain

valuable awareness about follower's beliefs about leadership (Drago-Severson, 2009; Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010). Additionally, these interactions are critical in understanding teacher perspectives and implementing innovative practices. By listening to teachers, school leaders are exposed to new ideas that can challenge assumptions and promote improvement (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Critics of Relational Leadership Theory

Some critics oppose the idea of relational leadership and the LMX approach because of its contrast with traditional leadership styles that have been considered effective in different eras or different work environments (Stringer, 2006). Relational leadership differs from traditional leadership styles because it invites open dialogue and collaboration, whereas traditional leadership establishes a line of authority in the workplace with boundaries and limitations to the leader-subordinate relationship (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004; Raelin, 2011). Traditional leadership styles include a model where an individual manages others through a hierarchal structure. Implementing nontraditional strategies, such as relational leadership, could make leaders vulnerable due to a perceived loss of control or being perceived as demonstrating favoritism with some subordinates (Harris, 2004).

Another argument against the LMX approach includes the idea that situational factors for leader-follower relationships are ignored in the research of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995; Ronald, 2014). This includes factors such as limitations on building relationships due to time, proximity, and communication (Ronald, 2014). Although Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) complemented the VDL work with the expansion of the LMX theory, relationship development is difficult to control and predict (Raelin, 2011).

Rationale for Relational Leadership

By using the theory of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) as a theoretical framework, an accurate interpretation and analyses of leadership style preferences of millennial teachers can be made with the acquisition of data during the research process. The theoretical framework of relational leadership can be used in a variety of studies, but the most relevant work has been associated with educational, business, and medical leadership (Stringer, 2006; Uhl-Bien, 2006). The areas of education, business, and medicine would have the most relevance due to the nature of the work and focus on human interaction. Educational, business, and medical organizations are established on interpersonal interactions and leadership has a major influence on these relationships.

The work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) has helped promote more investigations on LMX, particularly on leader-follower relationships that affect the overall performance of a team or group. While the original work of the VDL focused on establishing leadership relationships with a group, LMX allows for a more concise interpretation of individual leader-follower relationships (Schyns, 2006). The evolution of relational leadership research was heavily impacted by the framework established by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Because the theory is widely accepted and supported, researchers used the original work as a foundation for their investigations on correlations to other phenomena. Specifically, the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) has been used to delve deep into the relationships of multiple domains and results of LMX, along with applying these results to group dynamics and outcomes.

Application of the Relational Leadership Theory

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) developed a taxonomy for domains in relational leadership and established stages of research and development with LMX. Their work can

be considered as a categorization of relational leadership and a roadmap for future investigation. The research of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) has been used in further investigations in the areas of multiple-domain approaches and the development of four stages in LMX. There are several variations in the research and application of this theoretical framework on relational leadership. Some research remains focused on Stage 1, domain taxonomy, and Stage 2, relationships and outcomes, while the most recent research has focused on Stages 3 and 4, partnerships and expansion of dyadic partnership to group and network levels. This evolution in research was the desired intention of the seminal work (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The current applications of the research of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) have been directed towards the most lacking developments in LMX in Stages 3 and 4. As a result, recent research has been devoted to individual relationships and the effects on team and organizational performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Additionally, recent studies have used the model of LMX as a comparative tool for other outcomes (Chao-Chien, 2010; Gittell, 2012; Harris & Kacmar, 2006; Sears & Holmvall, 2010; Wisse and Rietzschel, 2014). The continued use of the theory by researchers demonstrates the stability of LMX theory and that Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) had a major contribution in the development of relational leadership. For example, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) heavily influenced researchers such as Stringer (2006), Boatwright et al. (2010), Schyns (2006), and Wisse & Rietzschel (2014) on their work related to relational leadership. Therefore, their research will serve as the primary lens for identifying and developing an understanding of leadership style preferences of millennials teachers.

Conclusions

The research of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) will be embraced in this study with the intention of successfully analyzing relational leadership and connecting this theory with the shared experiences of millennial teachers working with administrators to identify and understand their leadership style preferences. Educational leaders who are compassionate and take the time and effort to build relationships are more likely to promote motivation and satisfaction in subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Neumerski, 2013; Paglis & Green, 2002). Developing positive relationships with their teachers should lead to higher job satisfaction and improved practices, resulting in enhanced student learning (Stringer, 2006; Suwandi, 2014). Implementing leadership approaches that include the elements of relational leadership allows educational leaders to work more effectively with teachers to improve overall conditions in an educational community.

The next chapter will incorporate the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) to investigate literature on millennials, their leadership style preferences in the workplace and connections to millennial teachers and education. The purpose of this analysis is to provide opportunity to understand millennial teachers' experiences working with educational administrators at U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America and to interpret those experiences using the ideas of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) and relational leadership theory.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review is organized into three distinct strands that include: (a) millennials and their characteristics, (b) the millennial workforce and their leadership preferences, and (c) contemporary models of education and millennial teachers. To address and analyze the strands of research, the following literature review will include a focus on three areas: (a) millennials, (b) leadership, and (c) education. First, there will be an analysis of research on the characteristics of millennials. Next, the millennial workforce and their leadership preferences will be identified and analyzed to see if there are connections between their preferences of leadership styles. Finally, an analysis of contemporary educational settings and this relation to millennial characteristics will be developed to evaluate the leadership exhibited towards millennial teachers. Each aspect has been investigated in relation to the idea of identifying the appropriate leadership preferences of millennial teachers in an educational setting. Following an analysis of the literature and conclusions of each aspect, the literature review will conclude with a summation.

The Millennial Generation

Based on current leadership research and identified characteristics of millennial workers, this investigation is intended to identify how millennial teachers make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. To achieve an accurate analysis for this investigation, it is highly important to gain an understanding of the millennial generation. To develop an accurate profile of these individuals, the ideas of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) will be reviewed and connected to the research.

A Profile of Millennials

The work of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) is the foundation of the work focused on the millennial generation. Strauss and Howe popularized generational theory and developed significant research on millennials in the 1990s. They discovered patterns in their research that identified four generational archetypes of behavior and characteristics. They categorized these groups as prophet, nomad, hero, and artist, and they asserted these archetypes have reoccurred in U.S. history (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Strauss & Howe's (1991) main claim was that millennials are a reoccurrence of the Government Issue or General Issue generation (G.I.s) and that both generations are in the hero category (Lifecourse Associates, n.d.). Members of the G.I. generation are individuals born between 1901 and 1924 (Keeling, 2003). Strauss and Howe (1991) predicted the millennial generation would restore the national health and education systems while restoring family values, similar to the achievements of G.I.s (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Additionally, millennials and G.I.s have been characterized as optimistic, collaborative, and trusting of authority (Kowske et al., 2010). More details about the generational archetypes developed by Strauss and Howe (1991) and the generational connections between the millennials and G.I.s can be found in Table 1.

In 2000, the work of Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation,* greatly impacted the understanding of millennials and their characteristics. Howe and Strauss (2003) continued their work and developed a profile of millennials. This profile detailed distinguishing traits that included being perceived as special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving. The profile developed by Howe and Strauss (2003) is consistent with the notion that millennials can be characterized as sociable, optimistic, collaborative, and open-minded (Raines, 2002). Howe and Strauss

(2003) proclaimed millennials have the opportunity to be the next great generation in U.S. history and emphasized their perception of this generation by claiming:

> As a group, millennials are unlike any other youth generation in living memory. They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse. More important, they are beginning to manifest a wide array of positive social habits that older Americans no longer associate with youth, including a new focus on teamwork, achievement, modesty, and good conduct. (p. 78)

Table 1

Generational Archetypes in History

	Archetype			
	Hero	*Artist*	*Prophet*	*Nomad*
Generations	Arthurian Elizabethan Glorious Republican G.I. Millennial	Humanist Parliamentary Enlightenment Compromise Progressive Silent Homelanders	Reformation Puritan Awakening Transcendental Missionary Boom	Reprisal Cavalier Liberty Gilded Lost Gen X
Reputation as a child	Good	Placid	Spirited	Bad
Coming of Age	Empowering	Unfulfilling	Sanctifying	Alienating
Primary Focus Coming of Age	Outer-world	Inter-dependency	Inner-world	Self-sufficiency
Young Adulthood	Building	improving	reflecting	competing

Note. Adapted from "Lifecourse Associates: Generational Archetypes", n.d. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from http://www.lifecourse.com/about/method/generationalarchetypes.html.

Millennials are different from previous generations; they will provide stability to the workforce and will help build strong institutions (Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003). Millennials have been raised with high expectations for achievement, which has resulted in high levels of confidence under pressure (Downing, 2006). Additionally, millennials have a high regard for others, and they offer an element of compassion and empathy that is not evident in some previous generations (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016; Howe & Strauss, 2000). These positive traits of millennials provide a very encouraging outlook for the future workforce. Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) provided a positive perspective on millennials, and their research led to the prediction that this generation will have a beneficial impact in the workplace and in society.

Alternative Perspectives on Characteristics of the Millennial Generation

The research of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) on millennials has been widely acknowledged and widely criticized (Hoover, 2009). There is a debate on the conclusions generated from their research on millennials and generational differences due to a lack of survey data collected from a wide range of socioeconomic groups (Reeves & Oh, 2008; Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Most of the data collected in the research of Howe and Strauss (2000) were from middle and upper socioeconomic groups, and therefore, the results do not represent a true depiction of millennials (Reeves & Oh, 2008).

In an article in the *New York Times*, Brooks (2000) made harsh criticisms of Howe and Strauss (2000), noting their work lacked evidence and made several invalid assumptions. Brooks (2000) asserted Howe and Strauss (2000) were unconvincing with their arguments that millennials are a generation retreating from individualism and contested this assertion was only used to validate their original predictions on generational

differences developed from the Strauss-Howe generation theory (1991). This disagreement is compounded by the notion that critics believe small sample sizes of information, such as the data collected by Howe and Strauss (2000), are being used to characterize millions of individuals who are part of the millennial generation (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Additionally, Howe and Strauss' (2000) claims have not been verified by psychological data on characteristics such as levels of self-esteem, narcissism, and anxiety (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Overall, experts are divided by the predictions and declarations of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003), with some individuals claiming their work is relevant and historic (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016; Kowske et al., 2010) and others asserting their work is vague and invalid (Hoover, 2009; Reeves & Oh, 2008; Wetzstein, 2001).

Hershatter and Epstein (2010) argued there is no conclusive evidence millennials are uniquely different from previous generations. They claimed there is no concrete proof millennials are more group-oriented or altruistic than previous generations, and they argued that the generational archetypes developed by Strauss and Howe (1991) are unsubstantiated. Hershatter & Epstein (2010) claimed that individuals are not defined by their generation, but by their environment. This perspective poses a major challenge for researchers who are investigating millennials and offers a counterargument to the research of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003).

Critics of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) have felt millennials are afforded too much credit and they are inaccurately regarded as heroes who will usher a new era of progress (Hoover, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Critics have argued millennials are clearly more individualistic when compared with Generation X, and their level of narcissism is remarkably high (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). There are some

critics who consider the millennial generation as problematic and difficult to understand (Hoover, 2009; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). It is evident that these individuals have a perspective that focuses on the negative characteristics of millennials. This view of millennials is clearly a different perspective than that of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003), and the criticism must be acknowledged and considered when conducting research on the millennial generation.

Conclusions on the Characteristics of the Millennial Generation

Millennials have earned a unique reputation for their behaviors and characteristics (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). This reputation can be perceived as both favorable and unfavorable for this generation, depending on the perspective (Huyler et al., 2015). Millennials will soon dominate the workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Downing, 2006). After an examination of the research of Strauss and Howe (1991) and Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003), along with the criticisms of their work, it is apparent there are alternative lenses to consider when investigating millennials. Millennials can be characterized as self-centered, over-indulged, and protected (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). On the other hand, millennials can be acknowledged for being cooperative, diverse, and highly intelligent (Brack & Kelly, 2012). When exploring the characteristics of millennials, it is important to understand opinions on this generation vary, and all interpretations should be considered when making an analysis. If there is an emphasis on negative characteristics rather than positive characteristics, an attempt to understand millennials will be hindered by negative perception bias (Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998).

Millennials in the Workforce

Millennials, individuals born between 1980 and 2000, will dominate the global

workforce in the near future (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Howe & Strauss, 2003). By 2022,

millennials will compose nearly half of the global workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012).

Millennials have been stereotyped as self-centered, unmotivated, and disloyal (Hershatter &

Epstein, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). However, they have

also been widely characterized for having many positive characteristics that are highly

beneficial in the workplace. This characterization includes the notion that millennials are

highly optimistic, open to collaboration, socially conscious, diverse, and open to new

learning (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The diverse characterization

of the millennial generation has resulted in new challenges for leadership and some

trepidations in working with this growing population (Downing, 2006; Huyler et al., 2015).

Characteristics of Millennial Workers

Millennials and their characteristics have been highly scrutinized because they will

soon dominate the workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010).

Organizations and leaders should determine the individual characteristics of their millennial

workers to help provide the appropriate direction and support (Murray, 2015). The

performance of millennials is highly dependent on leadership and will determine the

success of the individual and the organization (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010).

Howe and Strauss (2003) developed a unique profile of millennials with seven

distinguishing traits that describe millennials as: (a) special and unique from others, (b)

sheltered from frustrations, (c) confident in themselves, (d) team-oriented and willing to

collaborate, (e) high-achieving and driven for success, (f) pressured from their personal

aspirations, and (g) conventional with strong adherence to established norms (Howe &

Strauss, 2003). The character traits depicted by Howe and Strauss (2003) presented a neutral perspective of millennials without passing judgment on the generation. This broad and impartial depiction of millennials can help leaders understand general characteristics of the millennial workforce and enable appropriate strategies for leadership and management of this generation.

Leadership Preferences of Millennials

To examine the leadership preferences of millennials, a connection will be directly made to the seven distinguishing traits proposed by Howe and Strauss (2003). By acknowledging and analyzing these traits of millennials, appropriate leadership styles and leadership preferences can be identified. Although there is much research regarding the characteristics of millennials and their behaviors in the workplace, there has been little research on followership styles and leadership preferences of millennials (Chou, 2012). This review of literature will include additions to the limited research on leadership preferences.

Millennials are considered to be special by those who interact with them, and they are accustomed to getting positive feedback and attention (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Millennials expect an open relationship with their supervisors with the ability to voice their opinions and ideas (Murray, 2015). They are not intimidated by the role of the leader and want a relationship that is supportive and focused on their development (Chou, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Under these assumptions, leaders should work to match their styles to millennials' expectations. In many circumstances, meeting the expectations of millennials requires using a leadership style that makes the work more meaningful and personally fulfilling (Chou, 2012).

A survey conducted in 2006 on employer relationships with millennials showed high expectations for personal and professional support from leaders (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Millennials expect to have an open-door policy with their supervisors and the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings (Murray, 2015). This expectation included seeking personal support with leaders on issues not directly related to issues at the workplace (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). This evidence strongly supports the strategy of relational leadership and the benefits of developing strong bonds between the employer and employee.

Because millennials are characterized as being sheltered and highly protected, they have earned a reputation of having a low tolerance for frustration and a high need for support (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Millennials are accustomed to order and structure and therefore need and expect clear guidelines for their work and outcomes (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Without clarity, millennials often struggle to achieve success and become frustrated in their roles. Therefore, clear direction is an important detail for leaders to recognize and implement. Structure and organization are highly important for millennials to achieve success (Murray, 2015). Additionally, millennials need to have a strong, positive relationship with their leaders that allows for recognition and appreciation (Martin, 2005; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennials expect their leaders to act as coaches and provide the protection that they crave and have been accustomed to for most of their lives (Murray, 2015). Leaders who have the ability to turn this characteristic of high maintenance into high productivity will have the advantage in the workplace (Martin, 2005). The use of relational leadership strategies to develop and cultivate personal bonds is critical in leading millennials.

Millennials can be characterized as confident, goal-oriented, and driven for success (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Millennials do not like to be micromanaged by leaders (Martin, 2005); however, many millennials have difficulty with managing their responsibilities. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) explained the evolution of the digital age is a contributing factor to how millennials process information in different ways when compared to previous generations. While millennials are confident in many areas such as multitasking and filtering information, they need constant feedback and reassurance on their performance (Murray, 2015). Leaders need to recognize the challenges and differences in working with millennials to help improve their skills and offer the appropriate support.

Millennials, who are often characterized as being conventional for adhering to accepted ways, conform to the expectations of authority, and strongly support social rules and norms (Howe & Strauss, 2003). These characteristics indicate a strong adherence to social and professional expectations. Millennials have high expectations for their success and therefore have high expectations from their leaders (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennials expect leaders to set the example for commitment in the workplace and meet expectation levels of support from millennials to work effectively with this generation (Chou, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Leaders need to be active in their roles and recognize the passion that millennials' have for their work (Kowske et al., 2010). Additionally, millennials seek leaders who work with confidence, establish clear rules, and provide guidelines for personal and professional behavior (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Stronge, 2007). Leaders who implement these strategies will meet the conventional needs of the millennial workforce.

The idea that an employee prefers empowerment and appreciation is not novel or particular to one generation (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Appreciation is a

human need with which every generation can identify. However, millennials have been branded as a generation that craves appreciation and attention (Howe & Strauss, 2003). The desire for appreciation and attention may be a result of millennials having the individual capacities to voice their expectations and not remain passive to leadership (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennials are respectful with authority and confident enough to openly voice their opinions and concerns (Howe & Strauss, 2003). The open communication exhibited by millennials allows leaders to actively listen to the concerns of employees and build the necessary relationships to remain effective with the changing characteristics of the workforce (Murray, 2015).

Millennials have a unique perspective about society and social commitment, which has resulted in a strong spirit of collaboration (Raines, 2002). The altruism exhibited by millennials has manifested in an influx of positive social behaviors, including the idea that millennials embrace modesty and teamwork (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Millennials are very capable working alone, but they have enhanced success when working with others (Martin, 2005). Leaders need to find the best strategy and figure out what tasks millennials are better at working alone or in a group setting.

In relation to collaboration, the research has indicated millennials are commonly characterized for their altruistic mentality and willingness to support social causes (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Leaders should be attentive to the values of millennials (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). Millennials are less likely to continue working for a company they feel is not socially conscious (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). Leaders in all fields of employment should analyze their practices to ensure they are aligned to the socially conscious values of the millennial generation to ensure attractivity for this generation

(Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). An important practice of leaders includes cultivating an environment that is active in social awareness and campaigns.

Work that is connected to a career path is extremely important to the millennial generation due to their aspirations for high achievement (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Keeling, 2003). Work is a key part of life for millennials, and it is an integral part of their existence. Because of this importance, the work millennials choose is usually personally rewarding (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Leadership strategies that contribute to the personal needs of these individuals need to be implemented by supervisors (Stephens & Carmeli, 2017). However, effective leadership takes practice. Individuals who seek to lead millennials need to gain an understanding of the millennial generation through personal experience (Longo & McMillan, 2015). Leaders can develop an understanding by building relationships to understand and know the personal beliefs and values of millennial employees and embracing their perspectives. (Madlock, 2008¸ Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Among the many characteristics needed to build quality relationships, relationship-building requires leaders to have patience, compassion, and the ability to open up genuinely and embrace the perspectives of others (Takacs, 2002).

Kowske et al. (2010) found there were not as many characteristic differences between millennials and previous generations, as commonly perceived. Millennials have been stereotyped as self-centered and interdependent similar to previous generations, including Generation X (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Lifecourse Associates, n.d., Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Millennials have also been characterized as pensive and reflective, which connects with characterizations of the Boom generation (Lifecourse Associates, n.d.). However, Kowske et al. (2010) discovered a difference in career advancement and development between millennials and previous generations, noting

that millennials have a desire for self-improvement and leaders need to be aware of this passion for personal development. Leaders should strategically provide opportunities for professional learning and personal growth (Kowske et al., 2010).

