



*Millennial' Preferences of Communication Systems
in the Workplace*

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I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Millennial' Preferences of Communication Systems in the Workplace

Abstract

Millennials have the power to influence organisations as they will soon become the dominant generation in the workforce. Making sure this generational cohort is empowered, engaged and productive is critical, specifically for a country like South Africa who experience a tough economic climate, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Millennials have been branded lazy, entitled, and self-centred, and it is this sentiment which provides the basis for the research.

The research aimed to answer what Millennials' preferences of communication systems are, and whether they are stifled by traditional communications systems and why. The research study utilised the Interpretivist paradigm, encompassing the Axiological and Ontological perspectives, encouraging a qualitative research approach. The qualitative data collected was done by means of an online survey and in-depth interviews. The research yielded 45 respondents for the online survey and 1 interview participant. The data was then analysed using open coding and thematic content analysis. The researcher found that respondents place high value in communication, but do not feel engaged or empowered by traditional communication systems which are still in place. The generational gap within in the workforce was highlighted, with a strong sentiment that they are being held back by leaders who are not adaptive or agile. Based on the results of the data, the findings suggest the feasibility for further research, and the researcher has made several recommendations collected and presented them to the reader.

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Section One: Introduction

1.1 Context and Background

The study will be discussed briefly, with a focus on the rationale, research problem, research purpose and the objectives that have informed the study. The millennial cohort in the workplace will be explored and looked at in terms of how this cohort manages in the workplace, specifically regarding communication systems and styles. The focus will be on the many aspects of the workplace and communication, and how millennials perceive these systems- as barriers to development or not. Millennials in the workplace, between the ages of 22-36 years old will make up majority of the workforce for the next 3 decades, outnumbering their 'Baby Boomer' and 'Gen-X' counterparts (Bogosian and Rousseau, 2017). The Millennial of today has had unique lifestyle experiences when compared to other generational cohorts and this effect can be seen in almost every part of their life, including their professional and work environment. This generational cohort has been labelled 'lazy', 'entitled' and 'lacking loyalty' amongst other things (PwC, 2011). There is a sentiment that Millennials will leave an organisation just as quickly as they entered if their needs are not satisfied entirely. If corporations want to be successful, Millennials' concerns must be taken seriously as they are the future leaders of organisations, and they expect to be heard, valued, and respected (Deloitte, 2014). With a myriad of elements present in the workplace it would be apparent that internal communication systems play a pivotal role in the millennials career (Protiviti, 2016).

1.2 Rationale

With multiple generations making up the workforce with varying ways of approaching work, socialising, and other workplace behaviours, the world of work has become a navigational maze for all individuals in the working world (Hall, 2016). How these individuals react and respond to these situations and events has been believed to come down to their generational cohort (PwC, 2011). With three different generations in the workplace it can be expected that all three generations have their own ideals, values, and expectations. With conflicting styles, the workplace has become a volatile environment, creating hostility and effecting outputs, but more importantly, effecting the individual.

Workplace communication has been an important aspect for the modern millennial because of their unique values and leadership styles. Millennials want to feel heard, and with a diverse workplace which is still dominated by the older generation cohort, there has been a struggle. Traditional systems still take preference in an ever-changing world, and organisation who fail to adapt and innovate risk the loss of an intelligent and empowered workforce. South African millennials have a unique experience of growing up in tough economic climate with high unemployment rates, which could impact their professional career- staying in positions which do not challenge them, and thereby becoming disengaged. This disengagement could have dire consequences for organisations, and ultimately the economy. In looking at how millennials feel about communication systems in the workplace, the researcher has been able to provide insight into whether communication systems pose barriers to either their development or progression and why.

1.3 Problem Statement

The workplace is highly competitive, with many organisations failing to adapt certain business culture characteristics to the influx, and eventual majority of millennials (Hall, 2016). This inability to adapt leaves organisations at risk of losing these valuable individuals and in doing so, may not be left with the best talent. One of the critical functions that can connect to millennials within an organisation is the internal communication systems employed (Hall, 2016). With many traditional systems currently in place, (e-mail, telephone and face-to-face communication) millennials have begun to feel hindered in their job, as well as their ability to flourish and develop in the way that they want to (Bogosian and Rousseau, 2017).

The aim of this research was to uncover South African Millennial' Preferences of Communication Systems in the Workplace, and whether or not 'traditional' systems have been a barrier to progression- and if so, why?

1.4 Purpose Statement

Millennial-centric communication systems are vital to ensure clarity, retention, and positive interaction (Bogosian and Rousseau, 2017). The Millennial cohort thrives on being valued but also adding value, and with effective communication systems organisations will have the capacity to create a healthy, sustainable, and successful organisation culture. The purpose of this study is to explore how these 'traditional' communication systems resonate with Millennials in the workplace.

1.5 Research Questions and Objectives

- Are 'traditional' communication systems barriers in the workplace and if so, why?
- What is the preferred workplace communication system/s for Millennials in South Africa, and why?
- What do millennials value in the workplace?

Objectives

- To uncover and understand what Millennials seek in communication systems within the workplace.
- To uncover whether there was a communication divide between generations within the workplace.
- To explore and understand factors that affected millennials development in the workplace.

Section Two: Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The ‘*Theory of Generations*’ developed by Karl Mannheim (1952) was the framework used to assist in grounding the research. The focus of the theory is history, with Mannheim stating that generations rapidly change and are grouped together in reaction to major historical events (DeChane, 2014). He put forth the idea that young generations are imperfectly socialised because of a gap between ideals they have learned from older generations and the realities they experience, thus the cohort forms a specific social identity that is a result of a common experience and this influences the identity of the individual (Mannheim, 1952). There is acknowledgement of no structure to the theory, and Mannheim does not rule out influence from previous generations, but says, ‘*people resemble times more than their parents*,’ (DeChane, 2014). Generations do not grow independent from society, their view of the world, including their attitudes and underlying value systems are directly impacted (DeChane, 2014). It is these “value systems” that influence behaviour and attitudes. This leads to what Mannheim describes as a “visible and striking transformation of the consciousness of the individual ... a change not merely in the content of experience, but in the individual’s mental and spiritual adjustment.” (Mannheim, 1952). The individual develops meaning based on their own social experiences. When this happens at the generational level, a ‘collective conscious’ is formed and these thoughts and beliefs continue to influence these individuals throughout their lives, (DeChane, 2014).

The Theory of Generations (1952), which focused on history, stating that generations rapidly change and are grouped together in reaction to major historical events, was applied to the research study as an understanding of the different generations present in the workplace is required, specifically pertaining to the millennial generation who were defined by the explosion of technology. Ongoing research has seen that a generational approach to understanding society and groups of people is scientifically acceptable and well-grounded in good social science (Codrington, 2008).

By applying the Theory of Generations to the research study, a clear understanding about how to understand and be aware of generational differences which lead to a clash of values, expectations, ambitions, attitudes, and behaviours amongst generations in the workplace

was developed. Understanding the millennial preferences and challenges of communication systems in the workplace will allow for better relationships, better business decisions and a more satisfied workforce- especially as this generation begins to dominate the working world. The proposed research has used the theoretical grounding as a basis to understand and find out what millennials want in the workplace, how they want to be communicated with and why, and explore what barriers 'traditional' systems could pose, preventing them from progressing in their career/ organisation.

2.2 Literature Review

The literature review will discuss concepts and key points in the literature, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the research topic, and the current situation. The literature review that follows will critically discuss the relevant literature with the aim of creating an in-depth understanding of the constructs on which this study is based. The study considered relevant works by authors Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), Smith and Nichols (2015) and Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016). Themes pertaining to millennials and other generations, communication and the workplace was also reviewed. This allowed for the research topic to fill a gap in the industry and provide insight into the question of millennials' in the workplace within the South African context. The aim was to identify and fill a gap in the research and provide insight into the question of millennials and their experiences and perspectives within the workplace.

2.2.1 Millennials: who are they?

The millennial generation, born between 1984 and 1998, also known as generation-Y have been the topic of much debate for several years (Bogosian and Rousseau, 2017). There has been much research on this generation, specifically when discussing the traits of millennials. The work of Smith and Nichols (2015) assert that as research suggests, millennials are confident, assertive and have high self-esteem. They have no problem expressing opinions and making greater demands than their elder counterparts. This generation is achievement focused, wanting to exceed all expectations, goals, and aspirations, leading them to continuously seek out new learning opportunities (Smith and Nichols, 2015). In addition, Smith and Nichols (2015) acknowledge that millennials enjoy group work, value diversity instant gratification.

Furthermore, Bogosian and Rousseau (2017) add that millennials grew up in a home environment of care and concern, with their parents ensuring their every need is met. They are used to having strong relationships with those closest to them and have a built-in need for interaction and attention (Bogosian and Rousseau, 2017).

Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016) brings to the fore that much of the research done around millennials have taken place in the United States of America- a first world country. On the contrary, Brant and Castro (2019) acknowledge this and argue that characteristics of millennials do vary by region and environment, but they are more similar worldwide. Contemporary social influences and globalisation have enabled millennials worldwide to experience the same formative experiences resulting in a so-called 'global generation' (Brant and Castro, 2019).

Millennials find themselves in the middle of an on-demand information society and this shapes their lifestyles, aspirations, needs and behaviours (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). This influence is then taken into the workplace, resulting in a complex generation that differs vastly to previous generations. Their preferences need to be considered as they continue to dominate the workplace.

2.2.2 Millennials and other generations

Smith and Nichols (2015) define a generation as a group which can be identified by year of birth, age, and significant events that create their character. There have been three generations dominating the workplace: The Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennials.

Smith and Nichols (2015) define the Baby Boomer generation is anyone born between 1938 and 1954. They are called Baby Boomers because when men returned from fighting in World War II, a large increase in birth rates resulted, thus creating a 'baby boom' during a flourishing economic time. They are a workaholic generation, driven, goal oriented and focused on the bottom line (Codrington, 2008).

