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Millennials hold different cultural values to those of other generations: An empirical analysis

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Orientation: Literature on the appropriate management of millennials in the workplace is plentiful. This differential treatment is on the premise that millennials hold different values to other generations.

Research purpose: The aim of this research was to test the assumption of cultural value differences between the generations and to specify where these differences exist.

Motivation for the study: Knowledge of specific values held by the millennials will assist those who work with this generation to adjust their behaviours.

Research approach/design and method: This research was conducted in South Africa in organisations, sampling employees across three generations. Cross-sectional data were collected using an instrument based on Hofstede's typology. After confirming the reliability and general factorial validity of the instrument, mean scores were compared using analyses of variance. As a broad measure, the correlation between age and the cultural values was determined.

Main findings: There were significant differences between the generations on three of Hofstede's cultural value dimensions, namely long-term orientation, power distance and masculinity. Millennials scored lower on power distance and masculinity compared to the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X. Millennials scored higher on long-term orientation compared to the Baby Boomer generation.

Practical/managerial implications: This research affirms some of the existing stereotypes about millennials and specifies where these exist. These results can be used to better understand and effectively work with millennials in the workplace.

Contribution/value-add: Through this study, we can acknowledge that millennials are somewhat different from the other generations in the workplace and so should be treated somewhat differently.

Keywords: Hofstede; characteristics; cultural values; generations; millennials.

Introduction

A generation is a group of individuals born within the same time period, having the same lifestyles and sharing life occurrences (Parveen & Vanaja, 2019; Treffler & Herzig, 2018). The events and social conditions in the life of a specific generational cohort shape their values and behaviours (Noonan, Bunn, & Shearin, 2019), and generational groupings have proven to be a useful tool in explaining differences amongst people (Campbell, Campbell, Siedor, & Twenge, 2015).

Generational cohorts have common expectations and preferences in the workplace (Otieno & Nyambegera, 2019). Where organisations strive for success, that success depends on their leadership having the ability to acknowledge and manage differences between the different generational cohorts (Shuler, Faulk, Hidleburg-Johnson, & Williams, 2016).

There are currently three generations in the workplace, namely the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) and Generation Y, also known as the Millennial generation (born between 1980 and 2000) (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012). Given these distinctions, there is a need to identify if values are fundamentally different across the generational cohorts so that each segment of the workforce can be effectively managed (Brink & Zondag, 2019).

Research purpose and objective

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the Millennial generation is different from other generations in the workplace by virtue of the values according to which they live and that

they hold dear. This knowledge would then improve employer engagement with millennials and inform how they are treated in the workplace.

Literature review

The Millennial generation is known as the 'Digital Generation', that is, having been born in an era of information and communications technology advancement. This has caused them to be more 'tech-dependent', in that they are somehow incomplete without the technology that allows them to improve their knowledge anytime and anywhere (Parveen & Vanaja, 2019; Wotapka, 2017; Zainuddin, Latif, Sulaiman, Yusof, & Ahmad, 2019).

Millennial children have a reputation for having grown up receiving constant praise and reward from their parents. This phenomenon is known as 'helicopter parenting' and is characterised by parents hovering around their children, ready to swoop in when their children need them (Casey, 2015). Millennials are also regarded as the most educated generation and are likely to hold tertiary qualifications that will have prepared them well for the workplace and their careers (Paulin, 2018; Sabir, Naved, Khan, & Khan, 2019).

Although the Millennial generation may be stereotyped as being entitled and overly dependent (Hallman, 2016), their upbringing has also enabled them to have positive qualities in their lives, such as optimism and confidence (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017). They look for meaning and purpose above that which is to be found in material gain (Cox, Stewart, Lortie, & Barreto, 2019), and they want to make a difference in the world (Jirasevijinda, 2018). In addition, they like self-expression and for their thoughts and opinions to matter and be accepted (Smith & Turner, 2015).