Effective Strategies for Leading Millennials

Millennials are characterized as being pressured and craving structure and organization due to their upbringing and societal changes (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Kaifi et al., 2012). Due to the immediacy in our society, millennials are accustomed to constant and consistent feedback and progress (Martin, 2005). They live in the moment and have daily expectations, rather than long-term outlooks (Martin, 2005). Along with having the confidence to delegate tasks to millennials (Kaifi et. al, 2012), leaders can help work more effectively if they implement the following strategies:

- Design training programs that will enable young employees to quickly prepare and handle every new task.

- Practice and master coaching skills that will help these employees to remain focused and motivated.

- Develop an incentive program that rewards employees for their performance on a frequent basis.

- Challenge an outdated policy that obstructs young employees from making positive strides in the organization (Martin, 2005).

Organizations and leaders should recognize that millennials need to be constantly informed and must ensure that there is clear direction and order in the workplace (Murray, 2015). Meister and Willyerd (2010) explained that millennials want a clear path to success in their career, and they want feedback and direction from leadership to help make

appropriate decisions and reduce the pressure caused by ambiguity (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Martin, 2005; Murray, 2015). Leaders who have this awareness are more effective while working with millennials by providing a clear direction.

Based on the characteristics defined by Howe and Strauss (2003), leaders should take practical, measured steps to make connections with the millennial workforce and connect with their preferred styles. Murray (2015) summarized the strategies that leaders should use to maximize the millennial workforce with the following indications:

- Use and embrace the technological skills of millennials. The skills offered by this generation will enhance performance and productivity.

- Provide clear structure with plans, schedules, tasks, and outcomes.

- Provide mentoring and a platform for open communication and feedback. Use communication channels to offer encouragement.

- Encourage teamwork and collaboration.

- Provide support and listen to the individual concerns of the millennial workers.

- Support the digital curiosity and needs of millennials.

Leadership styles used with millennials should not be determined by the preference of the leader; instead, leadership styles should be determined by the perspectives and processes of the millennial (Chou, 2012). Due to their unique characteristics, millennials need to be understood, appreciated, and treated well. Leaders can promote an understanding and appreciation through the building relationships and providing trust and confidence (Brower et al., 2000; Longo & McMillan, 2015; Louis, Mayrowetz, Smiley, & Murphy, 2009). Differentiated treatment is a highly effective strategy, but leaders need to be aware of problems that can occur when using this approach. Specifically, leaders must

avoid personal preferences and favoritism (van Breukelen et al., 2002). Employees'

perceptions of leadership differential treatment affect their motivation and commitment to

the work community and perceived differential treatment in the work group can have a

neutralizing impact on the positive effects of leader-subordinate relationships (van

Breukelen et al., 2002). Therefore, the relationship between leaders and subordinates can

be negatively affected if there is a perceived bias of preferential treatment (Long, 2017).

Leaders must consider this detail while maintaining and managing individual relationships.

It is critical that leaders avoid being perceived as having preferential treatment when

individualizing treatment with subordinates (Long, 2017).

Conclusions on the Millennial Workforce

By understanding the preferred leadership of millennial teachers, educational

leaders can maximize job performance. An analysis of the personal and professional

characteristics of the millennial workforce and listening to their opinions on preferred

leadership styles can help educational leaders focus their strategies to meet the expectation

of this growing population. Time and research must be invested to develop an accurate

profile of millennial leadership preferences to enhance performance in the workplace. The

development of a profile includes an analysis of the traits proposed by Howe and Strauss

(2000, 2003) to adequately match leadership styles with the preferences evoked by the

characteristics.

The most effective styles of leadership in working with millennials include elements

of distributed and relational leadership. Millennials crave responsibility and need to feel

that they are part of a team and completing meaningful work (Chou, 2012; Howe &

Strauss, 2003). Millennials also want to feel appreciated along with an open and supportive

relationship with their leaders (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Murray, 2015). Leaders should

differentiate elements of distributed and relational leadership strategies to match the needs of millennials, and improve performance (Naidoo et al., 2011; van Breukelen et al., 2002).

Contemporary Models of Education and Millennial Teachers

It has been suggested that students of today are being prepared for jobs that currently do not exist (Krueger, 2017). Education is trending towards a skills-based approach, and this change has resulted in a major shift in educational philosophy in schools from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach (Hains & Smith, 2012; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). This change has included an emphasis on 21st-century skills that will provide a broad education of abilities that can be universally applied in any professional setting (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2017; Rodriguez & Hallman, 2013). With the increase of millennial teachers in the workforce, these individuals will be largely responsible for cultivating this change in education. This section will include a description of the skills that are currently being emphasized in educational settings and provide and examination of the characteristics of millennial teachers to draw connections on the likelihood of effectiveness in the classroom.

Twenty-First Century Skills

The traditional model of education is typically represented as a group setting where students are taught in rote fashion (Jones, Jo, & Martin, 2007; Walser, 2008). The traditional style of group teaching was a result of economic demands of the 18th and 19th centuries when education was not accessible to much of the population (Jones et al., 2007; Kaplan & Flum, 2012). While a traditional style of education was a practical strategy, the world has evolved and new approaches in education are required.

A more personalized form of education has been embraced and pedagogy focused on 21st-century skills has been gaining momentum in schools during the past decade (Jones

et al., 2007; Pearlman, 2010; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). The ambiguity of the future job market has led to a transition of education with a focus on skills and away from memorization and content (Kaplan & Flum, 2012; Walser, 2008). The vast quantity of information available, along with the increased accessibility of information, has resulted in an educational shift that has resulted in the embracement of the whole student and not the delivery of knowledge (Kaplan & Flum, 2012). This information includes an emphasis on developing values, social responsibility, and global perspectives in students through the development of 21st-century skills such as collaboration and communication (Fullan et al., 2017; Kaplan & Flum, 2012). For this review of literature, the 21st-century skills that will be addressed include collaboration and communication and their connection to technology in education.

Collaboration. Collaboration is defined as an interaction between two or more individuals working towards a common goal or purpose (Williams & Sheridan, 2006). Collaboration is a 21st-century skill that is fundamental in the educational process due to the importance of children's' ability to socially interact and learn from peers (Fullan et al., 2017; Williams & Sheridan, 2006).

Although the concept of collaboration is not novel to classroom settings, this strategy has recently been emphasized due to the educational and professional benefits (Pearlman, 2010). McCoog (2008) explained the new generation of learners have innate 21st-century skills, such as collaboration because of their experiences in social networking, and have incorporated these skills in educational settings, which has allowed teachers to make learning connections. These individuals will need skills such as collaboration to thrive and succeed with increasing globalization in the workforce and a demand for professional networking (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010; Walser, 2008). Developing an

educational environment that includes collaborative opportunities requires much work and time, but the results make it worthwhile (Salpeter, 2003). Using collaboration in the classroom is a shift in strategy that allows students to learn by working hands-on with problems and materials, rather than listening to a teacher dictate information (Salpeter, 2003). By doing most of the work and interacting with others, there is an enhanced level of engagement and learning (Pearlman, 2010).

Implementing structures that encourage and facilitate collaboration in the classroom may require time and planning, but it does not require a major overhaul of pedagogical practices (Walser, 2008). Emphasizing collaboration in the classroom requires educators to make simple changes in the way they approach classwork to include resources and design settings that are conducive to promoting collaboration (Walser, 2008). Developing the 21st-century skill of collaboration is more achievable in a student-centered model of classroom instruction, which is a major shift from teacher-centered structures that have typically been implemented (Hains & Smith, 2012; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010).

In many ways, teacher-centered instruction is similar to traditional styles of leadership mentioned earlier in this review of literature. Traditional leadership establishes a line of authority with boundaries and limitations to the leader-subordinate relationship (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004). Traditional teacher-centered instruction also includes a hierarchical structure in the classroom where the clear authority is the instructor (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010).

Student-centered instruction has many correlations to relational and distributed leadership practices due to the cultivation of relationships and delegation of responsibilities (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004). In a student-centered classroom, the teacher serves as a facilitator of collaboration and provides support and direction without imposing

authority (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010; Walser, 2008). Leaders who exhibit relational leadership use these same strategies (Louis et al., 2009; Madlock, 2008). As educational settings continue to move toward this student-centered model, there will be more opportunities for collaboration (Fullan et al., 2017).

Communication. A central component of 21st-century skills in education is the aspect of communication (Fullan et al., 2017). Schools around the globe are shifting their educational philosophies to include more student-directed classrooms that are driven by academic conversations and strong communication (Frey & Fisher, 2011). Academic conversations are moments of meaningful dialogue that include the elaboration of opinions, supporting ideas of others and using new information to challenge one's own thinking to apply this knowledge to make connections with others (Skills, 2009). The features of academic conversations can be found in Figure 2.
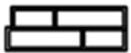
Features of Conversations (with symbols and hand motions)	Prompts for Using the Feature	Prompts for Responding
Come up with a worthy topic	Why do you think the author wrote this? What are some themes that emerged in . . .?	I think the author wrote it to teach us about . . . One theme might be . . .
Elaborate and clarify (pull hands apart)	Can you elaborate? What do you mean by . . . ? Can you tell me more about . . . ? What makes you think that?	I think it means that . . . In other words . . .
Support ideas with examples (index finger on pinky of other hand, palm up)	Can you give an example? Can you show me where it says that? Can you be more specific? Are there any cases of that?	For example . . . In the text it said that . . . One case showed that . . .
Build on or challenge another's idea (layer hands on each other and build up)	What do you think? Can you add to this idea? Do you agree? What might be other points of view?	I would add that . . . Then again, I think that . . . I want to expand on your point about . . .
Apply/Connect (hook both hands together)	So how can we apply this idea to our lives? What can we learn from this character/part/story? If you were . . .	In my life . . . I think it can teach us . . . If I were . . . , I would have . . .
Paraphrase and summarize (cup both hands into a ball)	What have we discussed so far? How should we summarize what we talked about?	We can say that . . . The main theme/point of the text seems to be . . .

Figure 2. A chart of the features of Academic Conversation and prompts to promote meaningful dialogue. Adapted from How to start academic conversations, by S.C. Skills, 2009, *Educational Leadership*, *66*(7), 70-73. Reprinted with permission.

Individuals learn through communication and imitating others, which provides opportunities for critical thinking and understanding a variety of perspectives (Williams & Sheridan, 2006). Another aspect of communication is the concept of student voice (Pearlman, 2010). Students who have confidence to express themselves and interact will have deeper learning experiences (Fullan et al., 2017). Deeper learning experiences include opportunities for students to interact with information and make choices on their learning paths (Pearlman, 2010).

Frey and Fisher (2011) introduced three steps educators can use to structure classroom dialogue and maximize verbal exchanges, including establishing a purpose for their conversation, using language frames to guide discussion, and providing opportunities for productive group work and exchanges. If structures and appropriate language are in place, students will be able to communicate effectively to share perspectives and think critically through intellectual conversations (Frey & Fisher, 2011; Walser, 2008). Suitable strategies include the practice of Socratic seminars that are currently being popularized with many young educators (Walser, 2008). The intentional building of communication skills is essential in the 21st-century skills model of education.

Technology. Much of the pedagogy included in 21st-century classrooms is supported by the boom in technology, creating opportunities for individuals to learn in both virtual and physical settings (Jones et al., 2007). While manipulating technology is considered a skill, this ability is also an enabler for other skills and for understanding complex information that can be used to collaborate and communicate with others (Salpeter, 2003). Technology is an accelerator of 21st-century skills and it can be used to enhance communication and collaboration in the classroom and beyond (Fullan et al., 2017).

There should be little surprise that technology is a catalyst to the 21st-century skills movement because most students have computers and technology constantly at their fingertips (Pearlman, 2010). The implementation of technology allows for more personalized attention, efficiency in educational processes, and timely communication (Jones et al., 2007). Most importantly, technology in education can help ensure student engagement and promote skills that will be useful for their future (Pearlman, 2010; Salpeter, 2003). Additionally, in a 21st-century student-centered learning environment, students have direct access to technology to research material, collaborate with others, and construct new knowledge (Fullan et al., 2017; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). Technological skills will be in demand in the future job markets and cultivating these abilities is an essential part of 21st-century education (Pearlman, 2010; Walser, 2008).

The Millennial Teacher

Millennial teachers are the first educators who were 21st-century students, and therefore, they offer new perspectives in schools (Jones et al., 2007). Along with skills in technology and the ability to collaborate effectively with others, millennial teachers bring a spirit of enthusiasm into the classroom (Abrams, 2018). Millennial teachers also embrace open communication with continuous feedback and clarity with expectations and outcomes (Abrams, 2018; Martin, 2005). These characteristics have a direct connection with 21st-century skills and should help promote learning environments that successfully address the skills that are currently desired in organizations and predictably desired in the future workplace (Fullan et al., 2017).

Collaboration. Millennials enjoy being part of a group (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennial teachers desire deep collaboration and their connection to their instructional team is vital for their motivation and success (Abrams, 2018; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lewis

& Sebert, 2011). Collaboration among teachers is an essential part of the 21st-century skills movement, and this work is considered to be one of the greatest strengths of 21st-century learning due to the exchange of ideas and perspectives (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). Millennial teachers have the ability to foster learning environments that promote collaboration due to their personal characteristics and abilities to communicate effectively. Collaboration directly connects with 21st-century education and should provide millennial teachers with a model for their classroom structure and routines.

The student-centered approach in 21st-century education specifically targets the practice of collaboration (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). While most teachers understand the benefit of this strategy, many educators are apprehensive to fully develop student-centered environments because there is a sense of chaos and lack of control without structures (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). A high-quality learning environment that inspires collaboration and learning through interactions can only be facilitated by highly competent teachers who have confidence in their work (Williams & Sheridan, 2006). Millennial teachers should have the ability to work and thrive under these conditions due to their confidence, adaptability, and ability to multitask effectively (Murray, 2015).

Communication. Millennial teachers desire clear communication and specific details about norms and expectations (Abrams, 2018; Martin, 2005). Clear direction often includes the use of models and rubrics to specifically define expected outcomes (Abrams, 2018; Walser, 2008). There is a correlation to the current model of education because this model includes the provision of clear expectations and anticipated 21st-century outcomes for students (Pearlman, 2010). Millennial teachers' desire for clarity should facilitate a strong practice of clear feedback in the classroom based on their own preferences and ideals. Additionally, millennial teachers can benefit from the strategy of encouraging

student voice because they can learn by observing how students choose to learn (Pearlman, 2010).

Millennial teachers desire frequent and detailed feedback to maintain professional engagement (Abrams, 2018; Lewis & Sebert, 2011). Their desire for feedback includes prompt responses during moments of difficulty (Abrams, 2018; Martin, 2005). The emphasis on immediate responses is particularly important when dealing with millennial teachers who were hired to teach at an international school.

Most teachers are hired months before starting their work. During the gap of time between hiring and arriving at school, it is critical that millennial teachers feel connected immediately, even if it is months before the start of school (Abrams, 2018). Additionally, millennial teachers are often characterized as having the capacity to voice their concerns and they are not passive individuals (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Millennial teachers are respectful with authority and confident to directly approach supervisors to present opinions or concerns (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). The characterization that millennial teachers are open connects to the current shift in pedagogical practices and promotes communication in millennial teachers to provide consistent and thorough feedback to their students. Additionally, it connects to the idea of promoting student voice in 21st-century education (Pearlman, 2010).

Technology. Millennial teachers are unique in many ways and one major advantage from previous generations of teachers is their connection to modern technology (Huyler et al., 2015). Millennial teachers, similar to their students, cannot live without technology (Lewis & Sebert, 2011). These teachers are the first educators who have grown up surrounded by technology, including the Internet, cell phones, and video games (Rodriguez & Hallman, 2013). Millennial teachers have a strong connection with

technology, and they are savvy and innovative when provided with opportunities to integrate technology with instruction (Abrams, 2018). Therefore, this generation of educators embolize 21st-century skills due to their backgrounds and experiences in the emerging world of technology. With this experience, millennial teachers seem to be ideal for educating our next generations to be equally adaptable and able to fill a variety of roles in the future workplace.

Conclusions on Contemporary Models of Education and Millennial Teachers

There has been a major shift in education toward the emphasis on developing 21st-century skills in the classroom (Jones et al., 2007; Pearlman, 2010; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). Teachers of all generations are being asked to make changes and embrace a new generation of students, including millennial teachers (Abrams, 2018). Much of the current research is directed at connecting with millennial students (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Therefore, millennial teachers should have first-hand knowledge of the expectations of millennial students due to the fact that the current research on education is based upon their own needs. Millennial teachers are being challenged with implementing strategies that promote 21st-century skills and it should be a natural transition due to the relevancy (Abrams, 2018). If millennial teachers can model the expectations of current pedagogical practices, they should be able to promote 21st-century skills and improve any educational setting (Wilson & Gerber, 2008).

Millennial teachers can be successful in developing 21st-century skills if they are attuned to their students' perspectives. Pearlman (2010) uncovered the sentiments of students when engaged in 21st-century learning activities. Comments from students indicated that they want to interact and communicate with others, but they also want opportunities to break away and think to themselves to process information. They also

noted having the digital resources to complement their learning styles is critical (Pearlman, 2010). Students are embracing changes in pedagogy, but teachers have a responsibility to create and maintain a structured learning environment. Millennial teachers can use this awareness to ensure structures that promote collaboration and communication, along with implementing technology.

Summary of Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter was to explore millennial teacher leadership preferences by examining characteristics of millennials, exploring the millennial workforce and their leadership preferences, and investigating a contemporary model of education and the role of millennial teachers in this model. First, characteristics of millennials were introduced and defined to demonstrate how millennials are depicted in society. Second, the literature review included an exploration of the characteristics of millennial workers and the resulting leadership preferences based on their professional characteristics. Third, the implementation 21st-century skills into education and how millennial teachers are facilitating this change were analyzed to develop further connections. The results of this analysis indicate a need for a differentiated leadership approach that acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of millennials to maximize performance in the workplace. The review also indicates millennial teachers have an ideal profile for promoting 21st-century skills, and their talents can be cultivated to make effective pedagogical changes.

With the implementation of appropriate leadership strategies, educational leaders can develop a climate of continuous improvement, share decision-making authority among staff members to empower individuals, and model effective practices. Leadership must embrace and promote technology and provide a clear path to success. Clear direction and clear expectations are precisely what millennials are seeking. Additionally, appropriate

leadership strategies can meet the needs of the millennial workforce by allowing for a strong relationship between the leader and follower and open channels of communication with consistent feedback. Educational leaders who are attentive to the characteristics of millennials and their preferences in leadership will enjoy more success and productivity while working with millennials.

As educational leaders work to implement new strategies such as the promotion of 21st-century skills, including collaboration, communication, and abilities with technology, millennial teachers will be depended upon to lead this change. Millennial teachers have been characterized as embodying many of the characteristics of 21st-century learners, and they provide a unique resource to educational communities due to their direct connection with this movement. By embracing the skills of millennial teachers and understanding how to successfully guide this new generation of educators, leaders can maximize the talents of these individuals and improve essential skills in today's students.

This review of literature included an exploration of the characteristics of millennials, the characteristics of the millennial workforce and how they embrace leadership, and characteristics of millennial teachers and contemporary education. This information will be pivotal while conducting research with millennial teachers and it will also allow for connections to relational leadership theory. The next chapter will include a presentation of the research design for this investigation, along with details on the investigative approach, participants, and research procedures.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter will include the research design for the study. First, the purpose of the research and the research question will be introduced to provide context for the design. After this introduction, the qualitative research approach of interpretive phenomenological analysis will be analyzed along with the key scholars and alignment to the research question. Next, the participants in the research will be described, along with the research setting and types of data that will be used in this research. Next, the procedures for data collection, interviews, and data analysis will be presented. Finally, the criteria for quality research will be discussed using the factors of ethical considerations, credibility, transferability, and limitations.