Codrington (2008) goes on further to explain that this generation values idealism, image, excellence, and personal gratification. In the workplace they do not feel compelled to consult much with other generations as they believe that they are the leaders who will drive the organisation to success (Codrington, 2008).

Generation X (also called Gen X, or Xers) were born between 1956 and 1984. Generation X is significantly smaller than previous and succeeding generations (Smith and Nichols,

2015). Generation X was the first generation to return home from school without a parent to greet them because their parents were out working (Smith and Nichols, 2015). They display characteristics of individualism, hard work and ambition. From a technological standpoint, they are less dependent on smartphones (Smith and Nichols, 2015).

Brant and Castro (2015) go onto to say that older generations were better established when entering the workforce, whereas the recession affected millennials which has resulted in them working harder and valuing what it means to have job security which challenges the notion that millennials will leave an organisation if they do not feel heard, seen and /or acknowledged, as Smith and Nichols (2015) argue.

Contrary to the Theory of Generations, which puts forth the idea that generations are purely shaped and influenced by historical events. Wilson and Gerber (2008) argue that millennials are in fact powerfully shaped by parental reaction to the perceived carefree rearing of the Sixties and Seventies. This sentiment was theorised and popularised by William Strauss and Neil Howe in a response to Mannheim's original idea (Codrington, 2008).

Beliefs of older generations about younger generations have remained stable for the past 40 years and continue to fuel inter-generational relationships. According to Smith and Nichols (2015) these stereotypes found were not supported by significant evidence. If organisations want to succeed it is imperative that inter-generational relationships are explored in greater depth, to bridge the gap between generational communication in the workplace.

2.2.3 Millennials and communication

Whether written or spoken communication; verbal or nonverbal communication; face-to-face or digital communication, the process of communication entails humans making meaning together (Venter, 2017). Face-to-face (FTF) exchanges allow people to communicate verbally and nonverbally – with spoken and body language (Venter, 2017). Communication does not only occur face-to-face – telephone conversations, text, direct messages, and participation on social networks suggest a personal connection with another person, although more through verbal cues (Venter, 2017).

Millennials' use of digital technology, and the way they use it for communication impacts their lives to a great extent (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). Smith and Nichols (2015) explain that millennials enjoy using technology, they were born into the technology era, unlike other generations and adopted it as second nature. Millennials who grew up around technology become skilful, and as more Millennials filter into the workplace, the more integrated technology will be in work processes. Further to this, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) confirm that millennials are heavy media consumers, who are accustomed to creating their own content.

The use of technology and social media are natural and essential to millennials, and for this reason they need a strong use of technology at work (Smith and Nichols, 2015). Organisations who are not gearing up for a technological shift need to be concerned. Millennials depend on technology, which makes integration in the workplace critical (Smith and Nichols, 2015).

In the fast paced workplace, FTF communication is time consuming and requires planning, making it more difficult, however Venter (2017) has uncovered that even though millennials are avid users of digital communication systems, FTF communication is still their ideal way of communicating, and the same sentiment is held by other generations. This emphasizes millennials' need for flexibility and choice in the workplace (Venter, 2017). In addition, millennials see technology as an opportunity to network with co-workers, customers and organisations, and in doing so they believe it to aid in breaking down social walls, flattening hierarchies and providing an egalitarian work environment (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). Hall (2016) points out that millennials are up to date with latest technologies, they are always on the lookout for opportunities online which means if their current environment is not keeping them challenged they are ready to apply for better prospects. Assumptions made about millennials and communication could have a detrimental effect on organisational culture and performance. There is a need to embrace the digital shift while maintaining a personal, human connection (Venter, 2017).

2.2.4 Millennials and the workplace

Millennials and technology are inseparable, and this fact has consequences in every aspect of their existence, including their workplace (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). This pairing of millennials with technology leads to a digital sophistication, that involves multitasking and multi-screening as they aim to identify more efficient ways to get work done (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). Further to this, Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016) adds that millennials discard strict rules and are eager to innovate, using the workplace as a launching platform. Myers and Sadaghiani, (2010) go on to explain that this affinity for digital-based communications could play a role in providing organisations with a strategic edge.

Hall (2016) explains that there is a desire from millennials for regular, positive, and open communication between employees, especially managers. In having open communication millennials feel as if they fit, they want to be highly engaged and be able to adapt easily to organisational culture (Buzza, 2017). Hall (2016) points out that information cannot be hoarded as the consequence could be a lack of loyalty and trust. Buzza (2017) echoes this by confirming that organisations need to be conscious of millennials' needs in the workplace.

Millennials strive to find balance in their personal and their working lives, they do not want work to feel like a burden and try to be creative and innovative wherever possible (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). In his study, Buzza (2017) found work life balance to be more important to millennials than job advancement, but there is no empirical research that informs this finding further just yet. This generation grew up with an emphasis on family, which has created a shift in mindset in the workplace (Smith and Nichols, 2015). This need for balance instils doubt in older generations about millennials' organisational commitment and dedication (Smith and Nichols, 2015). The focus on their private lives has made Baby Boomers question the sacrifices they made for their career (Smith and Nichols, 2015).

Although they are keen on technology, some 'traditional systems/ devices being used by organisations are new to them and they do not know how to operate these older devices which makes the workplace challenging (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016) states that managers who do not understand their visual mind-set, tell them what to do instead of showing them how, creating more frustration. Hall (2016) examines leaders' accountability and states that leaders have not made generational issues a priority in organisations. This may intensify differences in attitudes and values in the workplace and can negatively affect an organisation. This has led to speculation from Myers and

Sadaghiani (2010) questioning whether older generations would respect millennials as leaders, specifically in technology-based departments. With many older cohorts in leadership positions, organisation culture takes on a top-down approach which can hinder change. Without the required change, limitations are placed on millennials, leading to reduced job satisfaction and eventual turnover (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010).

Smith and Nichols (2015) argue that millennials understand that working for one organisation and retiring are both very rare. This can play a role in millennials seeking new employment opportunities more frequently, in doing so millennials make a bigger effort in making themselves appealing to potential employers online.

It is crucial for organisations to know the working styles of millennials and how this can change organisational dynamics. Leadership styles need to be adjusted to prevent organisational/ communication barriers for millennials.

2.3 Conceptualisation

For the study, the researcher identified key concepts relevant to the study. The literature review has looked at the four main concepts while noting other concepts of notable importance for the researcher, and the research study. These notable concepts include *preferences, collaboration, technology, work-life balance, leadership, and barriers*.

The four main concepts of value to the researcher were:

- *Millennials: preferences, qualities, and outlook*
- *The generational gap: barriers, leadership, collaboration*
- *Communication systems: technology, barriers, developments*
- *The workplace: qualities, work-life balance, communication, barriers*

The researcher used these four concepts to guide the study. These concepts held greater value when organising and examining the data collected.

Section Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm and perspectives

A Paradigm, according to Kuhn (1962), is a “set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed”. These paradigms are classed as Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Realism (Kuhn, 1962).

Interpretivism, the worldview which has been selected for this social science study, was developed on the critique of positivism, particularly with regards to the application towards social science, and favours qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Interpretivism takes the stance that reality is socially constructed as new meanings, perceptions and associations are being made daily- making up one’s ‘reality’ as they experience it (Dudovskiy, 2019).

Further to this, Du-Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) state that interpretivism integrates a human element and interest into the study, focusing on these shared meanings, and how intrinsically complex humans are, with the aim of trying to understand this behaviour. Interpretivism employs a natural approach to observations, with the researcher interpreting the elements of the study- therefore a subjective approach.

The interpretivist approach was selected for its subjectivity and inductive nature, the focus was on feelings, opinions and meaning with the researcher having played a pivotal exploratory role in the study. Interpretivism favours a naturalistic approach which is key to the researcher collecting viable data for interpretation, and to understand the reasons behind behaviours and differences within the accessible population being studied. The primary data collection of interpretivist studies generally has a high validity because the data is assumed to be honest and trustworthy (Dudovskiy, 2019).

Within the interpretivist paradigm there are three perspectives which played a role in the research, namely epistemology, axiology, and ontology (Du-Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). For the research topic of millennials and their preferences, a deeper understanding was required to find out why millennials have the preferences they do, and how other aspects in the workplace could have impacted these preferences. For this reason, the axiological and ontological perspectives were incorporated into the study.

Axiological perspective

Axiology is understanding the role of researcher throughout the research process (Dudovskiy, 2019). As Dudovskiy (2019) explains, what the researcher labels as important or valuable to the study will be directly influenced by the researcher's own values. The role of the researcher will be subjective when coding the data set collected, as the researcher will determine what information is classified as 'useful' or not.

Ontological perspective

Dudovskiy (2019) asserts that the ontological perspective of interpretivism believes that social phenomena and their meanings are constantly being influenced and changed by social actors. Reality is viewed as a social construct, changing, and being changed by people's perceptions and beliefs. Factors like age, experiences, and culture influence reality and how different individuals may experience reality in a different way to one another individual (Du-Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

When considering the two perspectives, the interpretivist approach was best suited to the study as it allowed for in-depth understanding of cross-cultural/ generational differences in organisations (the workplace). It allowed for an interactive and participative approach between researcher and participant, with the aim of the researcher being to understand and explore the meaning behind actions and behaviours rather than to predict results. Data collection tools (online survey and in-depth semi-structured interviews) were used and allowed for open-ended questions, allowing participants to discuss their beliefs and opinions in greater detail as the study aimed to discover why millennials think and feel the way they do about communication systems in the workplace, barriers they experienced and why, and how they dealt with these barriers.

3.2 Research Design

The research followed the interpretivist paradigm, and therefore the research design followed a qualitative approach which will be discussed further below.