Millennial workplace behaviours

Millennials have their own views of the ideal work environment – including the matter of authority – emanating from their own set of values and explanations (Rony, 2019), and they believe that respect for authority is earned (Casey, 2015). They are not impressed with positions and titles and tend to have a more familiar relationship with authority figures (Sledge, 2016). This is reflected in how they look directly to authority figures for direction and validation instead of following the established chain of command, as this is seen as more effective and efficient by the Millennial worker (Gardner, 2016).

Being digitally minded and tech-savvy, millennials can carry out more than one task at a time because of the technological gadgets at their disposal (Parveen & Vanaja, 2019). They become bored by mundane employment as they strive to learn their jobs quickly and then move onto something new (Axten, 2015). Because of the ease at which they access and obtain information, Millennial workers are impatient and less committed to a specific employer (Pratama, Nasution, & Absah, 2019). Accordingly, they consider commitment in the

workplace as a shorter-term arrangement than do older workers and are, in turn, considered as less loyal to their employer (Wotapka, 2017).

In the workplace, they have a strong need for continuous learning and development (Atieq, 2019) and are willing to work hard where they believe in the vision of the organisation and feel that they are included (Firestone, 2016). Because they like to be informed, they have a greater need for information than previous generations and prefer an ongoing flow of information (Ben-Hur & Ringwood, 2017).

Millennial workers are confident achievers, energetic tech-understanding multi-taskers and globally minded, wanting to make a difference in the work they do (Hallman, 2016). They are confident in the workplace, are risk-takers and tend to plan better than the older generations (Sabir et al., 2019). They are open to change and will question the status quo (Endress, 2019; Maier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, & Bradford, 2015). They will reject the notion that they are required to work within the rigid confines of a job description (Endress, 2019) and will challenge norms in the workplace, such as dress codes and employee–supervisor relations (Maier et al., 2015).

Millennial workers are not shy and are more likely than previous generations to let their employer know when they are not happy, being most satisfied when they are given a voice and when they know that their voice is heard in the decision-making of the organisation (Bogosian & Rousseau, 2017). They seek a caring interpersonal relationship with their employer that includes an empathetic connection to their needs (Sharon, 2015). The Millennial generation has been called a 'contradictory' generation as they seek independence, flexibility and challenge, and also look for clarity, regular feedback and 'safety nets' in case of failure (Meng, Reber, & Rogers, 2017). Millennials also have a lower resistance to stress in relation to their peers in older generations (Pinzaru et al., 2016).

Compared to Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation, millennial workers also show a larger sense of entitlement to perks or benefits, particularly where they are being paid less for doing the same work (Allen, Allen, & White, 2015). This sense of entitlement leads to conflict between generational workers because the older generations believe they had to work to get their promotions and rewards in the workplace (Casey, 2015). Millennials also have a high level of arrogance in relation to their peers in older generations (Pinzaru et al., 2016).

Work–family life balance is an important value for millennials in employment (Hattke, Homberg, & Znanewitz, 2017), and, inevitably, they will look to change jobs where they perceive they will have more opportunity for leisure (Ramli & Soelton, 2019). An inclusive culture in the workplace for the Millennial generation is where individuals are connected because there is teamwork, collaboration and

growth (Smith & Turner, 2015). This explains why millennials are team players in the workplace, believing that, together, everyone will achieve much more (Parveen & Vanaja, 2019).

Recognition is an important value for the Millennial worker, and, being confident achievers, they look for direct constant physical feedback and mentoring from their employer (Minhas & Islamia, 2020) as well as positive reinforcement and praise (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017). This feedback, along with the resultant recognition and reward, needs to be fair and transparent (Pratama et al., 2019) as millennials are an ethical generation, and these highly visible recognition practices must celebrate ethical best practices (Maier et al., 2015).

The work values of the Millennial generation are best understood by categorising these values into extrinsic and intrinsic values, as referred to in the literature per Table 1.

In essence, these values are in contrast with the values held dear by other generations, specific as they are to the Millennial generation.