Problem Statement and Purpose Statement

By 2022, millennials will comprise nearly half of the global workforce (Brack & Kelly, 2012). Understanding millennials' leadership style preferences is critical for workforce decisions and the implementation of appropriate leadership styles (Chou, 2012). Educational leaders need to be specifically attentive to this information due to the influence that millennial teachers have on a school climate and individual students. Millennial educators will soon have a powerful influence and responsibility on individual students and their classroom environment. It is imperative that educational leaders identify effective personal characteristics and leadership styles that will lead to favorable attitudes and conditions for this new generation of teachers (Kocabaş, 2009).

Research Question

The research question for this study is: How do millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America?

The research question has been developed to help leaders and millennials understand how leadership is being perceived. Evidence indicates that the millennial teachers have different characteristics and needs than teachers of previous generations. Leaders can develop a better understanding of these differences by learning about the shared perspectives that millennials have on leadership. The research question is designed to explore the unique perspectives of millennial teachers at a U.S.-style K-12 school to make sense of their experiences with leaders.

This chapter will include an explanation of the research design and the approach to answer the research question. First, there will be an explanation and reasoning of the qualitative research approach, including interpretive phenomenology analysis (IPA), which will be used in this research. Second, the participants of the research will be defined, sampling techniques will be explained, a description of the research setting will be presented, and data collection methods will be described. Third, the procedures of the research will be explained, including the steps for data collection and analysis. Finally, criteria for quality qualitative research will be addressed by explaining the ethical considerations, credibility, transferability, transparency, and limitations for this research.

Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative phenomenological approach has been selected for this research because this approach will allow the participants to express their ideas on shared meaning on an experience or phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the researcher will use

this approach to develop commonalities in responses and make strong deductions from these shared insights (Creswell, 2013). Ponterotto (2005) asserted the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm is the appropriate approach for qualitative research because it allows the researcher to interact and jointly develop findings with the participants in the research. The use of dialogue in the constructivism paradigm allows researchers to delve deeply into the issue and expose unidentified meanings to a study (Ponterotto, 2005). Researchers who use this paradigm believe there is meaning in experiences of individuals, and the goal of the constructivist is to evaluate this meaning through their own lens (Merriam, 1991).

Overview and Philosophical Underpinnings of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenology is attractive because it is designed to elicit general themes from participants through interviews and conversation (Roberts, 2013). This study will use the specific approach to phenomenology of IPA. Interpretive phenomenological analysis has a theoretical foundation in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiographic approaches (Smith, 2011). Jonathan Smith (1996) developed IPA as a quantitative approach from a derivation of phenomenological hermeneutics and the phenomenological philosophy method of inquiry developed by German philosopher Edmund Husserl in the 1930's (Roberts, 2013). The major philosophical underpinning of the IPA approach is that IPA research depends on the researcher's conceptions of the problem of practice (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011; Smith, 1996). The researcher has a more invested opinion in the investigation and this experience can add enrichment to participant feedback (Wagstaff et al., 2014). The double hermeneutic, or multiple interpretation between the researchers and participants, differs from Husserl's phenomenology approach because it allows the researcher to use their own experiences to analyze the research instead of separating one's own beliefs and perceptions (Allan & Eatough, 2016; Cronin &

Armour, 2017; McNabb, n.d.; Roberts, 2013; Smith, 1996). The researcher cannot expect a straightforward understanding of participants' responses and reactions without a process of personal interaction and interpretation (Smith, 1996; Smith, 2011). This is an attractive opportunity for many researchers, and it has rapidly developed into a highly regarded approach (Roberts, 2013).

Key Scholars

Smith (1996), along with his work with Flowers and Osborn (1997) are widely recognized for the theoretical foundations of the IPA approach (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Smith, Flowers, and Osborn were heavily influenced by the research methodology developed by Husserl (Wertz, 2005). Husserl is considered the founder of the phenomenological movement and the notion that research can be conducted through personal experiences (Roberts, 2013). Smith (1996) in his seminal article, acknowledged the ideas of Husserl, introducing IPA as an alternative approach to research that complemented qualitative research practiced at that time. Smith continued to develop and refine the IPA approach while collaborating with fellow researchers such as Flowers and Osborn in 1997 and later with Larkin, Watts, and Clifton in 2006, among others (Cassidy, Reynolds, Naylor, & De Souza, 2011). The collective work of Smith, Flowers, Osborn, Larkin, Watts, and Clifton has resulted in great momentum for IPA research in the last 20 years (Cassidy et al, 2011).

Scholarly Debate

Interpretive phenomenological analysis has a foundation in psychology and IPA includes the idea that the role of the analyst in the process of understanding personal experiences is highly important (Roberts, 2013; Smith, 2004). The inclusion of the

perspective of the analyst is the essential difference between an IPA and a descriptive phenomenological approach (Pringle et al., 2011). Interpretive phenomenological analysis research is different from a standard phenomenological approach because it does not require the researcher to bracket preconceived perceptions, a technique used by researchers to suspend their judgement on the research topic (Cassidy et al., 2011). Researchers often do not recognize their own preconceptions and biases or their exact role in the interpretation of data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Interpretive phenomenological analysis research can offer a clear direction and accessibility to a reliable perspective (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Interpretive phenomenological analysis research requires the researcher to use their personal perceptions and understanding to make sense of the participants' feedback (Allan & Eatough, 2016; Smith, 1996). Without this active involvement of the researcher, the full details and accounts of participants may not be completely uncovered (Pringle et al., 2011).

Alignment of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis with the Research

An IPA approach was suitable for this investigation because it provided an empathetic approach that produces answers and perspectives based upon personal experiences (Wagstaff et al., 2014). The double hermeneutic in IPA research allows the participant and the researcher to make simultaneous meaning making of a phenomenon and interpret the beliefs of the participants through probing questions (McNabb, n.d.; Pringle et al., 2011). The position of the researcher as a supervisor of millennial teachers allowed for a double hermeneutic and a unique observation of the participants' sense-making through personal perceptions (Allan & Eatough, 2016; McNabb, n.d.; Smith, 1996). The researcher is heavily involved in leading millennials and has developed assumptions on their characteristics and leadership preferences through personal experience and research. An

IPA approach will help the researcher make sense of what millennial teachers think about leadership and what are their preferred leadership styles.

<div align="center">**Participants**</div>

In this section, the participants of the research will be defined, sampling techniques will be explained, a description of the research setting will be presented, and data collection methods will be described.

Characteristics of Participants

The participants for this research included six foreign-hired teachers currently employed at the school included in this study, an international, U.S.-style, K-12 school in Colombia, South America. The purposive selection of the candidates was done using the criteria of profession, date of birth, and nationality. The profession is a factor because all participants will work at the school included in this investigation. The participants worked in the primary and middle school sections of the school included in the research and they will not be under the direct supervision of the researcher. Next, the group will be comprised of teachers who were born between 1980 and 2000 to ensure they qualify as millennials. Finally, all participants were foreign hired and specifically were native to North America (the United States and Canada).

Sampling Techniques

Six foreign-hired, millennial teachers were selected to participate in the research using purposive sampling. Smith (2004) explained many IPA studies have samples of five to 10 participants, which is the only way to conduct a deep analysis of this form. Wagstaff et al. (2014) supported that small sample sizes are appropriate for this form of research because they allow for intimate relationships between participants and researchers and will

yield enriched feedback. Wagstaff et al. (2014) cited the studies of Holland and Peterson (2014) and Nolan (2011) as examples of productive research with five or fewer participants. Additionally, IPA research with purposive sampling and six or fewer participants in recent studies has been highly successful, including the work of Barr and van Nieuwerburgh (2015), Cronin and Armour (2017), and Rizwan and Williams (2015).

Purposive sampling was used in this research, and it is typically used in qualitative studies (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Purposive sampling was implemented because this strategy focuses directly on individuals relevant to the research and excludes individuals who do not have relevance (Etikan et al., 2016). In general, the main reason for using purposive sampling was to target a particular group that is representative of the issue and that have common experiences related to the research topic (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). For this investigation, these commonalities will enhance the research, and the sample will be a homogenous group with similar profiles based on age, nationality, and profession.

Research Setting

The school included in this study is an international, U.S.-style school in Cali, Colombia, with both non-Colombian and Colombian teachers. The term *U.S.-style* implies students receive an education based on the curricular, logistical, and administrative requirements of a U.S. public school. The average age of the faculty members has been approximately 45 years old, but this average has been lowered to below 40 years old with recent retirements of the veteran staff members and the entrance of younger teachers. As with global trends in employment, the school included in this study is hiring an increased number of millennial teachers (Brack & Kelly, 2012). The average number of millennial teachers hired annually is approximately 10% (13 of a total of 140 teachers) of the overall

staff, and within 10 years, this population should form the majority of the school's foreign-hired faculty.

Procedures

Subsequent to receiving approval from the institutional review board, the researcher solicited approval from the school director to conduct doctoral research with teachers who are currently employed. Following approval, the researcher contacted six foreign-hired, millennial teachers to solicit their participation in this research project. Requested participants received information providing an overview of the project along with the time requirements and expectations (see Appendix A). Upon agreement, participants signed a letter of consent and a confidentiality agreement prior to the commencement of interviews (see Appendix B).

Types of Data

Much of the data was obtained through one-to-one interviews that were semi-structured and allowed participants to freely express their ideas and opinions. There were two interviews with each participant, each lasting approximately one hour. Additionally, research notes, audio notes, and reflexive journals were analyzed to facilitate appropriate analysis of the participants' feedback. Details such as nonverbal clues and the perceived emotions displayed by the participants with their responses were noted by the researcher and reviewed during analysis to identify useful data (Saldaña, 2013; Wagstaff et al., 2014).

Data Collection

The favored approach to data collection in IPA research consists of semi structured, one-to-one interviews and a small sample size of participants (Etikan et al., 2016; Roberts, 2013; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This recommendation supports the focus on individual

experiences and avoids a large collection of data that could overwhelm the researcher (Roberts, 2013). Smith (2004) expressed that the use of a focus group is not the ideal method for an IPA study because a focus group does not adhere to the notion of the exploration of a personal experience. For this investigation, data was collected by listening to the recordings of the interviews, making a transcription of the conversation, and then listening to the recording again to uncover more details and feelings from the participants (Flowers et al., 2009).

For the data collection process, participants were solicited on a voluntary basis, introduced to the research, and provided with a protocol to explain the procedures and ensure confidentiality. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants at the school. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis. A digital application for smartphones called Temi was used to record and transcribe the information collected from the interviews. Other artifacts, such as journals or diaries from participants, if available, were used to supplement the interviews and provide additional insights. The participants were not obligated to write in a journal or diary, and only one participant decided to make written reflections. This information was included in the analysis of the data. Additionally, analytical memos developed by the researcher during the investigation provided support for data analysis.

Interview Questions and Procedures

Interviews were semi structured, one-to-one, and conducted two to three times with each participant for a duration of approximately one hour. The initial interview included questions about the participants' personal and professional experiences, experiences as a teacher in an international school, differences the participants perceive between their generation and previous generations of teachers, and their feelings about treatment and

support they receive from leaders in the school (see Appendix C). The participants were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments and feedback about the themes discussed in the interview after the review of their transcripts and time to reflect on the conversation. The researcher solicited this information after returning the transcripts to the participants, documenting any relevant comments. The second interview included questions focused directly on sense-making of leadership at the school included in this study (see Appendix D). Additional questions were developed based on the feedback of the first round of interviews to clarify and reinforce common themes or ideas. Subsequent questions were more specific and targeted the experiences and emotions participants had towards leaders and their preferred styles of leadership.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this investigation was modeled after the six steps presented by Flowers, Larkin, and Smith (2009). These steps included: (a) reading and rereading, (b) initial noting, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections across emergent themes, (e) moving to the next case, and (f) looking for patterns across cases (Flowers et al., 2009). As suggested by Flowers et al. (2009), the researcher made changes and modifications based on analysis throughout the process until the findings became finalized in the written description.

Data analysis began during the interview process. Transcriptions were completed using a media application called Temi and reviewed thoroughly to ensure accuracy. This step also provided another revision of the feedback and include the note-taking stage. As suggested by Atkinson (1998), interviewees were asked to read the transcript after each individual interview and offered follow-up or feedback on their responses. Then, detailed themes were identified to begin the coding process and make interpretations of the story

being told by the participants. Specifically, the interview transcriptions were printed, and

physical notations of codes were developed on the margins of each response. The

researcher reviewed each transcript one by one, line by line, and highlighted words or

phrases that connected to feelings toward leadership (Flowers et al., 2009). Then, a list of

codes was developed from these words or phrases that matched the sentiments of the

participant (see Appendix E). The manual coding process was the preferred method of the

researcher because it allowed for rich, precise interpretations and this method was

supported by the application of electronic software. After re-reading each transcript and

developing individual lists, connections were made to views on leadership. Finally, there

was a comparison of all participants' codes to identify patterns in all responses and generate

the emergent themes (Flowers et al., 2009).

After the coding of the transcriptions was finalized, the documents were uploaded

into the NVivo (Version 9) program. Specific codes and themes were determined to

separate the responses and make connections from the dialogue. The transcriptions were

then reviewed and sorted into the appropriate theme in the NVivo program. This

information was organized in the database for an improved classification of the information

and each theme contained precise evidence from the transcripts. The responses from the

interviews were grouped together to allow for a simplified view of the evidence and

provide a practical way to analyze common themes.

Interpretive phenomenological analysis research requires an approach in data

analysis guided by the willingness of the researcher to have an open attitude and "dwell in

the data" (Cassidy et al., 2011, p. 269). For this reason, a highly recommended and

implemented approach for data analysis in IPA research consists of the immersion of the

researcher into the data and coding the interviews and artifacts line by line to uncover

emerging themes (Roberts, 2013). Emotional coding was used as the coding method because it allowed for the researcher to understand the human experience and interpret the personal perspectives of the participants (Saldaña, 2013). Emotional coding is a method that researchers implement to identify the intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences of the participants, and it is appropriate for all qualitative studies, particularly with research focused on personal perspectives (Saldaña, 2013).

Presentation of Findings

The findings of a well-developed IPA study can lead to the development of an enhanced research report that has a narrative structure with a classical approach that includes an introduction, literature review, and complete presentation of methodology (Creswell, 2013). The narrative presentation of the findings allows for the uncovering of major themes from interviews and artifacts. The results of the narrative included a detailed and in-depth account of each participant and enabled the researcher to identify and present valid information (Pringle et al., 2011). Specifically, excerpts of the interview transcriptions and direct quotes from supplemental artifacts will be presented in the findings to provide the reader with strong evidence of personal perceptions. These excerpts and gestures will highlight emotional responses that are elicited from the participants (Saldaña, 2013). Personal quotes and metaphors will help connect the analysis directly to the individual experiences of the participants (Pringle et al., 2011). Ultimately, the goal of this IPA study is to understand the perspectives of others and this will help to connect personal experience to the lived experience of the participants.

The presentation of the data will be through a phenomenological approach to allow the researcher to present a story using exemplars from the research to create a detailed image of the situation being analyzed (Chenail, 1995). The narrative approach allows

participants to develop insights through explaining their personal stories and presenting

themes for their points of view (Baker, 2015). This information can be inserted into the

NVivo program to assist in the analysis process. Figure 3 displays an example of theme

organization through the use of a coding technique. The specific findings directly related to

each of the themes can be analyzed individually and dissected for details. Feedback from

the interviews will be sorted and unified to develop a clear story about the perception of the

interviewees.
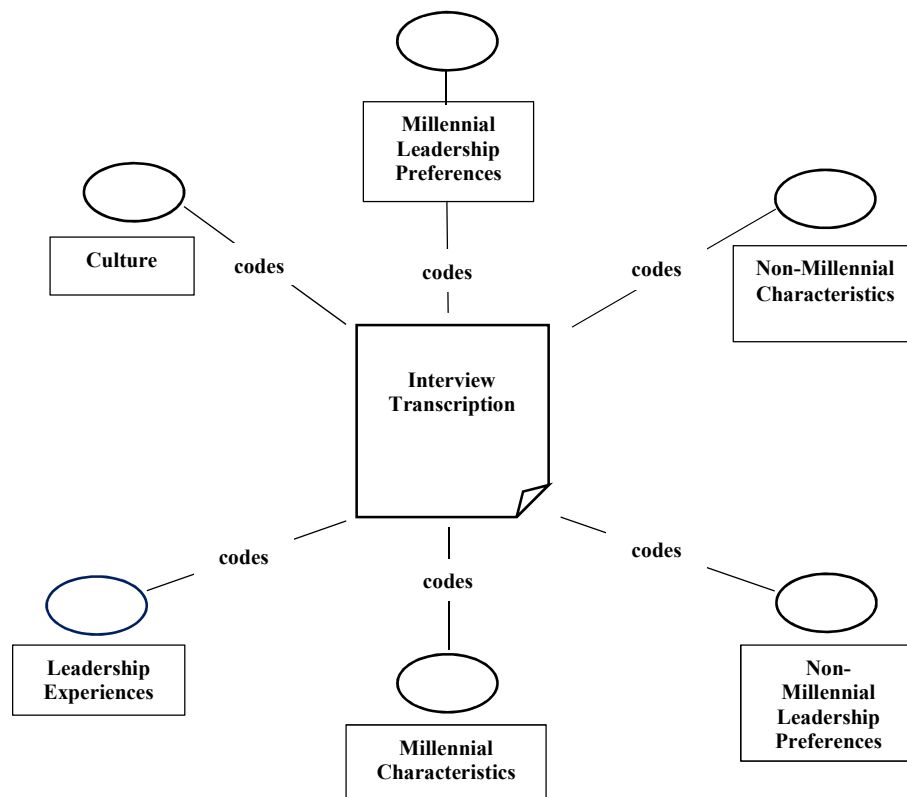
Figure 3. Example of coded themes developed using the NVivo program with an interview transcription. Adapted from "R3 Project 1B- Analytic Report," by M. Shannon (2018). Unpublished manuscript, Northeastern University. Reprinted with permission.

Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research

Trustworthiness is essential for the value of any research project (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). To ensure trustworthiness in this study, criteria for quality qualitative research must

be evaluated using the elements of ethical considerations, credibility, transferability, audit trail, self-reflexivity, transparency, and limitations. These criteria were introduced and assessed in relation to the current study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics of this research were maintained through high confidentiality and strict control of all evidence gathered during the research process. Candidates were selected with discretion; participants and school administration were the only individuals informed of the research. The approval of the principals of the primary and middle school sections at the institutions of research was solicited to work with teachers in their sections. Upon accepting participation in the research, the researcher met with each participant to explain the privacy agreement and the procedures in maintaining confidentiality. The appropriate documentation was signed at that time.

All electronic files, including recordings, journals, and transcripts were stored on the computer of the researcher and were password-protected; no other individuals except the principal investigator had access to this information. Additionally, physical copies of evidence produced from the research were stored in a secure, confidential office that could not be accessed by others. Participants were provided with a physical transcript of their interviews for review and approval. These copies were collected and filed with the research after the revision was complete.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the plausibility of the research, along with the trustworthiness of the data (Tracy, 2010). Credibility means ensuring the study successfully depicts an accurate portrayal of a phenomenon under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). One of the primary

strategies to ensure credibility of the research was the use of member-checking, or verification of information with participants during the research process (Shenton, 2004). After interviews were transcribed, physical copies were shared with each participant for review and to verify accuracy of the transcriptions. The use of an audio recording device ensured the written words matched the verbal intentions of each participant (Shenton, 2004). The second member-checking step that was implemented for this research was the sharing of conclusions and inferences with the participants to validate that the interpretations were correct (Krefting,1991; Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010). Feedback was solicited from all participants on possible patterns of common themes to help with the analysis (Shenton, 2004). This feedback can often add new data by providing a fresh perspective (Tracy, 2010).