The qualitative research approach was taken by the researcher to gain in-depth understanding and insight into the study. The qualitative research approach was selected for the study as the aim was to uncover and understand a specific phenomenon, and qualitative research methods was best suited for this need (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Qualitative research gains insights into the attitudes, values, and behaviours of the participants-who are humans- for this reason, a qualitative approach was best as each individual is unique in their own way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Qualitative research allows for the researcher to build an “in-depth understanding” of the data collected from the participants in the study, and it enabled new information to surface through the use of probing and introspective questions, which may not have been addressed in previous research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Furthermore, to the research design, the study attempted to answer the research questions surrounding millennials in the workplace using various methods, as well as the literature that formed part of the literature review.

The use of these methods allowed for clarity of the research purpose throughout the study. Inductive research, exploratory research and ethnographic research will be discussed and was used for the purposes of the study.

Inductive Research

Also referred to as inductive reasoning, inductive research has been selected by the researcher due to the lack of research around the study topic within the South African context. The researcher aims to collect the data, identify patterns from the data set and build a theory (Dudovskiy, 2019). It must be noted, the researcher has used the Theory of Generations when formulating the research questions for the proposed study. The researcher aims to identify patterns from the data to build a theory that is unique to the South African context (Dudovskiy, 2019).

Exploratory Research

This type of research design aims to explore a research topic rather than to “offer a final or conclusive solution to an existing problem” (Dudovskiy, 2019) and is most often used when researching a problem that has, not yet been clearly defined.

Exploratory studies offer a range of causes and alternative options for a solution of a specific research problem to be solved (Dudovskiy, 2019). The exploratory design assists in gaining better insight and understanding of the problem which is the purpose of the study – to gain insights into the perceptions of millennials in the workplace within the South African context.

With the area of study being relatively “unknown” in South Africa, this type of research needs to permit for “an understanding” of the problem to be developed (Dudovskiy, 2019). The researcher believes this type of research is most appropriate to the study as it is flexible in nature, allowing for adaptability and change- which is most appropriate when dealing with human studies (Dudovskiy, 2019). Added to this, exploratory research has the potential to save time and other resources by having the ability to ascertain at the infant stages the types of research that is worth pursuing (Dudovskiy, 2019).

Ethnographic Research

An ethnographic research design has been selected. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) describe ethnography as a method which is flexible in nature, and which allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of a certain group’s shared culture, conventions, and social dynamics. The researcher can gain a deeper understanding of a group by getting data directly from their individual point of view (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). There is access to authentic accounts and data, directly from the participants involved in the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Ethnography is best suited to the study as it enables the researcher to learn first-hand about the behaviour and interactions of people within a context, more specifically to attempt to understand how Millennials in the workplace feel and think.

The final aspect of design that will be addressed is the disciplinary design. The study will utilise a cross-sectional design, this is an important factor considering the short time frame of the study- due to time constraints. The cross-sectional approach of the study looks at data from a population at one specific point in time, and the participants in a cross-sectional study are selected based on inclusion and exclusion parameters outlined in the population and sampling parameters (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). The benefits of using this approach is that it allows the researcher to look at multiple characteristics at once and can provide information about what is happening in the millennial population (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

3.3 Research Plan

Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Population

The population refers to the number of people or entities that were of interest to the Researcher. The subjects of interest possessed specific or unique characteristics which created the population parameters for the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Once the specific parameters were demarcated, the target population and accessible population were also be differentiated. The target population included all people that identified with all the parameters, and the accessible population included the segment of the population that the researcher could realistically incorporate in the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The parameters of the population were defined by the common characteristics along with the amount of people in the research population, these parameters were:

- For the research, the unit of analysis was people.
- The unique characteristics of the population: Males and females who were between the ages of 22-36 years and had experienced corporate employment at one time or another.
- Target Population were all members of the population: Millennials who fit the population characteristics and lived in South Africa, with access to the internet, a smart phone, and/or laptop.
- Accessible population, were the members of the population which the researcher accessed: Millennials who fit the population characteristics and had access to internet, a smart phone, and/or laptop and whom were invited to partake in the study by either a direct invitation, or referral.

3.3.2 Sampling

The qualitative research approach required a smaller population sample, allowing for more in-depth and insightful data to be collected, it is for this reason that the researcher employed non-probability sampling methods (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). These sampling methods were most appropriate as it was not feasible for the researcher to gain access to the entire population (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). These methods aimed to draw a sample that fit the parameters which had been set out for the study. Within the non-probability sampling methods, there were a number of techniques available from which use, these methods were made up of the following, accidental, convenience, purposive, quota, snowball, and volunteer sampling (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

As the population had a prescribed set of characteristics, the researcher believed that convenience sampling would be best suited, as the researcher had ease of contact to the accessible population- whom are comfortable with the myriad of online platforms and who were required to answer the online survey and partake in the online interview. The online survey was done via Google Forms survey tool.

In addition to this, volunteer sampling, by means of an invitation and acceptance by participants was also utilised to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews using one of two online platforms – Zoom or Skype. The invitation to be interviewed was in the form of a tick box at the end of the Google Form online survey conducted. Participants ticked the box if he/she wished to be interviewed further regarding the research topic.

These two techniques were selected for their usability, the researcher would be able to execute both techniques as the researcher had easy access to participants who fit the criteria for the study.

The participants would be recruited by means of social media, and through the network of the researchers' formal place of work by means of an e-mail or direct message to partake in the online survey, with a link to the online survey being supplied.

The two methods outlined were most appropriate for the study, especially in a post-COVID-19 context. With many working individuals working from home and being asked to socially

distance themselves, both methods were easily adapted for the online world, presenting no barrier to the researcher connecting with the intended population. In addition, with the time constraints, the online methods to collect data assisted in making the chosen methods more cost effective, with a quicker turn-around time.

The intended sample size for the study was 100 participants who matched the population characteristics. Of the 100 participants, the researcher planned to conduct in-depth interviews with 12 participants. The sample size selected ensured there was a big enough data set, yet small enough to draw appropriate conclusions for the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Added to this, the researcher was aware that there was not a lot of information regarding millennials and the workplace, in the South African context and felt that the sample size will be a good starting point, while still leaving room for more research to take place in the future. The online survey was intended to be conducted for a period of 4 weeks, with participants of the online survey having the option of accepting the invitation for the online interview. The in-depth semi-structured interviews was intended to be done over a period of 2 weeks, with the entire process taking 6 weeks to complete.

3.4 Data Collection Method

As the research was exploratory and ethnographic in nature, with an interpretivist paradigm, it was definitively qualitative and therefore the data collection methods that were appropriate for qualitative research was used.

Within qualitative research, the category of field research involves the use of “ethnography, studies, grounded theory, case studies, focus groups and in-depth interviews” as methods of data collection (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). For the research study, and to gain valuable insight, online surveys and in-depth semi-structured interviews were the main data collection methods employed and were conducted with participants who met the parameters set out for the study.

Online surveys were done using Google Forms. The questions asked in the online survey were all open-ended to allowed for a free flow of information (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). There were four qualifying questions, ensuring that participants met the requirements for the study, before proceeding to complete the survey. The questions focused on the participants (millennials) and what was important to them as individuals,

while also focusing on their places of employment (past and present). The scope of questions was largely guided by the four aspects set out in the literature review;

- Millennials
- Millennials and other generations
- Millennials and communication
- Millennials and the workplace

By focusing on the four main aspects set out, the researcher uncovered deep insights regarding these areas of interest.

The online survey was cross-sectional in nature as the survey was conducted once only over the 4-week period. The participants were expected to complete the survey and there was no re-collecting of data at any stage thereafter (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

In-depth semi-structured interviews were done using the online facility, Zoom or Skype, due to the current COVID-19 lockdown that is currently in place. The same principles of the four aspects were applied, but on a deeper level of questioning and probing. With many of these participants having completed the online survey, the aim was to explore their opinions further, and the interview questions were more specific and targeted around the aspects of communication, the generational divide, the workplace, with a focus on the barriers they faced and why.

By asking these questions the researcher intended to uncover possible insights into the millennials' thought process, as well as their outlook of the world with the aim of being able to identify a 'trend'. The questions specifically dealt with the areas of research and therefore the insights uncovered have helped to answer questions around millennials experiences, within the South African context.

The online survey was set up and open for completion from the 14th August 2020 and was closed on the 21st of August 2020. The online survey was originally intended to be open for a 4-week period. Over the period the survey was open, there were 45 respondents who completed the survey. There was a total of 14 questions asked in the survey, with a total of 4 qualifying questions. The survey questions and results can be found on **Annexure 3** and **4**, respectively.

Collection Method	Start Date	End Date	# of viable Respondents
Online Survey (Google)	14 August 2020	21 August 2020	45

Table 1: Online survey summary

Ethical clearance was granted by the ethics committee this ensured that the online survey questions outlined were clear and understandable, without infringing on anyone's rights/privacy. The online survey allowed for respondents to opt-in to be interviewed further, for a more in-depth look into their thoughts and feelings around the research topic.

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured in nature, and the researcher used pre-determined open-ended questions as a guide to the conversation, or interview. These guiding questions were used to ensure control of the interview, but not stop the participant from being free to elaborate and discuss their thoughts to a deeper extent. When interviewing, the researcher also made use of probing questions, allowing for further insight and opinion to come through, resulting in more of a 'discussion' rather than an interview.

The interview transcription can be found on **Annexure 6**, within the transcription the questions used for the study can also be found.

Collection Method	Name	Date	Start	End	Place
In-depth interview	Participant 1	22 August 2020	20:00	20:30	University Estate, Cape Town

Table 2: Interview Summary

Before starting each survey or interview, all participant was required to sign/ accept a written consent form which outlined the study itself, as well as the voluntary nature of the study. Further to this it explained how the data gathered from either the survey or interview would be used. The Interview participant agreed to recording of the online interview, which was then transcribed for effective analysis. The four themes from the literature review, including Millennials, other generations, communication, and the workplace were included in the online survey and interview.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The qualitative data collection method selected for the study, was thematic content analysis with the use of open coding. Thematic content analysis is a useful way of gaining insight and knowledge from the collected data. Through the collection of data, the researcher can identify, analyse, and organise recurring themes that emerge- in a non-biased manner- from the data collected (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). With the emergence of themes, the researcher was able to develop broader ideas and theories surrounding the research topic.