Millennials and Hofstede's cultural values typology

Geert Hofstede, around 1970, created a multi-dimensional model for the study of cultural value differences across nations (Hofstede, 2011; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). When looking at the term 'cultural values', a person is regarded as part of the culture in which they are born into and live their life, and their total value judgements represent the cultural values of their society (Gündüz, Aktepe, Sulak, Baspinar, & Buyukkarci, 2019).

Currently, the model comprises six dimensions of cultural values: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, long/short-term orientation and indulgence/restraint. In essence, Hofstede looked at basic problems that may be inherent in all

TABLE 1: Millennials' extrinsic and intrinsic work values.

Extrinsic work values	Intrinsic work values
• Remuneration and salary growth • Career growth • Flexible work practices • Interesting and challenging work • Independence/autonomy in their job role and fewer rules	• Personal development and growth • Recognition • Work–family life balance • Sense of purpose aligned to employer's values and ethics • Contribution by way of new ideas

Source: Integrated from Datta, A., & Jain, A. (2017). Millennials' perception of work environment: A climate study amongst employees of hotel industry. *Synergy Journal of Management*, *19*(1&2), 23–30; Firestone, S. (2016). Millennials are people too: Evaluating other generations' negative perceptions of Millennials and the impact this has on workplace. *Review of Business and Technology Research*, *13*(1); Hee, O.C., & Rhung, L.X. (2019). Motivation and employee retention among Millennials in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *9*(2), 876–884. https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v9-i2/5629; Kuron, L.K.J., Lyons, S.T., Schweitzer, L., & Ng, E.S.W. (2015). Millennials' work values: Differences across the school to work transition. *Personnel Review*, *44*(6), 991–1009. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-01-2014-0024; Ozcelik, G. (2015). Engagement and retention of the Millennial generation in the workplace through internal branding. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v10n3p99; Sharon, A.L. (2015). Understanding the millennial generation. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals*, *69*(6), 11–14. Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.laureatech.idm.oclc.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=0a0336d0-b8da-410d-a5b3-7e42fa4cbe86@sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4210; and Sruk, B. (2020). How Millennials are changing organizations and business models – New values, new principles, new culture. *DIEM: Dubrovnik International Economic Meeting*, *5*(1), 101–108

societies and these dimensions are further explained below (Hofstede, 2011; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011):

• Power distance refers to social inequality, including the relationship with authority. Small power distance or low attraction to power distance indicates reduced respect for, or reduced fear of, older people and an expectation that employees will be consulted. Large power distance implies a more entrenched hierarchy in which roles are unequal and have been established for convenience.
• Uncertainty avoidance refers to how society feels about unclear, uncertain or unknown situations. Weak uncertainty avoidance is where each day is taken as it comes in that uncertainty is accepted, changing jobs is not a concern, and rules – whether written or unwritten – are not favoured.
• Individualism/collectivism refers to the relationship between the individual and the team or group. When collectivism is prioritised over individualism, the emphasis is on relationship rather than task, there is a need for belonging and harmony, and the objective of education is learning how to do rather than learning how to learn.
• Masculinity/femininity concerns the emotional implications of being born a male or female. In a feminine society, as opposed to a masculine society, there is little differentiation between women and men when looking at their emotional and social roles in life. There is also work–family life balance and both men and women are expected to be humble and caring.
• Long/short-term orientation refers to the choice that individuals make to focus their efforts on the future or on the present and past. In a long term, as opposed to a short term, society, traditions are adapted to changing circumstances, saving and determination are important goals, and individuals regard success as resulting from effort, whilst failure is seen as being caused by a lack of effort.
• Indulgence/restraint represents the control exercised by society relating to how needs are gratified. Indulgence occurs where people enjoy life and have fun, whereas restraint occurs where there is regulation and control through strict social norms. An indulgent society is characterised by autonomy in controlling one's life, freedom of speech and a higher emphasis placed on leisure.