Another strategy that was used to ensure credibility was the practice of peer review and input during the research process. The engagement of strong, experienced professionals can help provide credibility with the research (Krefting,1991; Shenton, 2004). These alternative perspectives can challenge the analysis of the data and this criticism should be welcome to assist in the development of an accurate analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015; Shenton, 2004). This practice also exposed any undetected preconceptions to help with the IPA analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability is the extent of which detailed descriptions of phenomenon in research can allow for connections and comparisons and be valuable for future work (Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010). Transferability is also the extent in which the research connects with the reader and their own situations (Tracy, 2010). Kuper, Lingard, and Levinson (2008) explained much of the responsibility of determining the level of

transferability is the reader and it depends if the setting and results are transferrable to their own context. A strategy to ensure transferability in this research was the use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling can increase transferability due to the assembly of a specific target group in an investigation that can result in specific analysis of a phenomenon (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Most IPA research is done with a small, homogenous group of individuals, and it is focused on personal experiences to link to literature and generate transferability in research (Allan & Eatough, 2016). In addition to research and future investigations, educational leaders and millennial teachers will contribute to the transferability due to the relevance to their own personal and professional experiences (Tracy, 2010).

Another strategy that was used to ensure transferability was the use of rich, descriptive data to detail the experiences and preferences of the participant's included in the study (Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010). The use of detailed information provided accuracy, and this enhanced the transferability of the research (Krefting,1991; Shenton, 2004). The concise interpretations of data can help researchers to easily make comparisons when developing future research (Krefting,1991). Additionally, the rich detail of documentation allowed participants to reflect deeply on their contributions and make judgements on whether the information was accurate and pertinent to their own lives (Noble & Smith, 2015).

There are some limitations with the transferability of this research. First, the school of research had teachers with various cultural backgrounds due to being an international school. This could limit transferability to schools that do not have a mix of foreign and local teachers because this mixture affects the social and professional dynamic of the relationships between leaders and teachers. Second, the school included in this

investigation had strong, stable leaders for an extended period. This consistent, experienced leadership does not exist in many schools, and therefore responses of millennial teachers towards leadership may vary greatly based on alternative experiences and this would affect the transferability.

Audit Trail

An audit trail contributed to the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Bowen, 2009). An audit trail is a transparent presentation of all steps in the research process and contains the records of all components of an investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this research, the audit trail included audio recordings, interview transcripts (digital and physical), lists of interviewees, the categories developed through the analysis process, research notes, and all electronic files and references (Shaw & Gould, 2001).

Self-Reflexivity and Transparency

The researcher is not a millennial and he is no longer a classroom teacher. The researcher is an educational administrator and a supervisor of teachers. These differences have a major effect on the researcher's perspectives and opinions of millennials and teachers. While he was previously overly empathetic towards most concerns amongst teachers, the researcher now has a different perspective towards their challenges. The change in perspective is due to the intricacies of the researcher's administrative responsibilities and his role as a teacher supervisor. The researcher still considers himself to be a compassionate leader, but he has an increased expectation that teachers will work hard and continuously improve. His tolerance for a lack of performance due to a lack of effort is limited. The focus on teacher performance and understanding teacher motivation has resulted in a deep desire by the researcher to develop knowledge on the reasons why

there is success or underperformance with teachers. With an increase in millennial teachers, the researcher cannot rely on his previous knowledge and experience to understand the new complexities in the employer-supervisor relationship and the perceptions of millennial teachers.

The role of the researcher as a former teacher and current administrator can present a bias in his work. Through interactions with fellow teachers, the researcher has been able to discover and understand various aspects of leadership preferences through others' perspectives. Being in the trenches, this intimate experience with fellow teachers has allowed the researcher to understand and interpret what leadership strategies motivated and caused a lack of motivation in his peers. The first-hand experiences of the researcher provided possible predispositions towards factors for leadership preferences. However, these experiences also provided a helpful perspective on the issue and can benefit the research if the researcher remained neutral with his investigation. Briscoe (2005) stated, "Even with the best of intentions, it is likely that scholarly representations of the experiences of the other still disproportionately benefit the researcher" (p. 36). The experiences as a teacher and an administrator provided unique insight and a path for an accurate, scholarly representation of leadership style preferences for millennial teachers.

Identifying personal views and feelings was not a difficult task but isolating these feelings was a challenge. While it is always difficult to isolate one's personal feelings and bias, there is no other option when attempting to construct meaningful research. An effective researcher must be objective and enter research with an open mind (Machi & McEvoy, 2012). There were times when the researcher had to ignore his instincts as an administrator and remain humble with his opinions. While this may be challenging, the

researcher understands this was the only way to maintain neutrality and personally develop as an authentic researcher and critical scholar-practitioner.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study is the transferability. Pringle et al. (2011) argued there is a limitation of transferability if a sample is too homogenous because it will not allow connections to any other groups and this is inevitable in IPA research. Even though the nuanced analysis of an IPA study requires small sample sizes (Smith, 2004), generalizations are difficult to make due to the small number of participants and because the group is highly homogeneous. Different results may be produced from using a larger group from diverse populations or organizations (Kaifi et al., 2012). Group size and group diversity are details that must be considered when developing IPA research. Wagstaff et al. (2014) explained non-qualitative researchers and research approval committees may question the small sample size and struggle to see the depth of the study. However, this obstacle can be managed, and transferability can be maintained if the researcher is forthcoming and acknowledges these limitations (Pringle et al., 2011).

Regarding the transferability to the reader, the study is limited to leaders and teachers who are teaching in one setting and therefore the scope for comparison is limited. Leaders and teachers who work at schools with similar profiles could make comparisons with the data, but the school setting and dynamic have a major influence on the perceptions of teachers and their professional experiences with leadership. While this is a limitation, the investigation can support any research relating to leadership and millennial teachers due to the universal connections with the characteristics of millennials and an overall goal of educational administrators to provide effective leadership strategies.

       This chapter included the research design for the study. The qualitative research approach of interpretive phenomenological analysis was analyzed along with the key scholars and alignment to the research question. Additionally, the participants in the research were described, along with the research setting and types of data that was used in this research. Finally, criteria for quality qualitative research was introduced and discussed in relation to the current study. The next chapter will include the findings and analysis of the research. General themes that emerged from the research will be presented along with sub-themes to provide an in-depth analysis of the data and portray the sense-making of millennial teachers toward educational leaders.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

This chapter will include the findings and analysis of the research. First, the purpose of the research will be restated, along with a brief summary of the procedures and a description of the participants of the research. Next, three general themes that emerged from the research will be presented along with sub-themes. Conclusions are presented on each theme, along with a general conclusion of all themes developed from an analysis of the data.

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study was to understand how foreign-hired, millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by leaders at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. The global teacher population is undergoing a transformation and the number of millennial teachers is starting to increase in most schools around the world (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Greenebaum, 2009). With the impending shift in the teacher population, it is imperative that an understanding of leadership style preferences of millennial teachers is developed to improve overall performance of both teachers and leaders at any educational institution that employs millennials (Kocabaş, 2009).

A qualitative interpretative phenomenological approach was implemented, and this approach complemented the investigation of relational leadership theory due to the sense-making form of qualitative interpretative phenomenological research. Data analysis for this investigation was modeled after the six steps presented by Flowers, Larkin, and Smith (2009). These steps included: (a) reading and re-reading, (b) initial noting, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections across emergent themes, (e) moving to the next case, and (f) looking for patterns across cases (Flowers et al., 2009). Two semi-structured, face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 1 hour each were conducted with

each participant at the school to gather feedback on leadership style preferences. The favored approach to data collection in IPA research consists of one-to-one interviews that are semi-structured and include a small sample size of participants (Etikan et al., 2016; Roberts, 2013; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In total, there were six participants and 12 interviews. Transcriptions were completed through a media application called Temi and reviewed thoroughly to ensure accuracy. Participants were asked to read the transcript after each individual interview and offer any follow-up or feedback on their responses (Atkinson,1998). Then, detailed themes were identified to begin the coding process and make interpretations of the story being told by the participants. After the second and third revision of each transcript, connections were made with the emergent themes. After analyzing each case one by one, themes were explored across all cases to identify patterns in all responses (Flowers et al., 2009).

Participants

The participants for this research included six foreign-hired teachers who are currently employed at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. The purposive selection of the participants was done using the criteria of profession, date of birth, and country of birth. This information can be found in Table 2. All participants were interviewed at the school of study at a time of their convenience. The participants were extremely open and honest with their responses and their frankness provided enhanced conversations and useful data regarding the views of foreign-hired, millennial teachers toward leadership. More details about each participant are presented in the following pages.

Table 2

Summary of Participants

Pseudonym	Teaching Role	Age	Country of Birth
Adam	Primary Science	32	U.S.
Isabel	MS Humanities	39	Canada
Mark	MS Math	36	U.S.
Nicole	Instructional Coach	39	U.S.
Richard	MS Math	34	U.S.
Samantha	MS Science	32	U.S.

Adam

Adam is a 32-year old, millennial science teacher in the primary section of the school. He was born in 1988 in the United States; this is his seventh year as a teacher and his third year at the school. Adam has worked closely with several educational leaders at the school, both directly and indirectly. Educational leaders at the school characterize Adam as an open-minded teacher with the ability to build strong relationships with his students. Adam admittedly expressed that there was a period of adjustment during his first year working with students at the school and that leadership influenced in his growth and development during his transition. Adam also brings a unique perspective into the research due to his teaching experience in Colombia, Asia, and the United States. He was able to

reflect on those previous leadership experiences while conversing about his leadership experiences at the school.

Isabel

Isabel is a 39-year old, millennial teacher who has worked as a homeroom teacher in the primary section of the school and now currently teaches humanities in the middle school. She was born in 1981 in Canada and this is her sixth year as a teacher and her fourth year at the school. Isabel has worked closely with several educational leaders at the school, both directly and indirectly. Educational leaders at the school characterize Isabel as a patient, knowledgeable teacher with the ability to build strong relationships with her students. As she stated in her interview, her father was an educator and she considered teaching at an early age because teaching "…is what's in the family." Isabel brings a unique perspective into the research because she has worked in two sections of the school, primary and middle school, with two different principals. Additionally, Isabel has teaching experience in three different schools in Latin America, one in Mexico, and two in Colombia. She was able to examine her overall experiences and provide excellent perspectives while reflecting on the current leadership at the school.

Mark

Mark is a 36-year old, millennial math teacher in the middle school section of the school. He was born in 1984 in the United States and this is his 12th year as a teacher and his 11th year at the school. Mark has worked closely with several educational leaders at the school due to his longevity and the rotation of leadership during his tenure. Educational leaders at the school characterize Mark as a strong, knowledgeable teacher with the ability to build positive relationships with his peers and students. Mark has also embraced the

challenge of being the leader of a multicultural mathematics department for the past several years at the school. This role has allowed him to evaluate his own leadership style while also working under the umbrella of administrational leadership. In addition, Mark brings a unique perspective into the research due to his teaching experience in Colombia and the United States. He was able to reflect on his experiences to provide a better understanding of how millennial teachers make sense of administrational leadership at the school.

Nicole

Nicole is a 39-year old millennial and she is the instructional coach for math in all sections of the school. She has also previously worked as an English and math teacher in the high school. She was born in 1981 in the United States and this is her 14th year as a teacher and her sixth year at the school. Nicole has worked closely with most educational leaders at the school due to her role as a school-wide instructional coach for the last two years. Educational leaders at the school characterize Nicole as a highly knowledgeable educator with the ability to connect with both students and fellow teachers. Nicole has held multiple roles in the school and different leaders have strongly influenced her growth and development during her time at the school. Nicole also brings a unique perspective into the research due to her teaching experience in other schools in Colombia and the United States. She was able to examine those experiences closely during the interviews to reflect on her perspectives of leadership at the school.

Richard

Richard is a 34-year old, millennial teacher of math in the middle school section of the school. He has also taken on more leadership roles in his section and serves as the leader of the middle school student council, the middle school leadership program, and the

teacher mentoring program. Richard was born in 1986 in the United States and this is his

seventh year as a teacher and his fifth year at the school. Richard has worked closely with

several educational leaders at the school. Educational leaders at the school characterize

Richard as a confident, open-minded teacher with the ability to build strong relationships

with his students and fellow teachers. Richard is identified as a leader among his peers, and

he expressed in his interviews that leadership at the school has greatly influenced his

growth and development as a future administrator. Richard also brings a unique

perspective into the research due to his teaching experience in Colombia and Africa. He

was able to examine those experiences to reflect on the current leadership at the school and

his personal perspectives.

Samantha

Samantha is a 32-year old, millennial teacher of science in the middle school section

of the school. She has also taken on the role as the leader of the science department and

introduced STEM electives into her section. She was born in 1988 in the United States and

this is her 10th year as a teacher and her sixth year at the school. Samantha has worked

closely with several educational leaders at the school, both directly and indirectly.

Educational leaders at the school characterize Samantha as an excellent, exemplary teacher

with the ability to build strong relationships with her students. Samantha admittedly

expressed that there was a period of adjustment with a change of administration at the

school during the past few years, but that the new leadership has had much influence in her

growth and development. Samantha also brings a unique perspective into the research due

to her teaching experience in the Middle East, Colombia, and the United States.

Additionally, her family background allowed her to live abroad and attend international

schools. Samantha was able to examine those personal and professional experiences to provide deep insights about her understanding of leadership at the school.

Emerging Themes

The remainder of the chapter will include a focus on the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts, informal conversations with participants, and personal memos and notes taken by the researcher during the investigation. After multiple reviews of the transcripts and written information, a pattern of beliefs and values of the participants became evident and many stories evolved into perspectives of leadership with both favorable and unfavorable recollections. These stories typically generated much emotion and reflection from the teachers included in this research, and therefore, the testimonies provided genuine feedback with rich detail. After careful and thorough analysis, the following themes emerged regarding leadership characteristics and millennial teachers: (a) breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders; (b) gaining confidence through reassurance; and (c) seeing behind the curtain. Figure 4 represents the emerging themes (in bold), along with the sub-themes (in ovals). These three themes repeatedly appeared in the conversations with millennial teachers and they will be explored deeply through their sub-themes to provide insight into the responses.

Yearning for Support

Expecting Partnerships

Breaking Barriers

Interview Transcription
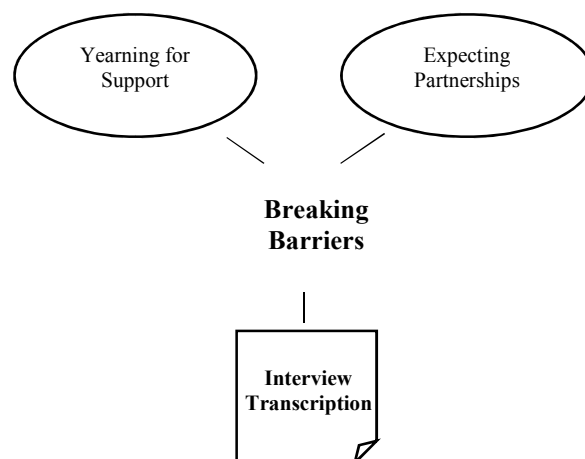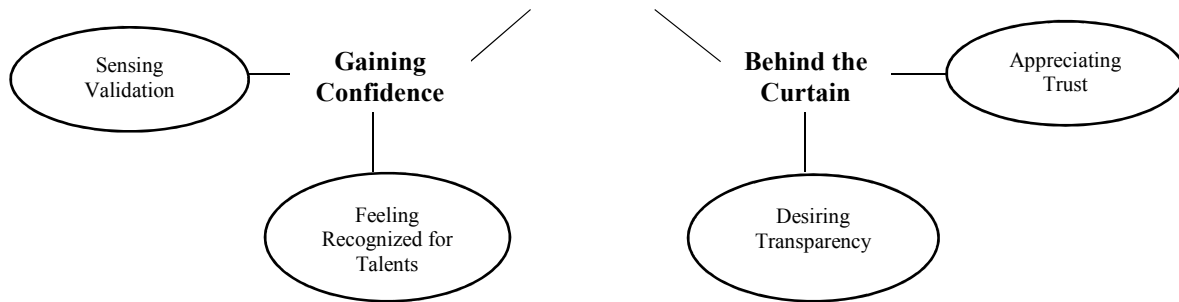
Figure 4. Coded themes developed from interview transcriptions. Adapted from "Understanding How Millennial Teachers Make Sense of Education Leadership Exhibited by Administration," by M. Shannon, 2020. Unpublished manuscript, Northeastern University. Reprinted with permission.

Breaking Down Barriers Between Teachers and Leaders

The importance of breaking down barriers between foreign-hired millennial teachers and the educational leaders at the school of research was a reoccurring theme in the investigation. To analyze this theme, two sub-themes were developed based on the participants' responses. The first sub-theme was yearning for support and the second sub-theme was expecting partnerships. Each sub-theme is supported by evidence from the research, followed by a conclusion on the theme of breaking down barriers and the relation to foreign-hired, millennial teachers and leaders at the school.

Yearning for Support

All participants in the research stated that support and understanding from leadership was critical in developing positive, personal relationships. Support and understanding can be the result of the positive relationship or factors that initiate a positive relationship between the participants and their leaders. To the participants, support and understanding was exhibited in various ways, including the feeling of being supported both personally and professionally. The participants expressed that they wanted to feel that they could approach their leader with any issue, whether it was a problem at home or at school,

and that leaders who exhibited empathy and compassion toward their situation were identified as individuals that they could confide in and feel at ease. When asked about what the most important quality of a leader, Samantha explained that an empathetic leader was most valued. During moments when faced with difficult challenges or emotional struggles, participants acknowledged that leaders who offered consoling advice and an understanding of their situation were highly valued. Additionally, these gestures provided a path for positive relationships. In these difficult situations explained by the participants, leaders at the school typically offered support that provided emotional relief and reduced stress and anxiety. These moments allowed the participants to develop a connection with their leaders and made them confident that no matter the circumstance, their leaders could be counted upon for help and support.

From an analysis of the data, the perception of the participants feeling supported was commonly associated with feeling comfortable with the leader and having a personal connection. Participants expressed that support was often the result of familiarity and understanding. When referring to the possibility of reuniting and working with a former colleague from the school, Adam expressed that the support and understanding was a result of the personal relationship he shared with this individual. He stated:

> It'd be great to work with someone like him [former colleague] who is supportive...
> Going from someone who I don't have a particularly close relationship with [current
> principal] to someone I knew personally, that would be a huge plus.

Mark explained that the support and understanding that he has consistently received at the school has led to positive relationships because he could feel at ease in his role. He expressed that the support that he received, "makes me feel like I can let my guard down a

little bit." The evidence was clear that teachers related support and understanding from leadership to their personal relationships with their leaders.

All conversations provided evidence that the participants felt supported by the leaders at the school. Typically, support and understanding were most highly recollected during difficult, stressful moments. For example, Samantha recalled a time when there was a delicate disciplinary situation that transpired in her classroom after school hours. Samantha was not present during the incident, but she was very nervous that she would be held responsible and receive professional repercussions because it happened in her classroom. To the contrary, her principal called her into his office to carefully explain the situation and let her know that she was not in any trouble. Samantha stated, "And he [the principal] basically said, I've got your back." She continued by expressing, "I felt really comfortable from then on and knowing that the worst can happen, and the school has my back, the administration team has my back and I have felt that way since that moment."