The researcher employed an inductive qualitative content analysis approach and allowed themes to emerge from the text (data) which was collected through the collection methods outlined above, this process is also referred to as coding (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Coding enabled a manageable process of analysing and its key benefit was that it is well-applied to all texts (observations, interviews, surveys), which made it well suited to the research study being conducted (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). A 'code' can be thought of as a word or a short phrase that signifies a theme or an idea (Dudovskiy, 2019).

As Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout explain, there is no preconceived conceptual framework from which to draw ideas when using an the inductive approach, hence the researcher expected to develop unique themes and categories purely from the data collected and examined- eventually creating a unique framework from which to build on in future research. The text was analysed numerous times to ensure consistency and through this approach dominant trends/ themes were then grouped in categories within the research, enabling easier referral for any later research which would possibly take place, as well as for analysis (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Thematic data analysis techniques were used and applied to the study as it was appropriate for the qualitative nature of the research topic and design, as well as being highly flexible in its approach (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). In addition, the researcher selected this approach as it was a more accessible form of analysis that allowed for new ideas and thoughts to generate, which is ideal for the area of research that is still relatively new (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

As previously discussed, the data for this study was derived from participants responses Through an online survey and in-depth interviews which served as a qualitative data collection method.

The data gathered was then analysed using qualitative content analysis which broke down the content gathered recreated it in a way that allowed for the understanding and interpretation of the participants' views and experiences to derive meaning from them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The process of coding, Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) pointed out, can be done through 8 steps, ensuring effective analysis of qualitative data:

1. **Prepared data:** The data collected from the online surveys and interviews were transcribed.
2. **Defined the coding unit to be analysed:** Identification of coding units to be used (phrases, single words, and sentences).
3. **Developed categories and a coding scheme:** Grouping of associated coding units were used to form categories of codes.
4. **Tested coding scheme on a sample text:** Sample of the data was used to test the consistency of the categories which were defined. This ensured all possible issues were addressed and could be resolved.
5. **Coded the text:** Used the selected form of coding to code all data collected.
6. **Accessed the coding consistency:** Coding consistency was checked and ensured.
7. **Drew conclusions from the coded data:** Categories and themes identified were interpreted. The relationships/ associations identified were explained, and the outlying information of relevance was also taken into consideration.
8. **Reported the methods and findings:** The researcher stated the process applied in coding, analysis, and interpretation.

The specified steps informed the process of analysis which the researcher employed.

3.6 Reliability and Trustworthiness

As the aim of the qualitative research was to understand a phenomenon rather than to generalise, it was required to be both trustworthy and valid (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). For the purposes of the study the following factors were taken into consideration to ensure a trustworthy and valid study was conducted.

The term 'trustworthiness' in research is made up of four different terms as explained by Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014);

Credibility: refers to the accuracy of the interpretation of the data collected. For the proposed study, credibility was ensured by making use of triangulation of the data collection methods (online survey and semi-structured interviews and previous literature). In addition to this, the researcher increased the credibility by ensuring that all findings were unbiased and from the participants perspective, with them believing in the data the researcher has collected from them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Transferability: the methodology of the study was clearly defined, allowing the study to be applied to other similar areas of research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Dependability: refers to the quality of the integration process. The researcher intended to ensure the integration of the study was applied equally and throughout the study. The data collection and analysis methods were fit for purpose which resulted in reliable findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Confirmability: The research process of study was be explained in full, from the data collected to the findings, ensuring that others would be able to analyse the research design and draw similar conclusions to the researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Section Four: Findings

4.1 Presentation of Findings

The information collected from the online survey and in-depth interviews with participants was analysed and interpreted using thematic analysis and open coding to determine themes and patterns within the qualitative data which was collected. The data collected was gathered using semi-structured interviews from participants who met the criteria, and who opted to be interviewed by means of a tick box on the online survey. They needed to be Millennials who fit the population characteristics and have access to internet, a smart phone, laptop and whom have been invited to partake in the study by either a direct invitation, or referral. The online survey results were gathered and transcribed and read through to develop an overall understanding. Once this was done, the information gathered was divided into grouped concept categories or themes that were integral to the research study, once complete, open coding was used split the categories/ themes into sub-categories or sub-themes for further understanding in order to fully answer the research questions, and also ensuring the research objectives could be achieved. This same process was applied to the in-depth, semi-structured interviews which were done.

Three themes were developed from the data collected and within those themes there were a further two sub-themes. The themes which were developed can be seen in **Table 1** below.

Theme	Sub-theme
Millennials:	Qualities
Communication Systems:	Technology
	Barriers
The workplace:	Generational divide
	Values

Table 3: *Summary of Themes*

The themes which have been identified have been interpreted to determine what type of relationships are relevant between the data and the previous literature, and whether the data addresses the research question and objectives.

Each theme consists of a different aspect which the South African millennials faces in the workplace and will be analysed in terms of how these themes resonate with millennials in the South African context, as opposed to their overseas counterparts.

4.1.1 Theme One: Millennials

Millennials find themselves in the middle of an on-demand information society and this shapes their lifestyles, aspirations, needs and behaviours (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). This influence is then taken into the workplace, resulting in a complex generation that differs vastly to previous generations. Their preferences need to be considered as they continue to dominate the workplace. Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016) brings to the fore that much of the research done around millennials have taken place in the United States of America- a first world country. On the contrary, Brant and Castro (2019) acknowledge this and argue that characteristics of millennials do vary by region and environment, but they are more similar worldwide. Contemporary social influences and globalisation have enabled millennials worldwide to experience the same formative experiences resulting in a so-called 'global generation' (Brant and Castro, 2019).

Sub-theme One: Millennial Qualities

All participants were millennials and had no problem explaining what about them made them a millennial. From the data collected there was an overwhelming response as to what exact quality made them 'feel' like a millennial, speaking to the confirmation of Brant and Castro's (2019) 'global generation, as seen in the answers by various survey participants where keywords relating to technology and being digitally savvy came out strongly.

Participant A: *"Always using technology for everything."*

Participant B: *"Driven by technology."*

Participant C: *"Techno savvy, digitally well informed."*

Participant D: *"Internet culture."*

In addition to this, the data reflected a great degree of agreement that this 'on demand' society considers themselves highly adaptable in life and work in general, similarly to the findings of previous research that has been done. This can be seen from various participants' responses such as the following,

Participant E: *"Fast-paced, adaptive."*

Participant F: *"Adaptable, flexible in all areas of my life."*

Participant G: *"do not prioritize traditional, stable and secure over passion and potential."*

Participant H: *"I guess the qualities that define me as millennial is our generation ability to adapt."*

From the responses collected, millennials see themselves as a generation that is not afraid of change, in fact they are eager for change, especially when it will give them a purpose or passion in life. They are very much driven by technology, with it being a way of life, rather than something they have needed to adapt to. With this mindset and inherent quality millennials will be stifled by slow systems that do not change with the times or does not require some level of technological prowess.

4.1.2 Theme Two: Communication Systems

Millennials' use of digital technology, and the way they use it for communication impacts their lives to a great extent (Pînzaru, *et al.*, 2016). Smith and Nichols (2015) explain that millennials enjoy using technology, they were born into the technology era, unlike other generations and adopted it as second nature. Millennials who grew up around technology become skilful, and as more Millennials filter into the workplace, the more integrated technology will be in work processes. Further to this, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) confirm that millennials are heavy media consumers, who are accustomed to creating their own content.

In the fast paced workplace, FTF communication is time consuming and requires planning, making it more difficult, however Venter (2017) has uncovered that even though millennials

are avid users of digital communication systems, FTF communication is still their ideal way of communicating, and the same sentiment is held by other generations. This emphasizes millennials' need for flexibility and choice in the workplace (Venter, 2017). In addition, millennials see technology as an opportunity to network with co-workers, customers and organisations, and in doing so they believe it to aid in breaking down social walls, flattening hierarchies and providing an egalitarian work environment (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). Hall (2016) points out that millennials are up to date with latest technologies, they are always on the lookout for opportunities online which means if their current environment is not keeping them challenged they are ready to apply for better prospects. Assumptions made about millennials and communication could have a detrimental effect on organisational culture and performance. There is a need to embrace the digital shift while maintaining a personal, human connection (Venter, 2017).

Sub-theme One: Technology

The research findings echo the sentiment put forth by Pînzaru, *et al.* (2016), Smith and Nichols (2015) and Myers and Sadaghiani (2010). The participants all generally agreed that technology is an important factor for them, whether in a professional or personal capacity. There was a lot of emphasis placed on the evolution of technology and communication systems, especially with the arrival of COVID-19 and the lockdown which has forced many to work from home (WFH) during this period. Interestingly, out of the 45 respondents of the survey, only two participants considered themselves *not* to be digitally savvy. The overwhelming response was that yes, they are digitally and technologically savvy, with some of the respondents point out the following.

Participant I: *“Yes. I think the current pandemic and lockdown has forced us all to be digitally savvy, to safeguard the livelihood of our businesses.”*

Participant J: *“Yes, I am digitally savvy because from the moment I wake up to the moment I sleep I am glued to my phone/work laptop either reading the news on news apps, or socializing on social media to ordering food, to checking the weather, working via work software. So, I am quite digitally savvy because most of my life revolves around technology.”*

The technological aspect of being a millennial is clear, there is great value in being able to connect and resonate with this generation through the use of technology in the workplace,

or in their personal lives, with there often being an overflow from one area to the next, creating a blurred line between work and personal life which could be potentially detrimental as a couple of participants stated.

Participant J: *"I would like to have a separate business WhatsApp."*

Participant K: *"I do not like getting work notifications via WhatsApp. I would love to leave our work group chat."*

While technology and the digital world is firmly set in the millennials' life, there is a fine line between work and personal life that cannot be taken lightly. While millennials thrive on the technological side of life, they are very much aware of when this aspect could become detrimental to their work-life balance.