From the literature review, we can infer that the Millennial generation differs from other generations in the workplace in terms of the values they hold. By applying Hofstede's typologies, we can hypothesise on the nature of these differences.

The general null hypotheses stated that the three generations, namely the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation, do not differ significantly across cultural values (represented by the dimensions per the Hofstede scale).

The following specific null and alternative hypotheses were set:

The approach according to which these hypotheses were tested is described in the following:

$H1_0$: There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view power distance.

$H1_a$: The Millennial generation shows a lower level of attraction to power distance than the other generations. This hypothesis is based on the literature review of Bogosian and Rosseau (2017), Maier et al. (2015) and Sledge (2016), suggesting that Millennials do not respect the traditional employee–supervisor hierarchy structure in the workplace, are not impressed with positions and titles in the workplace and expect to have a voice in the decision-making of the organisation.

$H2_0$: There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view uncertainty avoidance.

$H2_a$: The Millennial generation has weaker uncertainty avoidance than the other generations. This hypothesis is based on the literature review of Kosterlitz and Lewis (2018) and Wotapka (2017), suggesting that Millennials, because of being optimistic and confident in life, and driven by career growth, will remain in jobs for shorter periods than the previous generations.

$H3_0$: There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view collectivism.

$H3_a$: The Millennial generation has a higher level of attraction to collectivism than the other generations. This hypothesis is based on the literature review of Parveen and Vanaja (2019) and Smith and Turner (2015), suggesting that the Millennial generation wants to feel inclusive in the workplace as team players promoting collaboration and growth between the generations in the workplace.

$H4_0$: There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view masculinity.

$H4_a$: The Millennial generation has a lower level of attraction to masculinity than the other generations. This hypothesis is based on the literature review of Hattke et al. (2017), suggesting that work–family life balance is an important value for the Millennial generation, thus accepting caring roles for both sexes.

$H5_0$: There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view long-term orientation.

$H5_a$: The Millennial generation has a higher level of attraction to long-term orientation than the other generations. This hypothesis is based on the literature review of Firestone (2016), and Sabir et al. (2019), suggesting that Millennials, being confident achievers, look to the future, plan better and are willing to work hard where they believe in the vision of the organisation and feel included.

Method
Population and sampling
The target population of this study comprised employees across organisations. This research was conducted in a variety of organisations in South Africa. The sample consisted of 1140 respondents across 19 South African organisations. These organisations included both private and public entities representing, amongst others, the telecommunication, financial services, media, manufacturing and electronics industries.

The 19 organisations were identified using the criterion of each having an employee who was a registered master's level student at the Graduate School of Business Leadership at the University of South Africa. Entrance to the organisations, and thus access to the respondents, was obtained by leveraging the respective students as fellow researchers. Random samples of 60 employees were drawn in each organisation.

Measurement instruments
Cross-sectional data were collected using an instrument based on Hofstede's typology, after which the data were segmented according to the three generations – Millennials, Baby Boomer and Generation X.

The Cultural Values Scale (CVS) (Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011) was used to assess subordinate cultural identity. The CVS was developed so that Hofstede's metric of culture, being a multi-dimensional measure of cultural values, could be used as a direct measure of cultural values at the individual level (Yoo, et al., 2011). This scale is reliable and valid, ranging from 0.77 on uncertainty avoidance to 0.85 on collectivism (Mazanec, Crotts, Gursoy, & Lu, 2015), and consistent across sample types, for example Americans and Koreans (Yoo et al., 2011). The CVS may be utilised to compare persons at the country level as well as cross-culturally (Jakubczak & Rakowska, 2014), but does not, as yet, include measures for indulgence. For this study, indulgence, as the sixth cultural value identity dimension, was not measured.

The instrument consists of 26 statements. Five statements address power distance (e.g. 'People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions'), five statements cover uncertainty avoidance (e.g. 'Standardised work procedures are helpful'), six statements deal with collectivism (e.g. 'Group success is more important than individual success'), whilst four measure masculinity (e.g. 'It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women') and six statements consider long-term orientation (e.g. 'Giving up today's fun for success in the future'). Age, the independent variable, was self-reported.