Richard also reflected on the importance of support from leadership. When discussing his personal concerns about not completing his entire curriculum for his course, he acknowledged that he was disappointed with himself, but he was also worried that his principal would be upset. He explained, "I just remember going in there [the principal's office], being so freaked out and leaving, feeling so relaxed." Richard said that the support and understanding from the principal in that situation helped relieve his stress and helped with the development of his relationship with the principal.

During a deep conversation with the researcher, Nicole echoed many sentiments shared by the other participants. She described a situation that occurred after being hired for her first year at the school. Nicole explained that before she started her first year, she became pregnant with her second child and realized that the pregnancy would affect her

work. Nicole further explained that she was nervous about communicating with her

principal and even expressed a fear that her contract would not be honored. However,

during her conversation with her principal, it became immediately evident that she would

be supported, and that the pregnancy should be celebrated. This was Nicole's first

impression with leadership at the school and it had a positive impact. She later expressed

her feeling about leadership at the school in general terms by stating:

> I just feel like whenever I come to school, when I arrive to school, I arrive knowing
>
> that if something happens through the course of the day, I know that I can go and
>
> talk to my principal about it … Just knowing it's a constant, every day knowing if
>
> there's a problem, my principal is going to side with me.

It was evident that Nicole felt supported by leadership and this support had a positive

impact on her attitude and professional happiness. To her, support was the result of her

leader being understanding and considerate to her personal and professional concerns.

Nicole explained, "I've come to realize that relationships are really important and that there

are certain things that you can kind of bend on without breaking, and you can bend without

ruining the professional community and the high expectations." In her experiences at the

school, Nicole felt supported by her leaders because she shared positive relationships with

them, and her concerns were always addressed with an understanding attitude.

During a conversation in an interview with Isabel, she explained a similar example

with her principal; however, Isabel did not always feel a personal connection with her

principal at the time. Due to the lack of a relationship, Isabel was apprehensive to approach

her principal during a stressful moment. Isabel explained that she had a medical situation

and was waiting for an urgent appointment. When she was informed of the date and time

of the appointment, Isabel realized it conflicted with her teaching responsibilities and she

became overwhelmed. Isabel continued, "I was having like a mini breakdown … I started crying and she [the principal] was so confused." The tears were a result of her lack of confidence in approaching her principal. Isabel later explained that when presented with the situation, her principal was extremely understanding and supportive. Because her principal had not shown these characteristics, Isabel lacked confidence to approach her principal and she was apprehensive to ask for permission. Isabel concluded by adding, "Generally, we didn't see that from her, and I feel like it would've been beneficial to see that more. But that was a very positive experience." Many of the stories told by the participants included personal situations, but there was also considerable data about professional support from leaders and how it influenced their experiences.

Adam explained how in the last year, the primary school made a major shift with their instruction methodology in science. Adam acknowledged that he had more expertise in the material than his principal and the learning coordinator. To his surprise, both leaders gave him much autonomy and gave him complete support without question. Adam recalled that he had not worked much with the learning coordinator, but he was impressed by the leadership of this individual during the transition. He explained, "I know when he's working with us, he's trying to make sure that we feel supported and he's trying to help out with these little things." Adam explained that this unconditional support made his experience more enjoyable and fruitful.

Mark is a veteran teacher at the school and has had experience with multiple leaders and situations during his time at the school. Mark explained that he feels that leaders in the school have tried to cultivate a supportive and understanding environment through their openness. Mark shared, "as long as you take the time to make sure you hash stuff out and justify our decisions, I don't think we've ever been told no by administration … and so, I

feel supported." Nicole supported Mark's sentiment by expressing, "I always felt like I could be open about anything with my principal." Isabel similarly expressed, "If I have an issue, I have a concern, I just want to speak frankly. I feel like I can do that and that's really important to me." Finally, Richard presented a strong summary of his feelings toward the support and understanding of leadership at the school by stating:

> I have great relationships with the administrators here. This is probably the first place I've worked in my life where I feel like I've had a really strong relationship with multiple leaders in administration … everyone I've worked for here directly understands people.

Evidence clearly supported that the development of personal relationships is highly important to the millennial teachers in the study, and that support and understanding were pathways to establishing a close, personal relationship.

Expecting Partnerships with Leaders

Evidence from an analysis of the data also indicated that foreign-hired millennial teachers wanted and expected a relationship that was a partnership with school leaders. To the participants, having a partnership with their leaders signified a unique, personal relationship. This relationship led to leaders and teachers having a deep understanding of each other and their individual needs and characterisitics. Participants wanted to know their leaders personally as well as professionally. In fact, knowing the leaders' personal qualities appeared to be more important than professional attributes according to the reflections from all participants. Participants acknowledged that individuals who cared about having relationships with their teachers were able to make them feel a personal connection with leaders. The personal connection provided comfort and confidence with their leaders with both personal and professional matters. All participants felt that they

shared special bonds with their leaders at the school, and they acknowledged that these strong bonds were an important factor in their personal and professional happiness.

Richard shared, "I need a leader that's easy to talk to and is a human being. I want to be able to feel comfortable sharing with them and talking things out with them." To establish a high level of comfort, it was necessary for the leader to take steps to develop and build the necessary bonds of a partnership. The leaders of the school who have successfully achieved these bonds have done so with intention. Mark explained the style of his current principal saying, "I feel like he [the principal] really tries to make himself open and approachable." Isabel and Mark also shared stories about how leadership has made efforts to know them personally, even though they may not be direct subordinates of these individuals. Isabel shared that being recognized as an individual by school leaders was important to her when stating:

> I just assume that you guys [school leaders] are busy with your own teachers, your own section, why would you know me if I'm working in Primary? Those things make a huge difference. I feel like those moments stand out for me.

Samantha shared a similar sentiment when she expressed, "I feel like I've had really great bosses who have been really good at their jobs, but this is the first real like personal, individualized attention that I feel like I've had." Samantha was very pleased that her current principal has made purposeful attempts at building relationships. She continued, "I think he really pinpointed who I am as a person and what my personality is like. He has been able to use that to his advantage and to help me grow. Understanding my sensitivities." Samantha explained that due to her close relationship with her leader, he was able to identify her strengths and weaknesses and influence her development as an educator. To Samantha, their relationship resembled a partnership that benefited both her

and the leader. The actions of the leader inspired Samantha to grow and gave her confidence in her own abilities. These experiences with leadership were extremely important and Samantha expressed that due to an individualized bond and perceived partnership with her leader, "I've been really lucky."

During a conversation with Isabel, she noted the impact of partnerships and how that can improve personal relationships between the teacher and the principal. With her current leader, she expressed, "I think the thing that makes a difference is knowing who you guys are as people as well." Contrary to her previous experience in the primary section, Isabel noted that her current principal had been social and approachable, and this attitude allowed her to know her leader as a person. Isabel expressed, "I feel like [the principal] really tries to make himself open and approachable." She mentioned that she knew about his family and background and that the leader had also expressed a personal interest in her. It was evident that her leader was working toward a relationship that was a partnership. Conversely, Isabel explained that her previous principal was different and did not work at developing these individualized bonds and a partnership. Isabel lamentably shared:

> I never really knew who she was as a person and I told her that in my exit interview. We don't really talk, and I said, I feel like you really care about people, but it's just kind of like a vibe that I get. I can't place it. I feel like, I don't know you as a human and as a woman. And since I've left, actually some of the best conversations we've had have been since I was put into middle school. But I never saw that. I never got to know her.

Another detail that emerged in the analysis of the interviews regarding partnerships was the importance of leaders being visible both inside and outside of school. In the past years, some principals have organized outings for their faculty members, and this has been

a positive experience. Richard, Samantha, and Mark all noted that these outings were highlights of their time with their leaders and their fellow teachers. When asked what the most important moments were when developing relationships with leaders, Mark expressed:

> I think the parties outside of school for me, with administration there, in keeping with that common theme of humanizing and building camaraderie and stuff like that. For me personally, I found those moments really nice. Just sharing a beer with your bosses is cool.

The social gesture of sharing a beer with the leader allowed the teachers to feel on level with their leaders and this helped to cultivate a partnership between the teacher and leader. The social nature of the interaction influenced the dynamic and allowed participants to see their leader outside of a professional role. The efforts of leadership to provide social opportunities outside of school left a similar impression with Samantha and she stated:

> I think it comes back to showing that you value, and you appreciate your teachers. And in this case, it was such a unique way to do that, to go out and celebrate off-campus where the whole group is there, up to the technology crew. It was just such a neat thing for administrators to do. It left a really, really strong impression. It made me feel like this school is somewhere I want to be, look at how they treat their teachers.

Mark added, "Seeing administration outside of school … it made me feel like I had a connection and I could count on them and that there would be that personal connection to support me." Mark later explained that the effort by leaders was necessary because, "there's a lot of people who can distrust administration just because of the power they hold." Therefore, by establishing these personal, individualized connections, leaders can

fortify their relationships and develop partnerships. Richard commented, "I've had good

relationships, so it's made me feel like I want to do things for them and for our school."

Mark finalized his comments about partnerships with his leaders saying, "If I can connect

with my administration on a personal level, I feel like everything's just going to jive a little

bit better." The analysis of the data clearly demonstrated that personal connections with

leadership was highly valued by foreign-hired millennial teachers at the school. When

referring to having personal bonds with leaders, Isabel concluded, "you feel like you're not

just a number, you're not just lost among this group of teachers."

  Conclusions on breaking down barriers. The evidence in the research clearly

reflected the idea that support and understanding, along with the development of

partnerships between foreign-hired, millennial teachers and leaders at the school allowed

the participants to develop positive, personal relationships. To the participants, having a

personal relationship with their leader was one of the most important factors for their

personal and professional happiness. These relationships could not be fabricated, they

needed to be developed over time through actions by the leader. These actions included

being supportive and understanding to the circumstances of the teachers. Actions also

included being open and receptive to the teachers and working at building partnerships with

all these individuals. The participants valued a leader that demonstrated compassion and

understanding for their individual needs and leaders at the school of research were

successfully demonstrating these qualities. Mark shared, "It's hard to trust a boss that you

haven't had a chance to get to know on a personal level." Isabel commented, "I've been

really lucky in that I've generally had good relationships with my principals." Positive

relationships do not always happen naturally, and they need to be developed by leaders.

Evidence from the analysis of the data in the research at the school indicated that personal

relationships are vital for personal and professional satisfaction of foreign-hired, millennial teachers. Most of the evidence in this research indicated that leadership has successfully achieved a high level of satisfaction with personal relationships and the efforts of leaders at the school to develop relationships was appreciated by the participants. Additionally, responses indicated that educational leaders at the school differentiated their leadership to support teachers' needs and worked intentionally to develop partnerships.

Gaining Confidence Through Reassurance

The second major theme that emerged from the research was the participants' ability to gain confidence through reassurance. To the participants, gaining confidence was the result of being openly recognized and appreciated by their leaders. Intentional actions by leaders to make teachers feel valued allowed for teachers' personal and professional satisfaction. To explore the theme of gaining confidence through reassurance , two sub-themes were developed based on the participants' responses. The first sub-theme was sensing validation and the second sub-theme was feeling recognized for talents. Each sub-theme is supported by evidence from the research, followed by a conclusion on the theme of gaining confidence through reassurance as related to foreign-hired millennial teachers and leaders at the school.

Sensing Validation

All participants in the research stated that sensing validation from leadership was highly important and made them feel valued as an individual. Sensing validation is the idea that teachers are recognized for their efforts and positively acknowledged for their successes. Four out of the six participants acknowledged that the need for attention was a popular stereotype of the millennial generation, and the results of this investigation

supported the notion that millennials craved attention. While some older participants in the

research claimed to not identify with the millennial generation, most responses indicated

that they favored feedback and validation.

During a conversation, Samantha told a story about a time a few years back when

she was leading the orientation program for new teachers. She enjoyed the position and

had much success, but soon realized the payment and extra time was not worth her efforts.

Although she was a bit reluctant to approach the school director with her concern, she

decided it was a good idea and she presented him with a short summary of the situation and

what she was contributing in her role. Samantha asked for an increase in pay and she

shared his response saying:

> He was just so open to it and instantly was like, yes, absolutely. You're adding so
>
> much value to this position. Yes, yes, yes. I felt very appreciated, very satisfied
>
> with him being able to make that decision quickly without question.

When asked directly about sensing validation in her work, Samantha added, "I want

validation that this hard work, that what I'm doing is recognized. We're pouring ourselves

into our job every single day and we want to make sure that it's noticed, that it is

appreciated, that it is valued."

Isabel had a different type of story when talking about sensing validation. She

explained that during a previous year, leadership was adding more professional

responsibilities and not providing any additional incentives. Isabel shared that when

incentives were suggested, her principal responded by telling teachers it was "just part of

your teaching responsibility." Isabel expressed that the lack of validation of their time was

demoralizing to her and others. She concluded saying, "Things were said in matter of fact

way, and I just thought, no, we're humans. Don't you see that?" Isabel did not sense that

her leader valued her time. In a separate conversation, Richard added to the sentiments of Isabel. Richard did not work in this section, but he stated that colleagues expressed similar complaints of feeling overworked without recognition or validation for their efforts. Although most conversations with the participants had positive connotations, both conversations with Isabel and Richard that related to this subject produced strong emotion and frustration. There were strong indications with both teachers that the issue was of high importance. Richard added:

> I'll tell you that the times the principals have done this [given extra time], it's like, hey, you have three hours for independent planning. When you do that to a teacher, it's literally like Christmas morning. Understanding your people and knowing when they're overloaded is key and you've got to pull it back.

During a conversation with Adam regarding sensing validation from his principal, he told a story from his first semester at the school. Adam explained that he was initially struggling with his adjustment to Colombian culture and his interactions with Colombian students. He admitted that he was a bit distant with his students at the start, believing that it was an appropriate strategy to demonstrate authority. Unfortunately, Adam encountered a difficult situation with a student during the first months and he was struggling. Adam sought advice from his principal, but he did not feel that he received the appropriate support in that moment. He explained, "I didn't get that validation that I was right, and the student was wrong … at the time it really frustrated me." Adam continued by expressing it was a difficult period of time and he had some self-doubts. Later, the principal approached him with feedback indicating that he should make a more concerted effort to build warm relationships with his students. He said that the feedback could have been timelier, but at least there was some response from his principal that made him feel validated. Adam

explained, "I took that to heart and it really changed my relationship [with his students]."

He later added, "I don't know if there was a way that I could've gotten the feedback that I

needed to change at the exact same time that my feelings were validated."

The subject of formal and informal feedback from leadership on professional

practices, in relation to validation, was discussed with all participants. Almost all teachers

welcomed feedback from classroom visits to validate their efforts, except for Mark.

Samantha expressed, "I want somebody who has a very full picture of my teaching

capabilities and from who I can receive feedback." Nicole shared, "I like directness. I like

to know where I stand. I appreciate constructive criticism and I appreciate specific

feedback." All teachers appeared satisfied with the level of professional feedback that they

have received at the school. However, teachers expressed that some feedback lacked

substance if it was not purposeful. Nicole explained, "I don't like a constant stream of

positive feedback because it makes me feel like it's not genuine … I like having things that

I can work on." Richard shared the same sentiment saying, "Good leaders, they have the

ability to give you that positive reinforcement, not all the time, but just the right amount of

times that just keeps me going." He expressed that he has received that balance from

leaders at the school and that gives him validation in his work.

Mark was the only participant who expressed a lack of confidence while being

evaluated and provided feedback from leaders. Even with his self-doubt, Mark

acknowledged that the feedback he received from his current principal has been effective

and validating. He explained:

> [The principal] is more directing and his observations are stressful but really, really
>
> productive. The reflection questions that he makes you ask yourself or answer

> beforehand and the meeting afterwards are very productive. And you know, I think
>
> I need somebody to force me to do that.

Mark concluded his story expressing his appreciation for clear direction through feedback from his principal by saying:

> I do feel like for me personally, my principal really wants me to be the best teacher
>
> that I can be … and though it is still annoying and the pressure and the whole thing
>
> of having him come into my room is still awkward and it makes me tense up, he has
>
> been able to make me feel like I am a good teacher and I can trust in what I'm doing.
>
> Just the fact that he could come in and observe sometimes motivates me.

Feeling Recognized for Talents

An analysis of the data from this investigation indicated that feeling recognized for talents and abilities was highly important to foreign-hired millennial teachers at the school. Feeling recognized for talents implied that the teachers were provided opportunities for professional growth. The participants expressed high expectations from their leaders to recognize their talents and support their growth as individuals and teachers. When reflecting on a previous principal, Adam explained, "I felt like she really formed me as a teacher in a lot of ways because I just felt so much permission to make mistakes and grow." The data analysis provided much evidence that having opportunities for growth was essential for personal and professional satisfaction with the participants and feeling valued as an individual.

Richard recounted his experiences with leaders at the school and their influence on his development. Richard shared that he was thinking about moving into educational administration, but he said, "It wasn't in my short-term plan." Then, two leaders at the school approached him to discuss his future and promote his advancement into leadership

positions. The school director then offered an opportunity for long-term professional development in educational leadership. Richard expressed that he was surprised, but very pleased and motivated. He said, "to have someone say that makes you feel more empowered." Richard also explained that his principal reduced some of his teaching duties to allow him more time for leadership roles. He said that he had many ideas, but no free time to work on these ideas until the principal provided more time. Richard concluded his story saying that at the school, "leadership has been the one to ignite those fires … that is all I need from a school because that shows me that they see what I see in myself and that they see more." It was evident that the actions of leadership had a significant influence on Richard's development, and he appreciated the opportunity to grow with the confidence from school leaders.

Samantha shared a similar story to Richard's experience. She explained that a few years ago, several friends had left the school and she was actively planning her next move to a different international school. She said that at that moment, her principal approached her about opportunities for growth. She explained, "I was on my way out the door and he approached me and talked to me about leadership potential, which I had never seen myself being anything other than a teacher." Like Richard, Samantha felt pleased and empowered by these comments and it greatly influenced her career path in education. She concluded saying, "[My principal] sees this potential and I had never considered that until it was brought to my attention by leadership." Since that conversation, Samantha has continued to work at the school for three more years.

During a conversation with Nicole, she referred to a story about growth in her classroom as a result of her principal. Some of her students had approached her principal complaining that there were differences in the ways that she interacted with each of her

groups. Some groups felt treated better than others. Nicole explained that her principal approached her with the concern in a non-judgmental way and just said that he wanted her to think about it. She shared:

> He [the principal] just called that to my attention. And I felt like, okay, cool. That's something that I can work with and something that now I can be aware of. I don't think he even said who the kids were, and it didn't make me feel bad, the way that he said it.

Nicole expressed that she received the feedback for growth, and she responded positively, "because he did it in a kind of informal, natural way." Nicole reflected saying that although she likes direct feedback, it was sometimes difficult to accept unless it can help her growth and it was delivered in an appropriate manner. She concluded saying:

> I felt like, okay, this is something that has been called to my attention, that I can be aware of, and that I can address, and I don't feel bad about it. I feel like, okay, this is an opportunity for me to just become a better teacher and be more aware of my relationships.

During a conversation with Mark, he told a story about his growth as a teacher at the school. Mark explained that a previous principal had helped him grow immensely on the research principles of education. Mark expressed, "He helped me to shift over my philosophies." He shared that this influence was essential to his growth. However, he later explained that over time, he was left with an abundance of autonomy and little feedback. Mark said, "I didn't feel like I was growing anymore under that principal … I had gotten comfortable with him and it was kind of like I had tenure." This relationship left him with some boredom until there was a change of administration. Mark explained, "Coming into the new administration, I felt like I was invigorated when he came in because I had made

the philosophical changes, but I was ready for someone that could help me with the practicality of it." Mark was clearly looking for growth opportunities and he was pleased at the new opportunity to improve.