Sub-theme Two: Barriers

In the fast paced workplace, face-to-face (FTF) communication is time consuming and requires planning, making it more difficult, however Venter (2017) has uncovered that even though millennials are avid users of digital communication systems, FTF communication is still their ideal way of communicating, and the same sentiment is held by other generations. This emphasizes millennials' need for flexibility and choice in the workplace (Venter, 2017). In addition, millennials see technology as an opportunity to network with co-workers, customers and organisations, and in doing so they believe it to aid in breaking down social walls, flattening hierarchies and providing an egalitarian work environment (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010).

Hall (2016) points out that millennials are up to date with latest technologies, they are always on the lookout for opportunities online which means if their current environment is not keeping them challenged they are ready to apply for better prospects. Assumptions made about millennials and communication could have a detrimental effect on organisational culture and performance. There is a need to embrace the digital shift while maintaining a personal, human connection (Venter, 2017).

From the data collected, there were several barriers faced by millennials in the workplace with regards to communication systems. As Venter (2017) asserts, most generations still prefer FTF communication, but from the responses it has been found that many millennials find it difficult to approach their leaders/ management in the first instance, coupled with this is a lack of transparency, something that the respondents mentioned is extremely important to them in the workplace as is depicted by the following responses.

Hall (2016) explains that there is a desire from millennials for regular, positive, and open communication between employees, especially managers. In having open communication millennials feel as if they fit, they want to be highly engaged and be able to adapt easily to organisational culture (Buzza, 2017). Hall (2016) points out that information cannot be hoarded as the consequence could be a lack of loyalty and trust. Buzza (2017) echoes this by confirming that organisations need to be conscious of millennials' needs in the workplace.

Participant L: *"Unapproachable managers."*

Participant M: *"Miscommunication between the older & younger generation."*

Participant N: *"Lack of transparency in communication."*

Participant O: *"Communication between the team has not been clear as management makes erratic changes after things has been agreed upon."*

Interviewee 1: *"There is the old mentality of the 'the less they know, the better'."*

In addition to the inability to approach leaders and lack of transparency, there was a strong theme coming through in terms of generational barriers that respondents felt were present in the workplace. Many respondents were affected by this generational divide as a couple mentioned in their responses.

Participant P: *"Having to conform to the communication standards set by an older generation."*

Participant Q: *"Older people are quite closed minded."*

Participant R: *"Older generations are not willing to change how they do things."*

Participant S: *“Not all colleagues are equipped yet with the digital age.”*

From the data collected, the researcher was able to see that alongside the age gap, and lack of transparency, there are other factors that influence millennials and the barriers to communication that they experience. This could have dire consequences as millennials need to be nurtured as they strive to progress and develop in their career. If they are not able to effectively communicate with their team or leaders then this will hamper their chances at being able to progress and develop, ultimately leaving them feeling frustrated and closed off to those around them.

4.1.3 Theme Three: The Workplace

With many older cohorts in leadership positions, organisation culture takes on a top-down approach which can hinder change. Without the required change, limitations are placed on millennials, leading to reduced job satisfaction and eventual turnover (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010).

Brant and Castro (2015) say that older generations were better established when entering the workforce, whereas the recession affected millennials which has resulted in them working harder and valuing what it means to have job security which challenges the notion that millennials will leave an organisation if they do not feel heard, seen and /or acknowledged, as Smith and Nichols (2015) argue. They go on to say that millennials understand that working for one organisation and retiring are both very rare. This can play a role in millennials seeking new employment opportunities more frequently, in doing so millennials make a bigger effort in making themselves appealing to potential employers online.

Sub-theme One: Generational Divide

The generational divide continuously came up as a theme from the data collected, respondents on the survey generally found there to be a gap in the workplace.

Participant T: *“Relationships I have with my millennial colleagues are much stronger.”*

Participant U: *“Unwillingness to teach the younger generation.”*

Participant V: *“Older colleagues do not accept that there are better ways to do things.”*

Participant W: *“Not good. Older generations have a different work ethic. They hinder your creativity and seem to be stuck in the traditional way of doing things.”*

There is a clear struggle taking place in the workplace between generations, proper change management needs to be implemented if effective change is to take place. In conclusion, the older generations way of doing things could seriously hinder the work environment, in terms of relationships and innovation.

Sub-theme Two: Values

Millennials strive to find balance in their personal and their working lives, they do not want work to feel like a burden and try to be creative and innovative wherever possible (Pînzaru, et al., 2016). In his study, Buzza (2017) found work life balance to be more important to millennials than job advancement, but there is no empirical research that informs this finding further just yet. This generation grew up with an emphasis on family, which has created a shift in mindset in the workplace (Smith and Nichols, 2015). This need for balance instils doubt in older generations about millennials' organisational commitment and dedication (Smith and Nichols, 2015). The focus on their private lives has made Baby Boomers question the sacrifices they made for their career (Smith and Nichols, 2015).

Although Buzza (2017) asserts that work-life balance plays an important role for the millennial, interviewee 1 had the converse to say when considering their desired work values and whether they were being fulfilled.

Interviewee 1: *“But even so, when I think about it, I could put my thoughts on my values aside because this is my job, I would like a perfect picture story but that doesn't always happen in life.”*

Interviewee 1: *“In terms of the responsibilities that I have, job security is very important to me right now. The cost of living is very high here in Cape Town, and South Africa. So, I know me and my friends value job security so much. In terms of government, there's so much room for growth- even though it's difficult to get your foot into the door initially. Government also has great benefits, like bursaries, housing benefits, car allowance, medical aid, so yes, I don't see myself leaving anytime soon, like I said I am gratefully and privileged to have a*

job, especially in our bleak economic environment currently, and COVID-19 has also obviously impacted that thoroughly.”

The interviewee was reluctant to change jobs, when asked if their workplace matches their desired work values. This sentiment could be considered for many young millennials who are employed. The weak economic environment coupled with COVID-19 has impacted everyone in a different way. Millennials appear to be more cautious, sticking around in their job for fear of not having a secure job, which could result in a disengaged workforce. This sentiment was echoed by a respondent who had this to say,

Participant X: *“I believe being a millennial is difficult because in our generation working hard does not promise success at all due to the state of the economy and the uncertainty in employment.”*

Section Five: Conclusion of Findings

In this section the research questions and objectives will be addressed, based on the literature reviewed, the collected and analysed data, and will address the implications of the findings for the study.

5.1 Research Questions and Objectives Interpretation

Question 1: Are 'traditional' communication systems barriers in the workplace and if so, why?

During the data collection, the researcher found that it may not be traditional systems that are barriers, but more so the traditional way of doing things in the workplace- especially as it pertains to communication. As one respondent put it, *"Having to conform to the communication standards set by an older generation."*

This implies that organisations not only need to be aware of what communication systems to introduce into the workplace, but also how these systems are managed. The older generation will need to learn to adapt and be agile, while millennials will need to be mindful and focus on tolerating change management, especially if it takes longer than expected. The onset of the global pandemic COVID-19 pushed online systems into the workforce, whether organisations were ready or not. In most cases the change was welcomed, from both online survey and interviews respondents.

Question 2: What is the preferred workplace communication system/s for Millennials in South Africa, and why?

The researcher found that participants would prefer any communication system that was digitally inclined. There was a heavy demand for online platforms to be utilised, with some participants going as far as to say they would prefer less face-to-face meetings too. This is important for organisations to adapt and adjust their communication systems in the workplace, there will need to be more emphasis on technology and online platform, as well as being able to factor in elements such as Wi-Fi and fibre to ensure connectivity doesn't hamper development.

Question 3: What do millennials value in the workplace?

The data collected indicated that the three most important values to them were open communication, transparency, and respect. The results show that while millennials may be fast-paced and driven there are core values that matter to them. Transparency came through in both survey respondents and the interview participant, strengthening the sentiment. The values chosen speaks to the environment within the workplace for millennial, indicating that there is a lack of open communication, respect, and trust which is something that will need to be addressed in the workplace. As many organisations still have older management, it may be a while before communication styles change, leaving the millennial possibly feeling ignored, frustrated, and disengaged.

Objectives

Objective 1: To uncover and understand what Millennials seek in communication systems within the workplace.

The research data collected has been helpful in exploring what millennials seek in communications systems within the workplace. There is a big preference for online platforms to be utilised, not just during the lockdown period, but in general. Their reasons for wanting online-based communications has also been explored, with many participants echoing the statement of one of the respondents, "...Microsoft Teams which you can use to make calls (video and audio), live chats, and perform planning and project management activities all in one tool."

Objective 2: To uncover whether there was a communication divide between generations within the workplace.

From the data collected from both online survey and interview it was clear that there was a generational divide, which then affected the communication between the two generational cohorts. The respondents generally felt that the older generation were not tech-savvy, nor wanted to stay up to date with innovative communication systems. The Interview respondent also felt that older managers were influential in limiting honesty and change.

Objective 3: To explore and understand factors that affected millennials development in the workplace.

The third objective was not explored in-depth, the researcher would have taken a deeper look into this area during the in-depth interviews which were to be conducted. Interviews were unable to take place due to time constraints which will be addressed in the limitations of the study.

Section Six: Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns noted with the research topic were limited to the participant and the researcher:

Participants

- The confidentiality of the participants was ensured.
- Participation in the study was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.
- Full, informed consent had to have been given by the participants

The above-mentioned points were ensured using a consent form which was sent to participants before they took part in the study. The consent form carefully explained the study in brief and ensured all terms of the study were understood beforehand.

Researcher

- Collection of data was done in an ethical manner.
- Ensured that all sensitive information pertaining to the participant was kept confidential.
- Ensured that the data collected was only used for research purposes and analysed responsibly.
- Objectivity and carefulness were top of mind when conducting the research.
- Acknowledgement of the works of other authors was be given.

By being aware of the ethical concerns the researcher ensured that the research study was legitimate and deemed valid.