Statistical analyses
Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software package. Frequency analysis was performed to provide a descriptive view of respondent demographics based on gender and race. Measures of central tendency were also calculated for the different age groups (generations).

For the reliability assessment of the scale, Cronbach's coefficient alphas were calculated. Where the alpha scores were above 0.7, reliability was deemed satisfactory (DeVellis, 2012), and where the scores were above 0.8, reliability was accepted as preferable (Pallant, 2020). Factorial validity was assessed using principal components analysis with Varimax orthogonal rotation (Pallant, 2020), with the aim of showing that the covariance between the items is explainable. The number of factors retained was based on Kaiser's criterion, applying the 'eigenvalues greater than one' rule (Pallant, 2020).

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, and it indicated whether there were significant differences in the mean scores on Hofstede's cultural values across the three generations. Using the Scheffe test for a post hoc analysis to determine where the differences lie, an appropriate alpha level of 0.05 was selected. Once statistical significance was established; Cohen's d-values were calculated to assess the practical strength of the differences using Cohen's 2008 guidelines (values smaller than 0.2 equal small effect, those up to 0.5 equal medium effect and those up to 0.8 equal large effect).

Additionally, as a broad measure, correlation between age and the different cultural values was calculated using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients. Correlations with p-values of less than 0.05 were deemed as significant. Correlation coefficients were interpreted as practically significant when the strength of the statistically significant relationships was large (see Cohen [1988]; large effect when $r = 0.50$ to 1.00, medium effect when $r = 0.30$ to 0.49 and small effect when $r = 0.10$ to 0.29).

Results
Demographic variables

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the respondents' age, race and gender, as shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

In the 'total group', the respondents ranged from 20 to 64 years of age. The mean of the total group at 38.62 years of age is within the higher region of the Millennial group.

The majority by race represented in the sample were the black respondents at 66.8%, followed by the white respondents at 18.1% and the mixed race respondents at 10.2%. The smallest race group represented were the Asian respondents at 4.9%.

An interesting point to note from Table 3 is the representation of the race groups per generation, considering the increase in black employees across the generations (Baby Boomers, 47.9%; Generation X, 60.7%; and Millennials, 71.8%) and the decline in white employees across the generations (Baby Boomers, 45.1%; Generation X, 24.0%; and Millennials, 12.5%). The tendency for Asians and mixed-race people resembled the increase shown amongst black employees.

TABLE 2: Respondents' age (years).

Generation age	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Total group	1140	20	64	38.62	9.36
Millennials	712	20	40	32.54	4.76
Generation X	354	41	54	46.95	3.90
Baby Boomers	71	55	64	58.01	2.74

Std. deviation, standard deviation.

TABLE 3: Respondents' race.

Race	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Total group			
Black	762	66.8	66.8
White	206	18.1	84.9
Mixed race	116	10.2	95.1
Asian	56	4.9	100.0
Millennials			
Black	511	71.8	71.8
White	89	12.5	84.3
Mixed race	73	10.3	94.5
Asian	39	5.5	100.0
Generation X			
Black	215	60.7	60.7
White	85	24.0	84.7
Mixed race	38	10.7	95.5
Asian	16	4.5	100.0
Baby Boomers			
Black	34	47.9	47.9
White	32	45.1	93.0
Mixed race	4	5.6	98.6
Asian	1	1.4	100.0

TABLE 4: Respondents' gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Total group			
Male	573	50.3	50.3
Female	567	49.7	100.0
Total	1140	100.0	
Millennials			
Male	330	46.3	46.3
Female	382	53.7	100.0
Total	712	100.0	-
Generation X			
Male	192	54.2	54.2
Female	162	45.8	100.0
Total	354	100.0	-
Baby Boomers			
Male	49	69.0	69.0
Female	22	31.0	100.0
Total	71	100.0	-

The genders were almost equally represented in the total sample.