Conclusions on gaining confidence. The evidence in the research clearly supported the idea that sensing validation, along with feeling recognized for talents, allowed the foreign-hired millennial teachers to gain confidence. Validation was very important to the participants. Validation came in the form of verbal recognition, monetary recognition, and more personal time. The participants mostly agreed that verbal recognition and monetary recognition was exerted by leadership at the school. However, there were some conflicting stories regarding an overload of responsibilities given by leadership and a lack of respect for personal time. Some participants felt that expectations were excessive, and this led to feelings of invalidation and not being valued. Samantha explained, "it comes back to showing that you value, and you appreciate your teachers." Leaders at the school who demonstrated appreciation have had a more positive influence on the participants in comparison with those who have not.

Regarding feedback, it was evident that feedback was expected and appreciated from the participants. There was a sensation that the foreign-hired, millennial teachers in this research yearned for information and acknowledgement of their work. Richard shared, "I think that's detrimental to the value of the teacher when you feel like – don't they [school leaders] know what I'm doing in the classroom?" Samantha echoed Richard saying, "I want a boss who knows what project we're working on, who is aware of the learning that's happening in my classroom. I want feedback frequently." Mark was the only participant with apprehensions about feedback, but he also concluded that it was necessary and appreciated the feedback from leaders at the school.

Feeling recognized for talents was highly important to the participants. In some instances, the teachers in the study actively sought out roles for professional growth, while others were identified by administration. In most accounts, the opportunity for growth has been appreciated. However, those who were identified by leadership admitted that they had some uncomfortable moments with their colleagues due to being appointed, rather than being hired through a process. For example, Nicole has made major steps in leadership roles at the school, but she feels that she has had to work hard for the opportunity, while others are just selected. Leaders at the school could be more attentive to these concerns. It was clear from the evidence that the foreign-hired millennial teachers in this research are motivated to grow professionally. Leaders are being successful in offering experiences to promote development, but improvements can be made with the process of providing growth opportunities.

Seeing Behind the Curtain

A third theme that emerged from the analysis of the research was seeing behind the curtain. Seeing behind the curtain is the idea that teachers perceive educational leaders as having clear expectations and a plan to meet goals for institutional success, and that the plan is transparent and viable. The desire for seeing behind the curtain was an important issue with all participants in this study. When referring to having a clear direction from his principal, Mark explained:

> I feel like if I have a concern, he [the principal] will address it or he will give me a
>
> way or an idea about how to address it … Or other times, he will step up and do it.
>
> I just feel like he's a guy that if I have a problem that I'm not so sure about how to

go about it, I feel like I can go to him and he will have ideas. He's got a lot of ideas, which is great.

To explore the theme of seeing behind the curtain, two sub-themes were developed based on the participants' responses. The first sub-theme was desiring transparency and the second sub-theme was appreciating trust. Each sub-theme is supported by evidence from the research, followed by a conclusion on the theme of seeing behind the curtain in relation to foreign-hired millennial teachers and leaders at the school.

Desiring Transparency

Evidence in the research indicated that transparency with decision-making was highly important to foreign-hired millennial teachers at the school. To the participants, transparency was a practice of being open and honest with all decisions. Most importantly, transparency implied that leaders would explain why decisions were being made and reasoning behind decisions would be provided. Richard talked about educational leaders at the school and how they responded to feedback from teachers. He referred to an annual survey on principal performance at the school and noted how some principals use this information to present a clear plan for improvement. However, other principals did not make improvements or sometimes did not even acknowledge the feedback. Richard explained, "What I want is for the administrators to be like, hey, I read your stuff on the survey. It's not going to happen. I'll be honest with you. This is why…" Richard shared that he understands there are limitations and leadership has their hands tied when making some decisions, but a transparent response is needed. Referring to a lack of transparency, he concluded saying, "It's a killer and it makes you ask, why am I going to try anything? Why am I going to give you any feedback anymore?"

Isabel had a similar story with transparency and her principal. Isabel shared how the celebration of Halloween was a major event in her section. However, that day always was uncomfortable for her because racial lines are sometimes crossed with costumes. She explained that the Colombian culture still accepts some offensive terms and characterizations of race, and in this instance, it was the use of an afro wig. Isabel subtly expressed her discomfort and a fellow colleague was more vocal about the issue in a faculty meeting. However, Isabel had the impression that some staff members did not respect her position and even made joking comments about the issue, while her principal seemed to be indifferent. This was not the first time that she felt ignored and Isabel stated:

> One of the things was I found you would have a conversation with her [the principal], and she would go do work on it, but she wouldn't say anything to you to follow up. So, you would just wonder…what happened after that conversation?

When Isabel approached her principal with her concern about the Halloween costumes, she felt ignored and that there was no urgency for a resolution. She did not understand why there was a lack of response. The lack of communication created an uncomfortable atmosphere and the lack of clarity became a festering issue with the faculty. Eventually, Isabel said she had a meeting with the principal and a small group of teachers, but she left the situation feeling that her concerns were minimalized, and it could have been handled much better and with more transparency. She expressed that she just wanted to hear the principal say:

> This is what's been happening. I see that this has been happening. I've been hearing this has been happening. Here's why it's an issue, and let's just talk about it … Everybody knew that there was something happening, and people were angry and annoyed that there was no genuine conversation around it.

Nicole emotionally shared a time when school administration was not transparent with a promotion process. A former principal was leaving the school and the position was opened for applicants within and outside of the school. Although Nicole did not have any direct experience as an administrator, she was a strong candidate due to her history of success at the school and her strong knowledge and professional abilities. She asked some leaders in the school about her candidacy and received mixed responses, and she became frustrated by the lack of transparency in the process. Other candidates from outside the school were introduced to the faculty, but she was not invited into the same process by the school's director. Eventually, a different candidate was chosen, and Nicole felt like she was never given the courtesy of a transparent process or announcement. She expressed:

> I feel like I heard through the grapevine that decisions had been made and he
> [school administrator] didn't tell me. And by the time he told me I already knew,
> and that made me feel really bad … And I feel like maybe I wasn't prepared in that
> moment to become an administrator. That's possible. But I just feel he could have
> been honest with me and said, no, I don't want to hire you. I don't want to hire from
> within, or I don't want to hire somebody who has not been a principal.

The conversation with Nicole was extremely emotional and obviously impacted her in that moment. However, Nicole has since elevated her roles and responsibilities in the school and has a major trajectory for success in educational leadership.

During a conversation with Mark, the theme of salary and benefits was introduced as a point of frustration. With the foreign-hire teachers at the school, there was contention about teacher salaries and the transparency about the benefits that each individual teacher receives. These differences in benefits generated a sensation that there was a lack of clarity on how monetary decisions were made. Mark stated:

> I think for me, part of it is the lack of transparency because we know different teachers have different benefits and things in their contract. It would be nice if that could be transparent, but in a good way, not like, okay, we're going to cut everybody's benefits. Let's figure out what makes sense… and then there's always these rumors.

On the topic of seeing behind the curtain, Mark continued to explain his frustration with a lack of transparency through generalized communication from principals. He told the story about how there was an issue with some teachers not having a sufficient number of evaluations submitted in the electronic gradebook system. The principal introduced the issue to the faculty as a generalized problem, but Mark explained that there was confusion on the expectation. Teachers were unsure of what was enough and unsure of what colleagues had the issue because of the lack of transparency. Mark said, "It's like, is that me? I don't think so. But now I'm worried, and you'd just be like, [the principal should] go to the teachers who have the issue." Mark noted that there was a lack of transparency and that the generalizations made by the principal confused and frustrated him. When asked what he wants out his leader in those situations, Mark shared:

> The clarity of expectations. And willingness to discuss the expectations if we don't feel like they're fair … just listen to our side of things. We want to know what the expectations are, but we also want to make sure that they're reasonable. But if we don't know what the expectation is, then there are statements being made about unclear expectations and that just creates animosity.

Appreciating Trust

Evidence indicated that trust was a major factor in the relationship between the foreign-hired millennial teachers and educational leaders at the school. Professional trust

from leadership helped the participants in their roles as educators and provided assurance that there was clear direction from leadership. Samantha talked about feeling professional trust with her principals and having the autonomy to make decisions with confidence. Samantha ascended in her roles at the school and she felt trusted by her principals as she developed new electives and led the science department. Additionally, she explained that she felt trusted with her educational practices and use of resources, and this trust was different from previous experiences. Trust was very important to her. Samantha expressed:

> I feel like anytime I ask for something that I need, it is granted and usually without question and without much justification needed … those things have been granted quickly, efficiently. I feel like it's definitely a sign of trust and appreciation and knowing that the resources are going to go to good use.

> Isabel had a similar story to Samantha's. She shared that in her previous section of the school, it was difficult to ask for time, resources, or materials. During that time, she said that at some moments she felt there was a lack of professional trust from her principal related to transparency with teachers. She expressed her frustration saying:

> We're the ones doing the work. We are the ones in front of the students, and you hired us. So, trust that we have something of value to bring to the table and to offer in terms of insight. And then if there's something that we're missing, you know, in terms of understanding why a decision has to go one way or the other, tell us, so we can understand it. Otherwise it just feels like we're not trusted, or we're not respected, or our concerns aren't taken seriously.

Two years ago, Isabel changed sections and now works with a new principal in middle school. When she entered this section of the school, she had the responsibility of starting a

new humanities program. Isabel explained that it was a difficult task, but the level of

support and trust from her principal was extremely different than her previous experience.

She said, "I feel like anytime I ask my principal for something or anytime we as a team are

asking for something, he was like, cool. He would just figure out how to make it happen."

She continued to talk about the situation and her principal stating, "It was like the complete

opposite of what I was saying [about her experience in the primary section]. I felt like he's

taking our word for things and he's seeing us as the ones who know." It was clear that there

was a different level of trust and confidence with the new principal. Isabel added:

> I just felt like there was a lot of confidence placed in me and my abilities and what I
>
> could do as a teacher and that made me want to work harder … I just felt like I was
>
> very much trusted to do whatever needed to be done.

> During a conversation with Adam, he talked about his recent experiences in

working with leaders at the school while redesigning the primary science program. This

assignment was a new role for Adam and a major change from the previous educational

philosophy. Adam was assigned to this position due to his strong content knowledge, along

with his ability to experiment and engage with his students. Adam explained that his

principal and the learning coordinator did not have the expertise that he had, and he was

worried about their interference. He was relieved by the amount of trust he was given in

the process. Due to the trust and confidence from leaders, Adam explained that he has

enjoyed the experience and that the program had been very successful. Referring to the

trust provided by the school leaders who were supporting the initiative, Adam stated,

"They're not particularly strong in those areas, but they both recognized the significance [of

the program]. I think it is really important for a principal."

Conclusions on seeing behind the curtain. The analysis of the data indicates that the foreign-hired millennial teachers who participated in this research wanted to see behind the curtain, and this required transparency and trust from leaders. Specifically, the participants wanted leaders that exhibited transparency with decision-making, and that cultivated an atmosphere of trust while providing direction. Awareness to the factors that motivated these individuals is essential in making appropriate decisions and cultivating a harmonious work environment. The data in the area of seeing behind the curtain at the school presented mixed responses, and conversations on the matters of transparency and trust were often emotional and resulted in commentaries based on frustration with leadership at the school, particularly on the issue of transparency. The participants felt that there was much information that is hidden and that the decision-making process was sometimes unclear. Richard summarized these feelings saying:

> I believe recently, I'm thinking about how change happens at the school and it's a slow process, which is guaranteed at most places. But as teachers, we don't get to see inside the black box, so we don't get to see what's happening. I think some of the greatest leaders that I've had have been the most transparent with that black box. Something isn't happening, so here's why … and to me not being able to see in it or feel like a decision doesn't match with the school values … that goes off in my head.

Although most comments about their leaders were positive, Richard and other participants had strong feelings that leadership could improve in this area of their work. Some leaders have been effective with their transparency, but there seems to be inconsistencies throughout the school. These inconsistencies have made some of the participants question the direction of the school and the decisions of school leaders.

Evidence in the data analysis indicated that the participants felt trust was highly important and that they felt trusted by their principals at the school to make autonomous decisions. Most of the teachers referred to trust as defined in the way leadership trusts them professionally. Mark explained, "They need to know that they can trust us." Richard added, "Having that trust in the person is huge because it empowers you." In most conversations, it was clear that teachers felt trust by their principal, and this trust allowed them to feel comfortable about the direction provided by leadership. However, there were inconsistencies among leaders in the school in the perception of how resources are managed. This discrepancy could lead to problems if not addressed. Isabel supported this idea by referring to a lack of trust with resources saying, "It's discouraging and it's also puzzling because it's like, this school has money problems? Like how?"

Leaders at the school can identify that perceptions of seeing behind the curtain are rooted in transparency and trust. Adam enjoyed trust and transparency first-hand when working with school leaders and said, "working with them, I get it now, where they're coming from. I actually think they're pretty good at what they're trying to do. They make a lot of sense, their vision makes sense." Attention to these details can help support positive, appropriate leadership for foreign-hired millennial teachers at the school.

Conclusions of the Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this research was to answer the question: How do foreign-hired, millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by leaders at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America? After several conversations with the participants regarding their perceptions of leadership at the school, three major themes emerged from an analysis of the

transcripts and review of the research materials. The themes included: (a) breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders; (b) gaining confidence through reassurance; and (c) seeing behind the curtain. Embedded in each theme are two sub-themes that provided a closer analysis of the feelings and perceptions that emerged through the stories of the participants.

The theme of breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders was introduced by all participants. The evidence indicated that the most effective way to establish these relationships was through support and understanding, along with establishing partnerships between leaders and teachers. The results indicated that the teachers included in this research had many positive experiences with relationships and that they felt supported and close to the leadership at the school. Mark explained, "I think this is a type of school where administration starts to learn the best way to work with the faculty, versus the faculty having to completely be the one that bends to the administration." Participating teachers were overwhelmingly pleased with this aspect of leadership and almost all conversations related to the theme were positive and encouraging.

The theme of the gaining confidence through reassurance was discussed with all participants. Reflecting on being a millennial teacher, Samantha explained, "I think we need, and we want, and thirst for more support, more validation than other generations." The evidence indicated that the most effective way for leaders at the school to ensure that the teachers felt valued was to provide validation of their work, along with recognizing their talents by providing opportunities for growth. The evidence indicated that leaders at the school were successful at making the participants feel valued for their efforts, with a few exceptions. Additionally, many of the teachers expressed that they were pleased with the opportunities to grow professionally at the school. Adam has moved into a leadership

role as a science program coordinator. Isabel has spearheaded a major change in curriculum in her section. Samantha and Mark have moved into positions as leaders of their respective departments. Richard has started transitioning from teaching to more leadership positions during the last years. Nicole has transitioned from her teaching role to become an instructional coach with expanding responsibilities. Overall, it was evident that educational leaders have provided many opportunities for growth for teachers within the school, and these opportunities had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the feeling of being valued to the teachers who participated in this research.

The theme of seeing behind the curtain was discussed with all participants. The evidence indicated that the most effective way for leaders at the school to ensure that there was access to seeing behind the curtain was to maintain transparency with decisions and cultivate an atmosphere of trust between teachers and leaders. Conversations on this theme generated strong emotions and it was apparent that some teachers had concerns and frustrations with some actions and decisions of leadership at the school. Transparency was the most pressing concern for the participants and almost all teachers had experiences when they questioned decisions based on a lack of transparency. Isabel explained:

> I feel like it is helpful to know, to hear - I talked to people, I did this and this is a decision that I have to make based on the information that I got and based on the discussions that we had.

The participating teachers presented reasonable arguments for their frustrations and it was evident that there were inconsistencies in leadership practices with transparency at the school. On the issue of trust, the teachers responded much more positively when referring to their experiences with leaders. Most participants felt professional trust through the support of resources and time. Evidence suggested that leaders at the school have been

successful at building trust between foreign-hired millennial teachers and leaders at the school.

Overall, the evidence from the research indicated that the foreign-hired, millennial teachers included in this research have favorable perceptions of leadership at the school. The participants felt that leaders were supportive and made efforts to build relationships with the teachers. The participants also felt that they received quality feedback from their leaders that validated their efforts. In addition, they felt valued by being provided opportunities for growth and this gave them confidence. The participants recognized that transparency can be a contentious issue at the school. However, most participants acknowledged and understood that some administrative issues require privacy. Finally, trust was evident between the participants at the school, and this trust allowed for a positive school climate.

The next chapter will include a presentation of the discussion and implications for practice. The findings will be presented and situated within the related research to understand how foreign-hired, millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by leaders at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America. A conclusion will be presented, along with recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications for Practice

This chapter will include the discussion and implications of the findings. First, there will be a review of the purpose of the research study. Second, the theoretical framework will be reintroduced to provide a background on previous research related to this study. Third, the methodology for this study will be reviewed to provide context for the study. Fourth, the themes and sub-themes developed through an analysis of the data will be restated. Fifth, the three major findings developed by the researcher and how they are situated in the current literature will be presented. Finally, the chapter will include recommendations for practice and recommendations for future investigations.

Revisiting the Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research study was to understand how millennial teachers make sense of administrative leadership in an educational setting. This knowledge could enable educational leaders to understand expectations of millennial teachers to maximize teacher performance and student learning. Educational leaders need to strategically adapt to the changing workforce that will see millennials in the majority. Understanding the shared experiences of this new generation of teachers can help support educational leaders and provide a concise, research-based understanding of millennial teachers. Specifically, this investigation was intended to answer the following question: How do millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America?
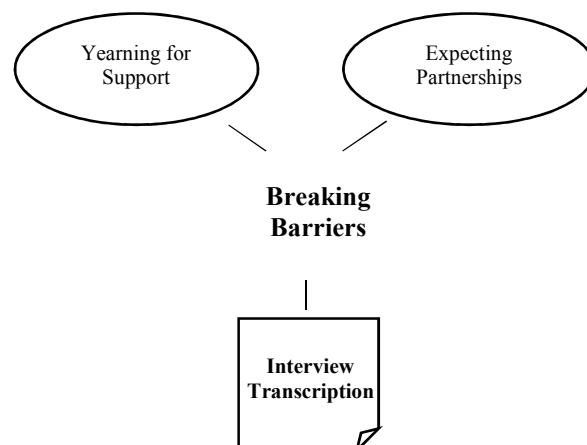
Review of the Theoretical Framework

For this investigation, the theoretical framework was based on the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) the development of LMX theory of multiple domains along with

relational leadership theory. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explain, "leadership is a multi-faceted construct involving aspects of the leader, the follower, and the dyadic relationship between the two. Therefore, investigations of leadership should focus on all of these facets" (p. 224-225). The central concept of the LMX theory is that effective leadership happens when leaders and followers develop strong leadership relationships (partnerships) and this results in mutual benefits and positive organizational outcomes (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Relational leadership emphasizes the individual within a group rather than the group as a whole (Boatwright et al., 2010; Schyns, 2006). Relational leadership differs from traditional leadership styles because it invites open dialogue and collaboration whereas traditional leadership establishes a line of authority in the workplace with boundaries and limitations to the leader-subordinate relationship (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004; Raelin, 2011). This style of leadership is founded on a relationship between leaders and subordinates that are constantly changing and affected by a variety of external factors (Wood & Dibben, 2015). Using a relational leadership approach to achieve a high-quality LMX relationship, leaders do not discriminate among their followers and instead, they find ways to work with each individual in a personalized way. This causes a shift in thinking from being a subordinate, to becoming partners (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Based on the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) development of the LMX theory and relational leadership theory research, and characteristics of millennial workers, this investigation intended to identify how millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America.