The online survey was conducted anonymously, and no names or sensitive information was required- there was no correlation between the participant and the given information in the survey.

The in-depth interviews were also conducted anonymously, only the researcher had access to all the information. The researcher abided by the ethics and did not reveal the information to anyone.

6.2 Limitations

The limitations for the study were the problems the researcher encountered while conducting the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). The limitations of the research study were accessibility, time constraints, and bias from the participant perspective.

Accessibility

One of the major limitations of the current study was the sample used in this study. The research was to the Western Cape only, comprising of millennials whom the researcher had easy access to. Therefore, this research results cannot be generalised to the entire population in South Africa.

Time Constraints

The intended time period over which the research study was to be conducted was a total of 6-weeks - this was made up of 4-weeks to run the survey, and 2-weeks to conduct in-depth interviews - and this time period was heavily restricted due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The lockdown made connecting with participants more difficult. The data that was collected was done over a 1- week period which restricted the amount of information that could be gathered.

Bias

The online survey used in the study heavily relied on participants' opinions and perceptions to their environment. This could have resulted in the possibility of misinterpretations of the questions which, in turn, leads to biases and misrepresentations. With the presence of a global pandemic, some participants may have been bias (negatively or positively) towards their organisation. For many participants, they would have had to draw upon their most recent experience of employment and if some had been subjected to salary cuts, retrenchment, or a negative experience this could have impacted their response in either the survey or interview.

6.3 Heuristics

To develop a deeper understanding of the role that communication systems play within the workplace, and millennials' preferences, the following suggestions for future research need to be considered:

- Widen the sample size of millennials. This will assist in creating a more in-depth understanding of the different preferences and experiences of millennials in the workplace with regards to communication systems, allowing for a more comprehensive study of this topic.
- Expanding the study to include all millennials in the various provinces within South Africa, again, allowing for a more comprehensive study of the topic, and thereby avoiding a bias in selection of sample.
- Elements of the research were not able to be explored in-depth, therefore further research is proposed to address the areas which were not explored deeply enough during the study.
- The recommendation to reduce the biasness and misrepresentations would be to use focus groups in addition to online surveys and interviews to strengthen results and validity.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the research study has revealed that millennials are looking for specific ways of communicating in the workplace, mostly opting for online platforms. The millennials in the study differ from the findings in previous research, with many acknowledging that they are unable to change jobs if they are not satisfied in their current role, revealing that a tough economic climate and cost of living does impact their decision making. The researcher feels that this study topic could stimulate further study and can fill a gap in the field of knowledge that already exists.

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Annexure 1: Ethical Clearance Letter



11 August 2020

Student name: Erin Human

Campus: CAPE TOWN

Re: Approval of BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications- Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor:



D. Bernhardi



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Carol Affleck

Annexure 2: Participant Consent Form



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Erin Joy Human and I am a student at VEGA:Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Donna Bernhardi about <i>the communication preferences of millennials in the workplace</i>, within the South African context. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of How South African millennials feel about workplace communication, and whether they feel it is a barrier to their development and why? I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because your input will prove to be valuable in gaining data relevant to the research topic. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to have you complete a simple Google Forms survey which will look at your experiences within the workplace, thereafter, upon your acceptance I would like to have interview with using one of the online platforms Zoom or Skype. You can decide whether to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer certain interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your current or past employment and your experience in the workplace, particularly around communication systems. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary. • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so. • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at VEGA, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use

quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?
Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Honours: Strategic Brand Communication . You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the outcome of the study.
What happens if I have more questions about the study?
Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether to participate. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. My contact details are as follows: Erin Human [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: Donna Bernhardt [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Annexure 3: Sample Questionnaire

Format: Google Form

Dear participant,

I am currently a Vega School, Cape Town, student. I am conducting research under the supervision of Donna Bernhardt, regarding Millennials and their experiences with communication systems in the workplace. I intend for this research to enhance our understanding of how businesses can become more innovative and open to adapting their communication systems, to fully suit our future workforce- the Millennial generation.

By completing this survey, you give full consent for your answers to be used for research purposes only. Your results will always remain anonymous as your privacy is of the utmost importance.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, you are free to decline to take part in this survey.

Qualifying Questions

1. Are you between the ages of 22 – 36 years of age?
2. Are you a South African citizen?
3. Are you currently, or have you previously been employed in a corporate organisation?
4. Do you have reliable access to the internet, as well as a smart phone or laptop?

Survey Questions

1. How would you describe yourself, as a millennial? What qualities make you a millennial?
2. What top 3 values are most important to you, as a millennial in the workplace?
3. What types of barriers do you face as a millennial in the workplace, if any?
4. Describe your experiences/relationships with other generational cohorts in the workplace.
5. Would you agree that you have an advantage over other generations?
If yes, why and if you do not agree, why not?
6. Would you describe yourself as being digitally savvy, why, or why not?

7. How would you describe the degree of innovation in your workplace, with regards to communications systems?
8. Would you agree that communication in the workplace is important to you?
If yes, why and if you do not agree, why not?
9. If you had the opportunity, which communications systems would you most like to change? Also, what would you not change about the communications systems in the workplace?
10. What types of communication barriers do you experience at work, with reference to the communications systems your organisation uses?

***Further research:**

Please tick the box (x) if you would be happy to be interviewed at a later stage, where your thoughts and opinions mentioned here will be discussed in further detail. ☐

Name _____

Contact number _____

e-mail address _____

Annexure 4: Survey Findings (Transcription and Coding Script)

Theme	Sub-theme	Code Colour
Millennials	Qualities	
Communication Systems	Technology	
	Barriers	
The workplace	Generational divide	
	Values	

Being a Millennial

How would you describe yourself, as a millennial? What qualities do you feel, make you a millennial?

I would describe myself as a curious millennial. **Driven by technology** that makes life easier and constantly need feedback

Abreast with the current trends

I am ambitious, and I always need to be bettering myself! I get bored easily and am only satisfied if my job challenges me, once I have been there for too long, I get bored and need change.

My young vibrant spirit and zest for life.

I would describe myself as a half millennial.

Fast paced, adaptive and high expectations

Looking for opportunities

Digitally savvy

I have a constant need to drive **innovation and finding smarter ways to do things** in the workplace. I believe that change is necessary for progress. The constant need for communication and staying in the loop about things and **visual stimulation**.

I was born in the millennial period and use social media comfortably. Apart from that I suppose I apply a millennial smart mindset as opposed to a "boomer" work hard mindset in daily life.

Internet culture and the way we use and spread information.

Someone who does not view age as a defining characteristic. "Possibilities are endless"

Always using technology for everything

Motivated and hard working

I do not really describe as millennial. I guess the qualities that define me as millennial is our generation ability to adapt.

I am tech-savvy, adaptable and engage frequently with social media content.

ability to use new technology with relative ease. able to accept change, while questioning old believes.

Born after the year 1980

Smart, trendy, health awareness, goal driven

Being young enough to relate to youth culture

access to the latest technology

Social butterfly

I am not rigid in my thinking. I trust my instinct and am willing to take calculated risks. I find my own path and do not prioritize traditional, stable and secure over passion and potential.

I am a very curious individual and I believe I am selfless in a way. I was always taught to grow up and respect other people and their boundaries. I also believe that to be a millennial is to be different/individual and that is exactly the type of person I am. I don't tend to conform to the norm, and I like all my ideas and individuality to be different to everyone else's.

To be able to utilise the latest technology

I do not necessarily associate with being a millennial based on qualities but based on the year I was born

I would describe myself as millennial for the simple fact that I **rely on the internet for everything from sourcing information to doing my grocery shopping.**

Techno savvy, digitally well informed and open minded.

Achievement-oriented

Free, Independent, Socialite, Confident, Ambitious, go-getter just to name a few

Being **tech savvy**, ambitious & achievement orientated is how I would describe myself as a millennial.

I am street smart and I'm street stylish and physically competitive

Besides being born in 1994. I feel I have a rather Liberal outlook on life yet level-headed.

I am **adaptable. Flexible.** Sociable and always willing to learn and grow in all aspects of life.

I am a millennial because I am ambitious and enjoy working with people.

Always **questioning authority** and seeking new challenges.

I am confident and goal orientated. Not afraid of a challenge.

I would like to contribute to a fair society

Date of birth

Yes, I was born in the 90's

What top 3 values are most important to you, as a millennial in the workplace?

Communication, open-mindedness, reliability

Good salary, **flexibility**, and **transparency**

Flexibility Up-skilling Diversity in the workplace

Respect, trust, and personal growth

Work environment, **mentorship**, career growth

Honestly, **respect**, equality

Respect, being giving the chance to express my ideas, responsibility

Honesty personal growth productivity

Open communication Shared vision and teamwork Recognition

Efficiency, competence, positivity

Efficiency, Open to creative solutions, supportive environment

Honesty, transparency, and flexibility.

Reliability, honesty, trustworthy

Integrity, respect perseverance

Transparency in business practices, opportunity for growth, and clear communication

1. Innovative 2. Solutions Driven 3. Socially Engaged

flexibility, ability for growth, non-corporate preferred.

Dedication, consistency, enterprise

Normal hours, good package, health awareness

Fair pay. Diversity. Tolerance

opportunity, growth, and experience

Adaptive to change, Open and Hardworking Driven and positive

I have an opinion and it is valid and should matter. Hierarchy is history. Everyone should be approachable. Do not be stuck in your ways because it's always been done that way.

Moving with the times sooner rather than later makes a good business great.

Respect, personal space, and social interaction worth your colleagues.

Reliable internet, to be able to work from home and to use less paper

Honesty Respect Effective Communication

Respect. Understanding and patience

Acquire advanced skills in my field, be able to express myself, adapting to change easily.

Open mindedness, free speech & respect

Exposure Career development Inclusion

Being honest, reliable, and delivering quality

Respect Integrity Responsibility

Honesty, open communication, and a good work ethic. Time management is valuable as well.