In the Millennial age group, the number of female respondents (53.7%) exceeded the number of male respondents (46.3%). Conversely, for Generation X, the number of male respondents (54.2%) exceeded the number of female respondents (45.8%). In the Baby Boomer generation, the number of male respondents (69.0%) exceeded the number of female respondents (31.0%) by a much larger difference.

Reliability

In Table 5, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha values of all the factors exceeded 0.7 (DeVellis, 2012), which is acceptable, and three met the 0.8 criterion (Pallant, 2020), which is preferable.

Factorial validity

The validity of the instruments was assessed through factorial analysis. Five factors had eigenvalues higher than 1, thus meeting Kaiser's criterion. The five factors explained 56.49% of the variance in the data, which is approaching the 60% rule of thumb (Field, 2018). When applying the Varimax rotational approach, the results showed that all the items for power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, masculinity, and long-term orientation loaded onto their respective factors, had weights exceeding 0.50. The weight of the lowest loading was 0.59, and that of the highest loading was 0.86, and there were no significant cross-loadings. The results (not presented in table format here) show significant support for the factorial validity of the scale.

Mean scores

Mean scores were calculated on each of the cultural identity dimensions for the three generations. Table 6 shows a variation in the mean scores on all dimensions across generations.

TABLE 5: Reliability data (N = 1140).

Cultural identity	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Power distance	0.78	5
Uncertainty avoidance	0.80	5
Collectivism	0.84	6
Masculinity	0.75	4
Long-term orientation	0.80	6

TABLE 6: Differences in mean scores.

Cultural identity	Generation	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error
Power distance	Millennials	712	**1.949**	0.759	0.028
	Generation X	354	1.976	0.772	0.041
	Baby Boomers	71	**2.225**	0.882	0.104
	Total	1137	1.975	0.773	0.022
Uncertainty avoidance	Millennials	712	**4.085**	0.679	0.025
	Generation X	354	4.076	0.655	0.034
	Baby Boomers	71	**4.014**	0.656	0.077
	Total	1137	4.077	0.670	0.019
Collectivism	Millennials	712	**3.345**	0.810	0.030
	Generation X	354	**3.448**	0.799	0.042
	Baby Boomers	71	3.340	0.883	0.104
	Total	1137	3.377	0.812	0.024
Masculinity	Millennials	712	**2.224**	0.892	0.033
	Generation X	354	2.279	0.900	0.047
	Baby Boomers	71	**2.507**	0.962	0.114
	Total	1137	2.258	0.901	0.026
Long-term orientation	Millennials	712	**4.353**	0.585	0.021
	Generation X	354	4.398	0.567	0.030
	Baby Boomers	71	**4.143**	0.647	0.076
	Total	1137	4.354	0.586	0.017

Note: Values presented in bold format in Table 6 illustrate mean scores with larger variations when comparing Millennials to the other generations on the culture identity dimension

To assess the magnitude of the differences between the mean scores, ANOVA was performed. The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 7.

In the ANOVA analysis, there was more variability between the groups than within each group, as indicated by the large F ratio of 5.651 (p = 0.004) for long-term orientation, 4.126 (p = 0.016) for power distance and 3.319 (p = 0.037) for masculinity. In the Scheffe post hoc test, which was performed to identify which groups differed, there were significant differences observed between the groups on the following dimensions:

- Power distance between Baby Boomers and Millennials (mean score difference = 0.276, p = 0.016, Cohen's d = 0.341) and between Baby Boomers and Generation X (mean score difference = 0.249, p = 0.046, Cohen's d = 0.302).
- Masculinity between Baby Boomers and Millennials (mean score difference = 0.283, p = 0.041, Cohen's d = 0.302).
- Long-term orientation between Baby Boomers and Millennials (mean score difference = −0.210, p = 0.015, Cohen's d = 0.341) and between Baby Boomers and Generation X (mean score difference = −0.255, p = 0.004, Cohen's d = 0.412).