Methodology and Themes

A qualitative interpretative phenomenological approach was implemented, and this complemented the investigation of relational leadership theory due to the sense-making form of this research. Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants, three major themes were developed from an analysis of the research data. After a thorough analysis, the following three themes emerged regarding leadership characteristics and performance: (a) breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders; (b) gaining confidence through reassurance; and (c) seeing behind the curtain. Two sub-themes were also developed from each theme. The sub-themes for breaking down barriers between teachers and leaders included yearning for support and expecting partnerships. The sub-themes for gaining confidence through reassurance included sensing validation and feeling recognized for talents. The sub-themes for seeing behind the curtain included desiring transparency and appreciating trust. Figure 5 represents the emerging themes (in bold), along with the sub-themes (in ovals). These themes and sub-themes were developed further and analyzed in relation to the research question and the theoretical framework. The theme analysis led to the three major findings that will be discussed later in this chapter. In addition to the findings, this chapter will include general conclusions, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

```
   ⎛ Yearning for ⎞        ⎛  Expecting   ⎞
   ⎝   Support    ⎠        ⎝ Partnerships ⎠

               Breaking
               Barriers

              Interview
            Transcription
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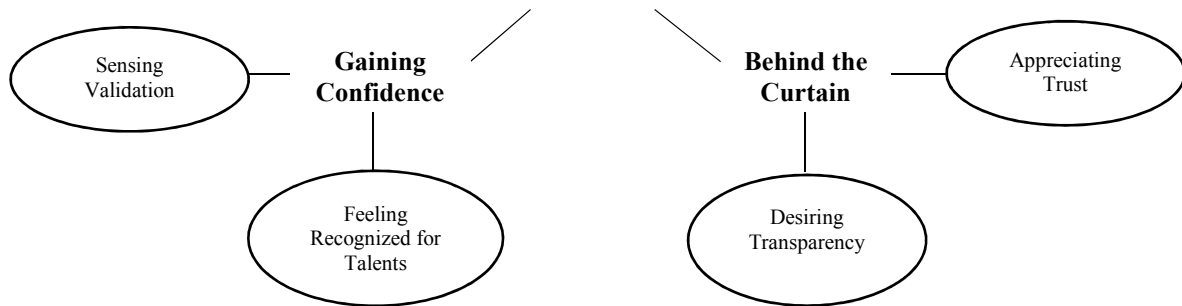
Figure 5. Coded themes developed from interview transcriptions. Adapted from "Understanding How Millennial Teachers Make Sense of Education Leadership Exhibited by Administration," by M. Shannon, 2020. Unpublished manuscript, Northeastern University. Reprinted with permission.

Findings

The research resulted in a detailed account of the sense-making of the participants on their perceptions of leadership at the school included in this investigation. An analysis of the data resulted in three major findings. These findings include:

1. Positive, personal relationships between millennial teachers and educational leaders resulted in teachers having personal and professional satisfaction.

2. Millennial teachers feel valued as an individual when they are recognized and appreciated by their leaders.

3. Millennial teachers want leaders who exhibit transparency and trust, and that have clear expectations and direction to meet institutional goals.

These findings are the result of an analysis from deep and detailed conversations with the participants. Each finding will be interpreted using the sub-themes developed in Chapter Four of this study. The findings confirm the previous research on relational leadership and on the research related to millennials. These connections are elaborated below to provide answers to the research question of this investigation.

Finding 1: Positive, Personal Relationships Between Millennial Teachers and Educational Leaders

All participants explained that sharing a positive, personal relationship with leaders at the school was highly important. Positive relationships will yield motivated, satisfied employees (Stringer, 2006). All participants told stories about how leaders were mostly effective in this practice, which has led to higher satisfaction in their work at the school. Building quality relationships requires leaders to have patience, compassion, and the ability to be open-minded and genuinely embrace the perspectives of others (Takacs, 2002). Educational leaders who take the time and effort to build relationships are more likely to promote motivation and satisfaction in teachers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Neumerski, 2013; Paglis & Green, 2002). According to the participants in the study, leaders at the school have been successful at cultivating these personal relationships because they offer support and understanding, as well as develop strong individualized bonds with the teachers. Prior research related to these two factors, along with additional research on millennials will be presented to show the connections in the literature with the outcomes of this study.

Yearning for support. Participants yearned for personal and professional support from their leaders. All participants expressed the desire for their leaders to be open and attentive to their personal and professional concerns. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explained that effective leaders who work on building relationships make hierarchical relationships disappear and the relationship of leaders and subordinates becomes more like peers. Several comments from the participants indicated that the teachers considered their immediate supervisors as peers. Two participants used the term "lucky" when describing the support and understanding from their leader and they indicated this was a direct result

of the leader being approachable and available. The teachers felt like they had a partnership with the leader. This partnership resulted in an increase of support and confidence with the teacher and provided the leader with more loyalty and commitment (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The findings of the study clearly support the idea that high-quality, supportive relationships among leaders and teachers at the school have resulted in an effective leadership process and satisfaction among the teachers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Being an effective educational leader requires tools and traits that include being supportive and serving the teachers, not serving edicts (Burke, 2013). Responses from the participants related to support and understanding were often emotional and feedback indicated that the teachers wanted someone that they could approach with any concern. Two stories highlighted professional and personal understanding and support from leadership. Nicole's story included her personal satisfaction with the way her principal handled the news of her pregnancy, and it was clear that this support had an enormous impact on her happiness. Samantha's story about feeling complete support from her principal during a complicated disciplinary situation with a student was evidence that the actions of her leader were appropriate and effective. Drago-Severson (2012) suggested that many aspects of teaching can lead to frustration, and this often leads to teachers exiting the profession to find work environments that are more caring and supportive. In moments like the ones described by Nicole and Samantha, a lack of support could have changed their attitude and impacted their experiences at the school. Because leadership gave them unconditional support, they became more invested in their work and felt the school was invested in them, both personally and professionally. The results of these interactions are

evidence that support and understanding will build relationships and yield motivated, satisfied teachers (Naidoo et al., 2011; Stringer, 2006).

Expecting partnerships. Millennial teachers expected a partnership to enhance personal relationships with leaders, and this was a reoccurring theme in the discussions with participants. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) emphasized that leaders should work on a one-to-one basis to enhance relationships and build partnerships. The participants emphasized that it was important for leaders to know them as individuals, understanding both their strengths and weaknesses. This feeling strongly relates to the practices of relational leadership and the notion that leaders should be informed and aware of individual conditions and attitudes to contour their approach to the characteristics of the teacher (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006). All participants recognized that they wanted and needed to have a close relationship with their leaders. This connects with previous research that indicates that individuals who have a strong attachment for support have a strong preference for relational leadership behaviors and leadership styles that are personalized (Boatwright et al., 2010). The findings indicate that leaders at the school are having success with establishing partnerships and school leaders recognize that individuals respond positively when they feel a connection with a supervisor (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The work of a leader should not be measured by their managerial actions, and instead it should be assessed on their interactions with followers and the relationship (Raelin, 2011). The findings of this investigation indicate that a major component of the development of a partnership is the idea that leaders should differentiate their approaches with each teacher. It is evident that educational leaders should diversify approaches based upon personal characteristics of teachers and this research supports this idea (Neumerski,

2013). This concept is connected to relational leadership because this form of leadership is grounded on the idea that differentiated leadership among subordinates can improve performance and satisfaction in the workplace (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Naidoo et al., 2011; van Breukelen, Konst, & van der Vlist, 2002). The story of Isabel and her experiences with two different leaders at the school highlight the impact of having a personal bond with her principal. At one time, she worked with a principal who was not open to developing partnerships, and this resulted in some frustrations with her work and a weak relationship with her leader. In her most recent experience, her principal has worked toward relationship-building and giving teachers individualized attention. Under these new conditions, Isabel expressed much satisfaction with her role and working conditions. Contrarily, Isabel lamented about the lack of relationship with her previous principal and expressed regret that she did not have an opportunity to get to know her better. Educational leaders who are attentive to individual needs and values are more likely to offer the appropriate support to teachers (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). The experiences of Isabel greatly support this idea.

While the development of partnerships through differentiated treatment is supported in this investigation and previous research, leaders should be cautious when using this practice. Differentiated treatment is a highly effective strategy, but leaders must not indicate personal preferences and favoritism. Employee's perceptions of leadership differential treatment affect their motivation and commitment to the work community. Perceived differential treatment in the work group can have a neutralizing impact on the positive effects of leader-subordinate relationships (van Breukelen et al., 2002). During an interview with Mark, this feeling was evident when he referred to differentiated treatment

on performance evaluations and how it can cause some confusion and frustration. Mark explained:

> Some of the teachers had been picked out almost immediately and told what was wrong with their classes, whereas others didn't seem to have any of that coming on. I was just really confused and uncertain about what was going on with them? From my perspective, they seemed like great teachers. I honestly never been in their class, but it just didn't seem like the right way to go about things.

It is critical that leaders avoid being perceived as having preferential treatment when individualizing treatment with subordinates (Long, 2017). Even though Mark had received positive reinforcement through his individualized bond, it was clear that this differentiation made him feel uncomfortable with his peers. If not implemented appropriately, differentiated treatment of teachers can lead to concerns and damage personal relationships and this should be recognized by educational leaders.

Connections to the research on millennials. The research on millennials has many connections to the finding and the notion that these individuals want a personal relationship with their leaders and that they expect support and individualized attention. Millennials are not intimidated by the role of the leader and they want a relationship that is supportive and that is focused on their development (Chou, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Howe and Strauss (2003) explained that because millennials are characterized as being sheltered and have been highly protected, this has resulted in a need for support. Millennials expect an open relationship with their supervisors with the ability to voice their opinions and ideas (Murray, 2015). Reiterating his comments from the previous chapter, Mark expressed, "Seeing administration outside of school … it made me feel like I had a connection and I could count on them and that there would be that personal connection to

support me." Samantha and Isabel also commented on the importance of having a personal relationship with their leaders, and both specifically mentioned that social interactions were critical for this bond.

The millennial teachers included in this study clearly wanted attention from their leader. The research revealed that the participants mostly focused on personal and social attention that resulted in positive relationships with their leaders. Four of the participants specifically noted socializing with their leader outside of school in a less formal setting and how this positively impacted their relationship. Meister & Willyerd (2010) explained that millennials often expect and seek personal support with leaders on issues not directly related to issues at the workplace. This idea resonated strongly with all participants and this need to discuss personal concerns is confirmed by the research on millennials. Educational leaders should determine the individual characteristics of their millennial workers to help provide the appropriate direction and support (Murray, 2015).

Finding 2: Millennial Teachers Feel Valued as an Individual When They are Recognized and Appreciated by Their Leaders.

According to the participants, feeling valued as an individual was highly important. All participants recognized that feeling valued by their leader was necessary for personal and professional satisfaction and happiness. Educational organizations should embrace leadership styles that are inclusive and encouraging (Murakami-Ramalh & Benham, 2010). Leaders at the school have been successful at making teachers feel valued by providing feedback and validation, along with providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. Prior research related to these two factors, along with additional research on

millennials will be presented to show the connections in the literature with the findings of this study.

  Sensing validation. The desire for feedback to provide validation was repeatedly expressed by all participants in the study. In fact, Mark was the only teacher who felt slightly uneasy when receiving feedback. However, he acknowledged the importance of feedback and validation and appreciated these moments in hindsight. Nicole and Isabel noted they wanted feedback that was direct and constructive. Isabel specifically stated, "I feel like I am most useful when I get to have frank conversations." Evidence from this investigation indicates that millennial teachers want useful feedback so that they can grow and learn from this information. The want and need for feedback are supported by the research on relational leadership. Relational leadership demands that leaders make connections with individuals and help them feel confident and empowered in their work (Brower et al., 2000). This confidence and empowerment can be achieved through quality feedback.

  Validation was a major theme with all participants. Leaders who provide validation to their teachers are helping to increase this personal gratification. Leaders should be attentive towards employees and make them feel appreciated and accomplished. The personal gratification that a teacher feels about their own competence is a major factor in being successful and satisfied in their work (Thoonen et al., 2011). Educational leaders who provide validation to their teachers and use relational leadership to connect with their teachers are helping to increase this personal gratification. This was evident with Samantha when she was immediately given an increase in payment for her work with the new teacher orientation program at the school. It was clear that she felt validated for her hard work and gratified that the school's director acknowledged this effort. To the contrary, Isabel and

Richard had strong feelings of not feeling validated when teachers were heavily burdened by school initiatives and felt underappreciated as more and more responsibilities were added to their work. Leaders should take note of the impact of validation and work toward promoting self-confidence and building self-esteem in teachers (Thoonen et al., 2011). Educational leaders who practice relational leadership invest much time and effort in each teacher to guide and help them to meet personal and professional goals and to build quality relationships with the teachers (Madlock, 2008).

Feeling recognized for talents. It was clear that the participants wanted personal and professional growth and that they considered leadership at the school as the conduit for their development. It is critical that educational leaders recognize the need to facilitate the growth of teachers (Drago-Severson, 2012). Teacher's personal perceptions of their own attributes and capabilities are critical to motivation and success in the classroom (Klassen, Chong, Huan, Wong, Kates & Honnok, 2008). This was exemplified in the case of Richard when he explained that he did not recognize his own talents until a leader at the school pointed this out. Richard was surprised by the leader's suggestion to move into educational administration, and this gesture gave him much confidence. The growth and the development of teachers can often be ignored, and this is an impediment on a school's success (Datnow, 2009). Leaders should be attentive to personal development and supporting the growth of staff members (Drago-Severson, 2012). If a leader can establish a positive relationship with the teacher, they are more likely to establish mutual respect that will incentivize teachers to seek opportunities for growth (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). All participants felt that their leaders promoted their growth. Richard, Samantha, and Nicole were appointed to leadership roles at the school after years of professional development, suggested by leaders at the school. These individuals felt that leaders intentionally directed

them to expand their roles and explore leadership opportunities. Adam, Isabel, and Mark had less opportunities for development, but each of these teachers were provided opportunities to grow and influence programs at the school. It was evident that the participants were grateful for the recognition and the opportunities to grow both personally and professionally.

Educational leaders who adhere to relational leadership use their influence to gain knowledge about a situation and then continue to use this influence to help teachers modify their attitudes and work towards organizational goals (Yukl, 2013). This was particularly evident in the cases of Mark, Samantha, and Richard. Samantha and Richard explained that they had not considered moving into leadership roles until their leaders approached them and initiated the idea. Both participants changed their attitudes and accepted the challenge to adopt new roles and grow professionally. In Mark's case, the influence of his leaders helped to shift his mentality toward adopting new pedagogic philosophies that influenced his teaching practice and how he understands student evaluation. In these situations, leaders gained knowledge of individual needs and the overall climate and feelings of the teachers to develop plans for growth (Neumerski, 2013). Leaders of the school purposefully identified qualities in the teachers to pinpoint ways to promote growth.

Connections to the research on millennials. Millennials are considered special by many researchers and they are accustomed to getting positive feedback and attention (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Millennials need a strong and positive relationship with their leaders that allows for recognition and appreciation (Martin, 2005; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). This characteristic implies that millennials expect their leaders to act as a coach and provide the protection that they crave and have been accustomed to for most of their lives (Murray, 2015). The story Adam told about feedback during a difficult moment with a student

exemplifies this research because he was not provided with protection and guidance. Adam was disappointed that he was not provided with feedback from his leader and he was discouraged because he did not believe that his feelings were validated. Samantha, Richard, and Nicole had more positive experiences with feedback and validation and their comments clearly indicate a strong need and desire for concise, constructive feedback on performance. The testimonies of the participants support the idea that educational leaders who continuously encourage teachers and recognize their value and contributions to the organization are more effective in working with the millennial generation (Murray, 2015).

Millennials can be characterized as confident, goal-oriented and driven for success (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Kowske, Rasch and Wiley (2010) found in their research with millennials that there were not as many differences in characteristics with millennials and previous generations as it is commonly perceived. However, their investigation did discover a difference in career advancement and development. Millennials have a desire for self-improvement and leaders should be aware of this passion for personal development. This awareness implies strategically providing opportunities for professional learning and personal growth (Kowske et al., 2010). The evidence from the participants' interviews supported this desire for growth and that the teachers felt that leaders at the school identified strengths in their abilities and made intentional effort to help their development. Work that is connected to a career path is extremely important to the millennial generation due to their aspirations for high achievement (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Keeling, 2003). Millennials choose work that is usually personally rewarding (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). This was evident with the participants. Samantha explained that after given opportunities for professional development, she decided to remain at the school for an additional two years. Richard, Mark, and Nicole have continued working at the school well beyond the

average number of years for a foreign-hired teacher. Millennials expect to make professional contributions and they will not wait around for years to make an impact (Downing, 2006). Leaders at the school have recognized the impact of opportunities for growth and they have provided these opportunities that have caused these millennial teachers to be satisfied and remain at the school.

Finding 3: Millennial Teachers Want Leaders Who Have Clear Expectations and Direction to Meet Institutional Goals.

According to the participants in the study, having a clear direction for their work was highly important. A leader must have a clear expectations and have the ability to give direction (Doyle & Smith, 2001). Lingam & Lingam (2015) explained that leaders should be attentive to details such as: (a) inspiring a shared vision, (b) modelling best practices, and (c) enabling others to be proactive in their work. Leaders at the school have been mostly successful at providing clear direction and this has been accomplished through transparent decision-making and by cultivating an atmosphere of trust at the school. Research related to these two factors, along with additional research on millennials will be presented to show the connections in the literature with the findings of this study.

Desiring transparency. According to the participants, transparency was a major factor in feeling that leadership had a clear direction. Transparency is a key element of relational leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Leaders who practice relational leadership invite participation and sharing responsibility, and these practices allow for transparency (Peters & Le Cornu, 2008). Relational leadership invites open dialogue and collaboration and attempts to eliminate the line of authority in the workplace (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Harris, 2004; Raelin, 2011). Evidence from this investigation indicates that

leaders at the school used transparency on most occasions. However, there were some lapses in this area and Richard shared his frustration about the sensation of having an open dialogue with leaders was only an illusion. In his example, the leaders solicited feedback from the teachers, and then nothing seemed to be done, and the feedback did not result in any change. Sometimes the feedback was never mentioned or addressed. Isabel also explained a story about the lack of transparency with all staff members while the leader managed a delicate issue. In this situation, the leader tried to create an opportunity for an open dialogue, but the efforts of the leaders made the situation worse because Isabel felt as though the leader was minimizing the concerns. In both situations, the teachers felt disheartened by the lack of transparency used by the leader.

All participants expressed that transparency with decision-making was critical in maintaining a clear direction. When decisions are forced upon individuals or there is a lack of clarity, there is typically resistance and a lack of support towards initiatives (Levačić, 2009). Mark explained a story about how his leader used many generalizations when discussing an issue with the evaluation system at the school and how the leader proposed some changes. He was insecure about his own performance because the problem was unclear. The teachers were asked to collaborate and find a solution to the problem, but Mark explained that they accomplished very little due to the confusion and ambiguity of the situation. Leaders who strive for team consensus will have improved results in performance (Schyns, 2006). In this instance, the leader was unsuccessful at building consensus and this resulted in frustrations from the teachers and little progress on resolving the issue.

Appreciating trust. For the participants in this investigation, trust was a major factor in feeling that leaders were providing clear direction. Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995)

explained that when there is a strong relationship between a leader and a follower, there is a higher level of mutual trust. When there are high-quality relationships between leaders and teachers, individuals can count on each other for loyalty and support which leads to higher levels of trust and respect (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Overall, the relationships between teachers and leaders at the school were positive and this led to mutual trust. Mutual trust resulted in a positive effect on the attitudes and behaviors of the participants (Brower et al., 2000). The teachers in the investigation felt that they were trusted with their responsibilities, and in turn, these teachers trusted their leaders with their decision-making. For example, Adam was provided with significant trust while initiating a new program at the school. He felt empowered by this trust and this empowerment led him to trust the advice of his leaders during the process. The stories told by the participants indicated that if leaders demonstrate trust in their teachers, the teachers will reciprocate trust. Leaders should be recognized as experts who can overcome adversity and persevere. They should be trusted for their experience in any moment (Doyle & Smith, 2001). Evidence from this investigation indicates that leaders at the school trusted the teachers and this trust resulted in a clear expectations and direction.