Adaptability. Communication. Creativity

Integrity, accountability, and transparency

Teamwork, achievement at a high level, and flexible working hours

I enjoy teamwork, I want to be a part of something that would be a positive change, I enjoy flexibility

collaboration and respect

Relationships, value creation, creativity

Respect, Appreciation, Honesty

What types of barriers do you face as a millennial in the workplace, with regards to communication, if any?

What types of barriers do you face as a millennial in the workplace, with regards to communication, if any?

Being managed by unapproachable managers. Not having any facilities or platforms to allow for anonymous whistle blowing

Race, it takes longer for a black person to move up the ranks

There are a lot of older generations who already have negative views on the generation and think we are "too big for our boots" so a lot of things go unspoken due to fear of being judged.

Communication techniques used by different leaders. (Verbally)

Lack of mentorship and clarity in terms of growth within specific areas

Generational, differences in emotional intelligence

Not all colleagues are equipped yet with the digital age

Information hoarding is still very real with the older work force.

Older colleagues tend to be set in their ways and do not always accommodate a different way of doing things.

Having to conform to the communication standards set by an older generation.

Currently lack of transparency in communication is an obvious barrier.

At times, communication between the team has not been clear as management makes erratic changes after things has been agreed upon

Older Generation (Gen X) colleagues tend to prefer the more formal and conservative mode of communication, which if not executed correctly by a millennial, might struggle to get information, or build a relationship with the Gen X colleague.

Age, most management positions are filled with older the generation which believe experience comes before anything else.

A lot, privacy, trust, responsibility, open leadership, lack of consistent communication

Hoarding info, diverse understanding from different cultures

Non-responsiveness

Often older generations are not willing to change how they do things or see that there is a more effective and efficient way of getting to the same or even better outcome.

Millennials tend to look a lot younger than they are and most people in the workplace have been there for years. So as a 'new' person coming in the people in the workplace tend to treat you as a 'child' and don't really value your opinion at times.

Old people who are unable to utilise the latest technology

Lack of communication

I'm one of the youngest people in the Municipality that I work for, so a lot of the older people are quite closed minded.

Working with the older generation which think and do things differently, they don't adapt to change easily.

I would say the **communication approaches used** (e.g. the structure like top-bottom) sometimes do build those barriers.

Miscommunication between the older & younger generation. Often so if the younger person is in a managerial position

Superiority complex

Being taken seriously by older managers. All ideas and input are normally valuable

Barriers would be being undermined by management for speaking up.

not being heard by the older generation

People taking offense too easily

Slow internet

Describe your experiences/relationships with other generational cohorts (either older/younger staff members) in the workplace.

Not good. Older generations have a different work ethic. They hinder your creativity and seem to be stuck in the traditional way of doing things. They tend to see their staff as a submission and struggle to work as a team

Older staff are stuck in the old ways

The older generations think my generation is impatient and that we are too big for our boots so **the interactions with the older generations is not very transparent** as I need to downplay a lot of my views. Interacting with younger generations is awesome as they see life like me.

I speak to everyone and everyone speaks to me.

There's a **lack of information sharing or up skilling between generations.** i.e. technology, integrating new managerial tactics that are suited for millennials and older generations

Varies from person to person.

Some will text you on WhatsApp for work matters even during the weekend. It's not good

Workable

The older team members are not very open to change.

It varies but often older colleagues do not accept that there are better ways to do things, currently, as there was before.

Efficiency versus Attrition, I guess.

Older colleagues are usually very set in doing things “the old way” and care more about you looking busy for a set amount of time than efficient workflow and being adaptive to individual workflows.

With older staff members it's a more traditional office space etiquette. With younger staff members it's a lot more casual.

Older needs lots of help with new technology

Positive and pleasant

Older colleagues often struggle to adapt, and do not take well to working with younger colleagues on the same level. They fear becoming obsolete, yet struggle to adapt

The relationship I have with my millennial colleagues are much stronger than those shared with Gen X colleagues. It's easier to relate with millennials than with Gen X as the forms of content we engage in vary quite a bit.

within my team we only have one person who is not millennial. She fits into the team effortless. Does report to me which I suspected would be an issue with the age difference, but I was wrong as our work relationship is amazing.

Get along well with most people, older people adverse to change. Stubborn at times. Younger people friendlier.

Not techno savvy, dislikes change

No issues, generally easy to get along

unwillingness to teach the younger generation

Older don't trust your opinions easily

They often feel that they are superior to younger colleagues given their age and experience and are not very flexible in their approach and way of thinking.

I feel that older colleagues will either treat you like you are their child or someone they care about or they will just take no interest in you because you are so young.

To be able to do skype interviews not to travel long distances going for interviews. Less spending on job hunting for as long you have good internet.

Good

It's fantastic. They are very welcoming, and they are happy to see me grow. I have a lot of respect and time for all of them.

People need to be more open to change and be more willing to learn from others

The younger generation understand and embrace IT software and hardware and adapt to change and new ideas easily whereas the older generation struggle a bit with technology and do not adapt quickly to change.

Friendly/honest

Luckily, it is a very neutral one, where people respect each other regardless of their generation.

I would say I am quite versatile when it comes to this as I can hold a conversation or relate with someone older, or younger than myself

Very liberal

Generally, pretty good. Barring one or two individuals I have always worked well with others.

I would say generally I have a very good relationship with my colleagues. I'd like to think I'm a very approachable and sociable person, so generally I have a very good accord with my peers/colleges in the workplace.

I am the youngest in my workplace, I get along with people a few years older than me. Older staff members have a wealth of knowledge and it is always good to learn from them if they are open to teach.

Older cohorts are easier to speak to than younger cohorts. Older cohorts are facts orientated whereas younger cohorts bullshit their way around the office space.

Older staff members are somewhat open to listening to new ideas, however I find that younger staff members feel like they have it all figured out and they are entitled to a certain degree.

Older generation do not take me seriously and points I make or contribute are glossed over

Suggest an initial discussion around personality traits, then interacting accordingly

Good, a bit slow to respond

Would you agree that you have an advantage over other generations? If yes, why do you believe so? If you do not agree, why not?

Yes, I believe our generation is creative and innovative and can bring in a change to the work environment that will be beneficial to all

No, I believe being a millennial is difficult because in our generation working hard does not promise success at all due to the state of the economy and the uncertainty in employment. However, the internet has brought us various opportunities to make a living which may not make sense to the older generations.

Yes, I do, I grew up in a time where punishing your child wasn't illegal.

We are a blend between the older generation and the up and coming generations

I believe every generation has its advantages and disadvantages

Yes, millennials we do a lot of research

I have the advantage because I have old age values, but I grew up in the age of the transition from analogue to digital

I believe we do. We grew up in the time of technological innovation which has pushed us to constantly reinvent ourselves to remain relevant.

Not necessarily. There is value in what older generations know and have experienced that a millennial like me hasn't yet acquired. The best form of learning is experience and older generations certainly have a lot of that, as a millennial we might be best suited to the

current climate but older generations through their experience probably possess a greater resilience as they've often had to adapt to change.

I think it is a double-edged sword. We have an easier access to information and education, but this has left the market very saturated and extremely competitive to the point that we are exploited when entering the workplace.

yes, our ability to succeed is seeded in our experience/generation but more in our willingness to react/adapt. We all experience the now, now!

No, we are all strong in our own ways

Yes. We millennials are high achievers and rather than wait for opportunity we seek out opportunities

My generation are eager to gain experience and can adapt to changing work environments. We can learn new skills as we work. The only downside is that companies are still asking for 5-10 years of experience when it's not needed.

I can personally agree with that statement as I grew up over a period where there was no internet as well as the progressive stage of the web, meaning that I can relate to both Gen X and Gen Z to some extent.

yes, in my industry (finance) we had the first major shift from closed server accounting to a more cloud based digital word. As a millennial I got to live through the changes.

In different. Both advantageous in terms of openness to change and learning, disadvantageous in terms of experience.

Yes, technologically advanced, change agent

Yes, the internet and ease of access to information gives us an advantage

yes

Quite, we have experience before and after technology in workplaces thrived

Yes. I believe that anything is attainable if you put your mind to it if your intentions are good, and you are willing to work at it.

Yes, we do. We tend to be up to date with all the current trends and we do know a thing or two about older generations and things.

Yes, there are more opportunities now not only locally but international also. Internet has made easier for networks between different countries.

Yes, because I am more open to a lot more things

Yes, I do have an advantage against older generations and younger generations because I have a taste of both worlds with and without technological advancements. For instance, I was around when there were no cell phones in sight in the early 90s and I now exist in a world where technology is advancing at a fast pace and I am moving along with that wave, so I have an added advantage against younger and older generations.

Yes, openness and willingness to adapt to changes in workplace

Yes, because we are more technological inclined and willing to adapt with times unlike the other generations who believe if things are working why change them. With us we go with times, why work hard when you can work smart?

I would agree. I see us millennials as the “in betweener”, where we have the mentality of both baby boomers as well as gen z. We know how to work hard as well as work smart

I do not agree, people have the opportunity for self-growth and change

Yes because of the Liberal, open minded mindset. But other than that equal playing field

Yes. We are more adaptable and flexible in adapting to modern times especially with role and effects of technology in our work and social environments these days.

I do not think so. The only advantage would be not being technologically challenged.

I agree because we have the work ethic of the older generation but the technological understanding of the younger generation. We set the tone for the future Gen to excel but they lack work ethic so fail. This might come across as narcissistic but those are traits of Gen Y, apparently.

Yes, we do because we are in the middle and we understand both perspectives

Yes, I understand the use of technology better and how the younger generation takes in information

Yes, tech savvy

Yes, more tech savvy

Being a Millennial in the Workplace

Would you describe yourself as being digitally savvy? If yes, why? If not, why not?

Yes

Yes, of course. I rely heavily on tech especially apps that make life easier and are easily accessible — online stores, online services.

Yes, but not as savvy and generation z

Yes, I own enough high-tech items. If its new I want it.