Having significantly higher scores on long-term orientation, and lower scores on power distance and masculinity, Millennials are primarily different from Baby Boomers in this area. For the sake of hypotheses testing, only the differences involving Millennials are relevant.

When considering the Cohen's d-values (see Cohen [1988]; small effect when smaller than 0.2, medium effect up to 0.5

TABLE 7: One-way analysis of variance mean and p-value.

Cultural identity	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Power distance					
Between groups	4.916	2	**2.458**	**4.126**	**0.016**
Within groups	675.575	1134	0.596	-	-
Total	680.491	1136	-	-	-
Uncertainty avoidance					
Between groups	0.327	2	0.164	0.364	0.695
Within groups	510.089	1134	0.450	-	-
Total	510.416	1136	-	-	-
Collectivism					
Between groups	2.586	2	1.293	1.963	0.141
Within groups	747.104	1134	0.659	-	-
Total	749.690	1136	-	-	-
Masculinity					
Between groups	5.369	2	**2.684**	**3.319**	**0.037**
Within groups	917.151	1134	0.809	-	-
Total	922.520	1136	-	-	-
Long-term orientation					
Between groups	3.850	2	**1.925**	**5.651**	**0.004**
Within groups	386.314	1134	0.341	-	-
Total	390.164	1136	-	-	-

Note: Values presented in bold format in Table 7 illustrate where there are significant differences between the generations on certain of the culture identity dimensions.

df, degrees of freedom; F, F value or ratio calculated by dividing two mean squares; Sig (Significance or p value).

and large effect up to 0.8), the differences were of medium or moderate size, meaning that the differences shown above between the generations in terms of the cultural value dimensions – power distance, masculinity and long-term orientation – were not small nor large on a practical level.

Correlations

Statistically significant relationships were found between power distance, with a coefficient value of 0.10 ($p = 0.001$), and masculinity at 0.09 ($p = 0.003$). Statistically insignificant relationships were found between long-term orientation, with a negative coefficient value of -0.04 ($p = 0.151$), Uncertainty avoidance, with a negative coefficient value of -0.05 ($p = 0.111$), and collectivism at 0.06 ($p = 0.053$). Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient results showed that the strength of the statistically significant relationships was small (see Cohen [1988]; small effect when $r = 0.10$–0.29).

Although the relationships between the three generations and the culture value dimensions, power distance and masculinity, were found to be statistically significant, the strength of the relationship between these dimensions and the generations was practically small.

Discussion

The literature on the Millennial generation and how they bring different cultural values to the workplace is abundant. From the literature, hypotheses on how Millennials may differ culturally from other generations were formulated.

The sample could be deemed as representative of the population, inasmuch as the gender distribution (in general) reflects the numbers provided by Stats South Africa. It is well known that, in general, more men than women are in the workforce (Statistics South Africa, 2020). It is also expected that this phenomenon will not be as dominant amongst Millennials. In addition, the race composition of the total group mirrors the statistics provided by Statistics South Africa. It is interesting to note that, when divided into generational cohorts, the race composition of the cohorts testifies to the effects of affirmative action on the workplace, with much larger percentages of blacks present in the Millennial generation, compared to the number in the Baby Boomer generation.

The CVS showed acceptable psychometric characteristics and the Cronbach's alphas were acceptable (0.75–0.84). With regard to factorial validity, the CVS delivered highly acceptable results.

Table 8 presents a summary of the differences found in relation to the null and general hypotheses set.

The results showed that the general null hypotheses could not be rejected completely, as there were significant differences between the generations on only three of the five cultural value dimensions. From this, we can conclude that it

TABLE 8: Differences found in relation to hypotheses set.