Teachers' perception of their leader's trust in them, based upon the leader's behavior, will affect their attitudes and behavior (Brower et al., 2000). This effect was evident in the stories of Samantha and Isabel. Both teachers required resources to support their initiatives and their requests were approved without question. The trust in their judgement from leaders had a major impact on their attitudes toward their work. The positive impact led to a cycle of trust because they were more committed to their work. Research indicates that the more a supervisor feels an employee is committed and loyal, the more autonomy will be given (Paglis & Green, 2002). In the cases of Samantha and Isabel,

they felt trusted and they performed well with this support. This result caused the leader to provide more and more autonomy with their decisions.

Connections to the research on millennials. There are several connections between this investigation and the research related to millennials and their desire for clear direction from leadership. Structure and direct communication are highly important for millennials to achieve success (Murray, 2015). The relationship between clear direction and communication was evident with the participants in this study. Millennial teachers have the capacity to voice their concerns and they are not passive individuals (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Therefore, they want to have clarity on expectations from leaders and the participants reaffirmed this idea. Chou (2012) explained that while leading millennials, leaders should implement a leadership style that involves the delegation of responsibility and that makes the work more meaningful and personally fulfilling. Stories from all participants affirmed they were most satisfied when they were included in the process of the school and given autonomy through transparent actions and trust from the leader. They also wanted clear instructions and expectations from their leaders. Millennials are accustomed to order and structure and therefore need and expect clear guidelines for their work and outcomes (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Educational leaders should recognize that millennials need to be constantly informed and leaders must ensure that there is clear direction and order in the workplace (Murray, 2015).

Leaders at the school have been successful in providing clear direction, but it is evident that improvements can be made and that the participants were sometimes frustrated by a lack of transparency. Millennial teachers are often characterized as having the capacity to voice their concerns and they are not passive individuals (Meister & Willyerd,

2010). It was clear that the participants in this study were not passive and they expected leaders to provide answers to their questions. Richard explained that he sometimes wants to know more information about why decisions are made at the school and he is negatively affected when he feels that he is not given answers from leaders. Richard's feelings support the notion that millennial teachers desire clear communication and specific details about norms and expectations (Abrams, 2018; Martin, 2005). If leaders can maintain transparency and build trust, they are more likely to develop clear expectations and direction for the school and for the teachers. Millennials are accustomed to order and structure and therefore need and expect clear guidelines for their work and outcomes (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Meister & Willyerd, 2010).

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the recommendations for practice and the implications for future research, along with a conclusion. The recommendations have been developed from an analysis of the data, along with the connections to the related research. The implications for future research will provide opportunities for further development on the research of millennials and their preferred leadership styles from educational leaders.

Recommendations for Practice

There is a growing pool of research focused on millennial characteristics (Chou, 2012; Harris-Boundy & Flatt, 2010). However, there is a glaring deficiency in the current research and a lack of investigation focused on the leadership style preferences of the millennial workforce (Chou, 2012). This investigation sought to identify the leadership style preferences of millennials and provide insight into how leaders can be more effective working with this generation. Evidence from this investigation indicates that educational

leaders can have much success working with millennial teachers by using the following strategies:

1. Educational leaders should provide millennial teachers with support and understanding in all personal and professional matters. Millennial teachers yearn for a leader who is compassionate and demonstrates a caring attitude.

2. Educational leaders should develop partnerships with millennial teachers. Millennial teachers want and expect that leaders share an individualized bond with them to cultivate a positive relationship.

3. Educational leaders should provide millennial teachers with feedback to validate their accomplishments. Millennial teachers need to sense that they are valued for their work.

4. Educational leaders should provide millennial teachers with opportunities for personal and professional growth. Millennial teachers want to feel recognized for their talents and abilities.

5. Educational leaders should practice transparency with all decisions that affect millennial teachers. Millennial teachers want to understand the reasons behind decisions that leaders make to help clarify expectations.

6. Educational leaders should cultivate trust with millennial teachers. Millennial teachers appreciate when they are given trust to make professional decisions with autonomy.

Implementing these simple strategies will make millennial teachers feel more satisfied and supported at a school. Millennial teachers want their leaders to take active steps to develop relationships, make them feel valued, and provide clear expectations. Conversely, if leaders do not implement these strategies, millennial teachers will likely be

frustrated, dejected, and unhappy. In the opinion of the researcher, if educational leaders implement these strategies with millennial teachers, there is a strong probability that they will be more effective in working with this new generation of educators. By listening to these teachers, school leaders will be exposed to new ideas that can challenge assumptions and promote improvement in a school (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Recommendations for Future Research

The literature presented is only a partial exploration of several emerging themes. For future research related to this work, there are several areas that could be investigated to enhance the research on the relationship between educational leaders and millennial teacher. The recommendations for future research include include:

- Investigating leadership strategies affect the performance of millennial teachers.

- Exploring the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors that motivate millennial teachers.

- Understanding the perceptions of educational leaders while working with millennial teachers.

- Studying the effects of the technology on the relationship between educational leaders and millennial teacher.

Future research should be developed to provide more clarity about educational leadership and the impact on millennial teacher performance. For example, there is a need for a focus on leadership strategies that enable leaders to understand and recognize the individual teachers' perspectives and views on reform and innovation (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015). A recognition of individual teacher's perspectives will contribute to investigations on relational leadership and provide authentic research from the viewpoint of

the millennial teachers. Additionally, connecting performance and leadership styles is needed to develop a guide for best practices through a differentiated approach. This investigation is a start, but future resource can enhance the validity of the findings.

Understanding the leadership preferences of millennials teachers will have several benefits. This includes retaining strong teachers, improving staff relations, and improving student learning (Kitching, Morgan, & O'Leary, 2009). By further examining the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors more closely and with a more specific scope, this examination could improve our genuine understanding of the factors of teacher motivation. There is no doubt that this knowledge will also lead to strong performance and increased student engagement. Therefore, there is an absolute need to further research the innate characteristics of millennial teachers to promote student learning and an improved educational environment. This research could include developing a profile for teachers' beliefs and ideas about their own performance (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). If we can identify the leadership preferences of millennial teachers, this information can be used to help teachers with their overall job performance and inevitably improve the learning environment by promoting 21st century skills.

Leaders' perspectives are critical in further development of ideas in leadership practices. For example, research suggests that the more a supervisor feels an employee is committed and loyal, the more autonomy will be given to that individual (Paglis & Green, 2002). However, investigations into leadership perspectives are limited and do not provide extensive support into leadership theories and practices. Much of the research on leader-subordinate relationships has focused on the subordinate's perspective and investigations on leadership theories could be expanded to include the ideas and perceptions of leaders.

Specifically, research could focus on the perceptions of educational leaders toward working with millennial teachers.

Finally, the work of Hershatter and Epstein (2010) and the idea that millennials are not uniquely different than previous generations but are responding differently due to the enhanced digital environment poses a major challenge for leadership. Much of the literature has emphasized the need for leaders to develop relationships with their employees. All meaningful relationships are supported by strong communication and the digital age has changed the dynamic of communication. Traditional email messages are being replaced by cell phone applications and social media sites. Effective leaders understand that maintaining only traditional paths for digital communication may cause limitations in building relationships. Further research to help educational leaders understand digital influences and the effect on millennials would enhance the ability of leaders to identify leadership preferences of millennial teachers.

Conclusions on the Discussion and Implications for Practice

This investigation intended to answer the following question: How do millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America? Through a series of in-depth interviews with a group of millennial teachers, evidence was gathered to gain an understanding of how they perceived leadership at the school included in the investigation. The results of the investigation and an analysis of the findings revealed that the millennial teachers had many high expectations of their leaders. Specifically, the millennial teachers wanted leaders who could cultivate positive, personal relationships, that could provide teachers with a feeling that they are valued as individuals,

and that could provide clear direction for their success. Leading millennials is a unique challenge due to the personality traits and the expectations of this generation (Murray, 2015). Working with millennials requires less reflection and emphasis on managerial duties and a shift toward focusing on the daily personal interactions and exchanges between leaders and subordinates (Raelin, 2011). It was quite evident that personal interactions and connections with leaders were very important to the participants. These interactions allowed the millennial teachers to feel understood and appreciated for their efforts. Additionally, personal interactions contributed to millennials feeling validation, trust, and transparency with leadership.

It is imperative that educational leaders identify personal characteristics millennial teachers and effective leadership styles that will lead to favorable attitudes and conditions for this new generation of teachers (Kocabaş, 2009). Millennials live in the moment and have daily expectations, rather than long-term outlooks (Martin, 2005). This mentality is a shift from previous generations. Educational leaders should be constantly attuned to the wants and needs of this new generation of teachers and being an effective educational leader requires traits that are inclusive and strategies that are designed to cater to the needs of the teacher (Burke, 2013). This behavior from leaders supports the research of relational leadership and the work of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) who explain that leaders should work individually with subordinates to develop deeper relationships that move beyond the superior-subordinate roles and seem more like a partnership. This investigation clearly supports the conclusion that relationships between leaders and teachers at the school of investigation are critical for to the participants satisfaction and happiness. Once leaders establish positive relationships, they can provide support, build bonds, provide feedback

with validation, provide opportunities for growth, demonstrate transparency with decision-

making, and build trust with their teachers.

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Appendix A: Interview Script and Protocol

Interviewee (Title and Name): _____

Interviewer: _____Matthew Shannon_____

RESEARCH QUESTION: How do millennial teachers, through personal, shared experiences, make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America?

Part I: Introductory Protocol

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about teachers' leadership preferences as a Millennial. My research project focuses on the experience of millennial teachers and their personal perceptions of leadership at the school included in this investigation. Through this study, I hope to gain more insight into the feelings of millennial teachers towards educational leadership and contribute to existing research. Hopefully this will allow me to identify ways in which I can be more effective in educational leadership.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversations. Do I have your permission to record our interviews? I will also be taking written notes. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts. I will be the only one privy to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. I will also ask you to sign a form of consent prior to starting our interview to ensure that our agreement is clear.   Do you have any questions about the interview process or how your data will be used?

Each interview should last about 60 minutes and we will meet at least two times. During these times, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

One of the things I am interested in learning about is teacher perspectives on leadership. I would like to hear about your perspective/experience on educational leadership in your own words. To do this, I am going to ask you some questions about the key experiences you encountered. If you mention other people, please use do not mention names. I will use a pseudonym for your name.

Appendix B: Consent Form for Interviews

Northeastern University, Department of Education
Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator, Quannah Elizabeth Parker-McGowan, Student Researcher, Matthew Shannon
Title of Project: UNDERSTANDING HOW MILLENNIAL TEACHERS MAKE SENSE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXHIBITED BY ADMINISTRATION

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the student researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and we will give you a copy to keep.

Key Information
- Your consent is being sought for participation in a research project and your participation is voluntary.
- The purpose of the research is to understand how millennial teachers make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America.
- The anticipated amount of time that your participation will take will be approximately 3 hours.
- The procedures that you will be asked to complete will be:
  - Participate in 2-3 interview sessions
  - Review the transcripts of your interviews to ensure validity
  - Provide any feedback on the process
- The foreseeable risks to you are negligible.
- There are no direct benefits for you.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a millennial teacher an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America and your perception of educational leadership will provide important insights on the research.

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study is to understand how millennial teachers make sense of educational leadership exhibited by administration at an international, U.S.-style K-12 school in Colombia, South America.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in 2-3 interviews that will last approximately 1 hour each. You will be asked a series of questions relating to your personal reflections on the leadership exhibited by education leaders. After each interview is transcribed, you will be asked to read the transcription and verify the accuracy of the interview.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
You will be interviewed at a time and place that is convenient for you. There will be 2-3 interviews and each session will last approximately 1 hour. Additionally, you will be asked to review and

comment on each of the transcribed interviews. You can either write your feedback or present your comments verbally.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
The foreseeable risks to you are negligible. However, the main risk in the research is the possible loss of confidentiality. The interviews will delve into deep, personal feelings about leadership at the school and this could generate the desire to elaborate on the conversations with individuals both included and not included in the study. This could generate tensions in the workplace and incite possible conflicts between individuals.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
Participants included in the research will have no direct benefits. Potential benefits to others include helping educational leaders to identify the leadership preferences of millennial teachers. This information can be used by leaders to help teachers with their overall job performance and contribute to the learning environment by accurately supporting the identified needs and preferences of millennial teachers.

Who will see the information about me?
Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being part of this project.

All electronic files including recordings, journals, and transcripts will be stored on the computer of the researcher and only the Principal Investigator and the researcher will have access to this information. Additionally, physical copies of evidence produced from the research will be stored in a secure, confidential office that cannot be accessed by others except for the Principal Investigator. You will be provided with a physical transcript of your interviews for review and approval after each session. These copies will be collected and filed with the research after the revision is complete.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board [**or if applicable** the sponsor or funding agency e.g. NIH, NSF, FDA, OHRP] to see this information.

If I do not want to take part in the study, what choices do I have?
You can decline. Your participation is completely voluntary.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?
You will not be subject to any harm in this research.

Can I stop my participation in this study?
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have [as a student, employee, etc].

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Matthew Shannon at shannon.mat@husky.neu.edu*,* the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact

Quannah Elizabeth Parker-McGowan at q.parker-mcgowan@northeastern.edu, the Principal Investigator.

Note that per Northeastern University IRB, any emails or phone calls to my work contacts must be deleted with no response—this is solely my student research.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation?
You will not be paid for your participation.

Will it cost me anything to participate?
There will be no costs for you if you participate in this study.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (# xx-xx-xx). *[protocol # will be provided to you by the HSRP office]*.

I agree to take part in this research.

_____   _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part   Date

_____

Printed name of person above

_____   _____

Signature of person who explained the study to the   Date
participant above and obtained consent

_____

Printed name of person above

☐   **I agree to be contacted for follow up or for future research studies**

_____

Contact Information (email or phone)

Appendix C: Interview Questions -Session # 1

Interview Questions:
*Introduction/Background***:**
1. Tell me about your history as a teacher

    a. How long have you been teaching and where?

    b. How long have you worked at this school and what is your current role?

    c. Why did you choose a profession in education?

Main Questions:
1. Tell me a story about a positive experience at an international school.

2. Tell me a story about a time that you had a negative experience at an international school.

3. Tell me about your experiences working teachers who are of different generations.

4. Tell me a story that you think highlights the differences of working with teachers who are from a different generation.

    a. What do you think about teachers of different generations?

    b. What traits do you feel that have in common/differ with these individuals?

    c. How have teachers from different generations influenced you?

5. Tell me about your relationship with administrational leaders at the school.

    a. Tell me about a time when you did receive or did not receive support from administration.

    b. What did the leadership look like in this situation?

    c. How did you experience leadership during this situation?

    d. What implemented leadership strategies were affective or ineffective with you?
    e. How has a leadership style affected your personal performance? Please explain.

6. Do you wish to add any additional details to your information provided?

Appendix D: Interview Questions -Session # 2

Interview Questions:

*Reflection on Previous Interview***:**

1. Please tell me about your reflections from our initial interview.

   a. Have you reconsidered any of your previous answers on leadership?

   b. Tell me about a time when leadership has influenced your performance.

   c. Tell me about a time when/if leadership has made you reconsider your career choice.

   d. Tell me about a time when you have felt satisfaction and support from leadership.

   e. Overall, how do you perceive the administrational leadership at the school?

General Questions:

2. Please tell me about a time when you had a positive experience with leadership at the school.

   a. What was the context?

   b. What made it a positive experience?

   c. Would you have changed anything about the way leadership handled the situation?

3. Please tell me about a time when you had a negative experience with leadership at the school.

   a. What was the context?

   b. What made it a negative experience?

   c. Would you have changed anything about the way leadership handled the situation?

Appendix E: Sample of Coding after Analysis

<u>Mark Coding 1</u>
1. Positive relationship
2. Informal and social interaction built camaraderie
3. Personal connection led to support
4. Professional trust
5. Confidence or neglect?
6. Feedback to improve self esteem
7. Promoting professional success
8. Trust
9. Motivation to meet high expectations from the leader
10. Feedback is motivating
11. Lack of growth
12. Leaders push growth
13. Appreciation and building of self-esteem
14. Top of the hierarchy is scary
15. Lack of appreciation
16. Decisions based on money
17. Lack of appreciation
18. Recognition
19. Comfortable
20. Personal connection
21. Support
22. Professional growth
23. Need for feedback and clear expectations
24. Leaders being teachers
25. Constructive feedback
26. Leader helping teachers to reflect
27. Promoting professional growth
28. Support and confidence
29. Leaders understanding personal capacities- strengths and weaknesses
30. Good advice and direction
31. Exemplary
32. Knowledgeable
33. Social relationship
34. Personal connection
35. Socializing builds relationships
36. Personal connections
37. Personal relationships
38. Apprehension to trust due to power
39. Lack of confidence due to a lack of connection
40. Reciprocal support between leader and subordinate
41. Trust
42. Personal relationships help build trust
43. Social opportunities help develop bonds
44. Personal connections

45. Building community and confidence
46. Fear pushing people away
47. Open-door policy
48. Communicating critical feedback to support
49. Leaders teaching
50. Influencing change and growth
51. Knowledgeable
52. Awareness
53. Collaboration
54. Promotes Collaboration
55. Motivation from positive change
56. Practical leadership is needed
57. Problem-solving and support
58. Comfort
59. Knowledgeable
60. Insecurity as a result of the leader
61. Confusion due to a lack of transparency
62. Trust
63. Acknowledgement
64. Lack of transparency
65. Lack of trust
66. Leaders must adjust to faculty
67. Lack of appreciation
68. Discomfort due to monetary offer
69. Transparency
70. Appreciation
71. Leaders need to make equitable decisions
72. Positive relationships and camaraderie
73. Respect and trust
74. Positive relationships were important
75. Connections led to professional growth
76. Reciprocal support
77. Facial gestures and demeanor from leaders are notable
78. Leaders should appear positive and happy
79. Feeling valued
80. Satisfaction from professional growth
81. Professional support
82. Support
83. Collaboration and autonomy in decision-making
84. Decisive leadership
85. Supportive
86. Decisiveness
87. Realistic decisions
88. Knowledgeable and capable leaders
89. Social integration with leaders
90. Humanizing and camaraderie
91. Leaders must recognize some individuals feel obligated

92. Leaders build community through camaraderie
93. Understanding individual preferences
94. Social integration
95. Exemplary social behaviors
96. Reserved and low-profile (Most of the time)
97. Lack of clarity and transparency
98. Generalizing
99. Direct communication
100.　　　Poor communication led to insecurity
101.　　　Lack of transparency
102.　　　Support
103.　　　Lack of clarity
104.　　　Direct communication
105.　　　Clear expectations
106.　　　Lack of clarity led to conflict
107.　　　Clear expectations
108.　　　Open to communication and listening
109.　　　Unclear expectations led to animosity
110.　　　Supportive
111.　　　Honest, ethical
112.　　　Knowledgeable