Hypothesis	Decision: reject	Decision: Not reject
H1₀ There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view power distance.	✓	
H1ₐ The Millennial generation shows a lower level of attraction to power distance than the other generations.		✓
H2₀ There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view uncertainty avoidance.		✓
H2ₐ The Millennial generation has weaker uncertainty avoidance than the other generations.	✓	
H3₀ There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view collectivism.		✓
H3ₐ The Millennial generation has a higher level of attraction to collectivism than the other generations.	✓	
H4₀ There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view masculinity.	✓	
H4ₐ The Millennial generation has a lower level of attraction to masculinity than the other generations.		✓
H5₀ There is no difference in the way the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X and the Millennial generation view long-term orientation.	✓	
H5ₐ The Millennial generation has a higher level of attraction to long-term orientation than the other generations.		✓

is irresponsible to make a blanket statement that Millennials differ (in all respects) from other generations. The results, however, also showed that there are differences between the generations on some (three of the five) cultural value dimensions.

Considering statistical significance, and practical significance, it is evident that the largest difference pertained to long-term orientation, where Millennials were shown to be more attracted to long-term orientation than the Baby Boomer generation, in that Millennials look at the future and are willing to work hard in an inclusive organisation whose vision they believe in. This aligns well with the study of Firestone (2016) and Sabir et al. (2019). It is important to note that the difference is of medium size, that is, not small and not large.

The second largest difference concerned power distance, where Millennials were shown to be less attracted to power distance than the Baby Boomer generation, in that Millennials do not respect positions and titles in the workplace, expecting to be consulted in decision-making. This aligns well with the studies of Bogosian and Rosseau (2017), Maier et al. (2015) and Sledge (2016). Again, it is important to note that the difference is of medium size and neither small nor large.

The third largest difference concerned masculinity, where Millennials were shown to be less attracted to masculinity than the Baby Boomer generation, aligning with the belief of Millennials that equality for women and men should exist in both emotional and social roles in life, and that this will result in work–family life balance. This aligns well with the study of Hattke et al. (2017). Again, it is important to note that the difference is of medium size and neither small nor large.

It is further of importance that Millennials did not differ from the other generations on two dimensions. Contrary to what was hypothesised, no differences were found on uncertainty avoidance and collectivism. This suggests that the works of Kosterlitz and Lewis (2018) and Wotapka (2017) could not be affirmed in this data for uncertainty avoidance. The same applies to Parveen and Vanaja (2019) and Smith and Turner (2015) for the collectivism cultural dimension.

The results from the correlation analyses were mixed, and not in line with those found in tests of mean differences. Long-term orientation, for example, showed the most significant differences when comparing the mean, whilst, when looking at the findings related to correlations, this cultural dimension did not significantly correlate with age. These discrepancies, as well as the fact that the significant correlations were small ($r < 0.10$), emphasise the complexity of generational issues and warrant further research.

Conclusion

This study focused on whether the Millennial generation differs from the preceding generations, Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation in the workplace and was undertaken with the intention of better managing this young generation.

In reviewing and aligning the outcomes of this study with the theoretical extrinsic and intrinsic values of the Millennial generation, as shown in Table 1, we can acknowledge that Millennials are somewhat different in some respects from the other generations in the workplace and so should be treated somewhat differently.

The difference is particularly marked with Baby Boomers and with respect to long-term orientation, masculinity and power distance. This provides important information for leaders and managers in the workplace so that they can adjust their behaviour accordingly to better work with and manage millennials as the largest emerging generation in the workplace.

Limitations and recommendations

A limitation of this study was the convenient sampling of organisations. However, it should be noted that whilst the sampling of the respondents in organisations was random, the demographics of the respondents seemed to closely reflect the demographics of the country as a whole.

A recommendation for future research is to use random sampling of both organisations and respondents. It is also recommended that indulgence should be measured in future research. The absence of a measure of indulgence is regrettable, as indulgence seems to be a central characteristic of millennials. The study also emphasised the complexity of generational issues. Mean differences were found in some cases although the correlation analyses did not follow these trends. Thus, further research is required on this topic, particularly qualitative research, which is often credited for exposing the complexities of phenomena.

Acknowledgements

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