Yes, I can pick up and learn to use new software quite easily

Yes. I can easily operate smart devices such as laptops and phones, am connected online and can use these things to my advantage

Yes, I apply myself on all new age platforms that is out there or to my disposal

I would say I am average. I am versatile with most platforms but there definitely room to immerse myself a bit more.

Yes. I can do most of what I need to online.

Yes, I understand the basics of technology and have certain expert knowledge in certain areas

No, I have limited experience in using digital platforms.

Yes, I know most platforms

Yes. Technology is fun and exciting rather than overwhelming

Yes, I am currently learning code, while building a website.

Yes, I am, however I must admit that I feel I might be losing my touch, if I look at how the younger generation engages with technology. To stay relevant, one has to move with the times.

Yes, my job involves me sitting in front of a PC for 8 hours. Would be worried if I were not Tech Savvy

Digitally savvy, I do not read manuals and click agree without reading through the terms and conditions.

Yes, understand it

Yes, most of the work I do is computer and software based.

Yes

Well yes, it is convenient during this day and age.

Yes. I think the current pandemic and lockdown has forced us all to be digitally savvy, to safeguard the livelihood of our businesses. Being able to have virtual meetings, sign documents and market your services on social media platforms would be a few areas.

Yes, I believe that I am quite up to date work all the new technologies and what is new and not.

Yes, everything I do I always to do it the old ways for example I hardly use cash I swipe at tills and do online payments when i buy online.

Yes. Well, everything I do for work is online based.

Yes, because I use my laptop or smartphone for everything

YES

Yes I am digitally savvy because from the moment I wake up to the moment I sleep I am glued to my phone/work laptop either reading the news on news apps, or socializing on social media to ordering food, to checking the weather, working via work software. So, I am quite digitally savvy because most of my life revolves around technology.

Yes, always keep up with latest technology trends.

I am, am in IT that by default makes you digital savvy.

Yes- it is important to be digitally savvy as technology keeps on changing and if you do not keep up, you'll get lost in it. You always have to ensure you're clued on the current trend

Not really, technology improve and through my time growing up I never had new tech

Yes. Being a designer and marketer, one would have to be.

Yes. I took IT as a subject at school as well as studying web development after matriculating from school. It is hard to find a millennial that's not tech savvy these days.

Yes definitely, I can work on all systems with ease.

Yes. Constantly pushing to I Corp new tech into the work field Means that I am always learning about what's new.

Yes, I catch on with a digital format quite quickly.

Yes, to a large degree

Yes, thorough understanding of digital communication platforms

Yes, I always try to stay up to date with the last techs and apps

How would you describe the degree of innovation in your workplace, with regards to communications systems (intranet/ mail/ online platforms/ social media)?

Not innovative at all. We are relatively small, so we have the bear minimum (emails, slack, social media). We do not make use of any fancy or out the box communication platforms

Still basic

In my workplace a little slow because it is a very traditional community and still jumping onto the technology train

fairly good

Non-existent

It is average

Not very good

We run with the best

We have come a long way in the past 3 years and have branched out and interacted on more platforms. We have a good social media presence and communicate internally daily.

We have been forced to use online platforms more since covid19 hit but I think we have used our online systems well since then. Microsoft teams is a good alternative to zoom.

Falling behind. Not making use of it nearly enough.

In my workplace there is a relatively high degree.

Workplace is innovative and relies heavily on technology

I would say medium, as email marketing has been done. In past three months we have developed a marketing strategy for our websites and social media.

For the size of the organization, I feel that the business does its best to remain relevant to the industry's progress. Sometimes I am amazed at the quick and nimble response the business has to innovation.

Leading in the field as we own a software company, so we have made several plugins to streamline several tasks.

Moderate. Many platforms but not user friendly like Facebook is.

Good, but can always improve

Basic to medium. Email and intranet in use. Plus, company has an Instagram and Twitter account

excellent

Meetings are held online, and notifications are on social media, so fairly good.

It has improved dramatically over the past few months and changed the way we do business - for the better.

Top tier, I feel that everything is up to date.

It is not advanced yet, but it is getting better each day.

Could be better

Being covid we fully rely on intranet and virtual meetings and our IT department are phenomenal on keeping us on point.

we are a 100% virtual workplace with co-workers across the globe

My company is very innovative when it comes to digital communication mediums. We use Zoom/Skype/Microsoft Teams/Microsoft Outlook to communicate within the organization.

Average

We are there already maybe a bit of something fresh, out of the ordinary is what we might have to consider.

We as a company is quite innovative as we make use of all of the following communications systems provided. Our focus is marketing and being able to communicate to our customers or suppliers on all levels.

Communication will always be a challenge with people because of the phobia of not being properly in stoke

I own my own business and I am well integrated on various platforms.

Very good. I work at a school, and E-learning has becoming a very big part of the way kids are taught these days. Digital communication platforms also play a big part in the way schools communicate with parents.

It is good, we have an amazing system and we are quite digital

Quite slow to be honest. Not used as efficiently as it could be.

Our company is beyond innovative, for the industry we are in.

Poor

Start-up - establishing comm system

Pretty standard

Would you say that communication in the workplace is important to you? If yes, why and if you do not agree, why not?

Yes, of course. Communication is key as it allows for employees to comfortably ask for help and to receive feedback regarding their work which all in turn help them improve. For internal purposes it allows for the business to communication any important matters to staff

Yes, cause without it there will be misunderstandings

Yes, it is important to feel like you are a part of an ecosystem that you can contribute to.

it is yes, keep us in the loop with what is happening.

Yes, these are the means and ways of getting best out of your employees and generates a form of motivation

Yes. Strong communication minimizes misunderstandings and problems

Yes of course without communication we can't produce great work

It is imperative for without it we cannot be productive

Definitely. I always like to stay informed.

Yes, it is. Your workplace is basically your home away from home, so it is important to communicate well with those around you. Getting a tea with a colleague or having a smoke is always good for improving those social connection/communication bridges.

Yes! Lack of/poor communication has caused numerous issues in the past and greatly hindered by efficiency.

Yes, but more so the degree of communication, too much easily leads to over saturation.

Yes, nothing will be able to be done without communication

Yes, communication is very important. Communication helps clarify expectations and makes me feel part of something bigger than myself and the job

Yes, that is the only way to run a successful business.

I fully agree that it is. If a company does not continuously keep all employees on the same page with regards to its objectives, mission, and vision, then we see frustration and low performance from the business.

Yes, I work in finance without people communicating tasks I'd be lost.

Yes, openness and transparency lead to better planning and participation in the workspace as well as growth.

Yes. We all speak the same language

Yes. Important for teamwork

Yes, for clarification

Communication is important everywhere to help with work ethic, motivation, happy workplace etc

Absolutely. It gives an employee a sense of pride in what they do and they are more brand loyal, when they feel that they are being heard.

Yes, because without communication we would not be able to get along with anyone.

Yes, it is important that as an employee you need to be informed about what is happening in the organisation you work for.

Yes.

Yes, because we fully rely on communication to complete our job

Communication is always important

Communication is very important in the company FOR ME. It keeps the business flow intact, avoids the "broken telephone" effect which leads to higher productivity levels.

Yes, to make sure business is running efficiently ad productively.

Yes, it is, that is what keeps us all informed and aware of what is happening in the workplace.

I agree. Communication is vital for any and everyone in the workplace because if nobody communicated, no one would know what's going on and if whether what they're doing is correct or not

Yes, for speedy workflow

Yes. It can only benefit one's workflow.

Yes! Communication is enlightenment. Effective communication leads to better understanding.

Yes definitely, when management does not communicate, I feel as I am being left out.

Yes, communication is key but listen to understand is more valuable. So both ends needs to be of high quality, the communication as well as understanding what is being communicated.

It's crucial, like in any relationship communication is key , therefore we need to brainstorm our ideas and see what we come up with.

Yes, we can achieve so much more so much quicker if communication was easier

Yes - **crucial to productivity**

Yes, it **makes you feel valued**. Also, good communication makes work easier

If you had the opportunity, which communications systems would you most like to change? What would you not change?

How **feedback between managers and their team is received** — I would like that to change. And I would not change our slack portal as it allows for staff to have private conversations and also for the business to communicate to us

Meetings, they take away time from your actual workday.

Star leaf, it is not necessary as Microsoft Teams is a great platform for meetings, sharing documents, etc.

I feel that every person communicates differently but old systems, like printing paper to communicate- news boards. **Everything should be digital by now.**

I would like to change the fact that sometimes for important points we don't officially do emails.

I would not change I would just continue improving stuff that is already in place

I don't think I would take away anything I would say we need to be **more interactive.**

Personal face to face communication will always be the best and it can never be underestimated. I think all forms of communication are good and serve a purpose. However, I would ensure that you do not abuse **WhatsApp groups outside of business hours.**

Unnecessary group meetings. Lots of time is wasted in these meetings when it does not concern many members and deal with lots of topics that can be communicated in emails.

I would change emails and **keep Tele communications.**

I would change meetings and keep things online.

Would prefer less in person meetings and more online meetings such as Microsoft teams or Zoom

Currently, the communication system we have got in place is working. I would like to have a separate business WhatsApp.

I would possibly refine the communication channel that is used to streamline comms to the specific branches, however all else works quite well. I would increase work-from-home days post-lockdown as it was recorded that performance was at an all-time high over the last 5 months.

Skype, it is useless and has been replaced with WhatsApp Web. The only thing I would like to add is the ability to forward WhatsApp messages to email.

The intranet to be changed. The WhatsApp groups to not change.

Time and attendance, more digital or electronic kiosks for self service

Cell phone messages are typically only where one receives spam, so this type of communication is not used. Other platforms such as WhatsApp are much better because of no spam. I would change the way messages work. I would not change end to end encryption on WhatsApp

The older generation.

Communication has come a long way and significantly improved over the past few months. I think communicating how this has changed and improved to all stakeholders should be the current focus.

Meetings. I feel like at most times they are very unnecessary, and it takes away valuable time that could be used for working.

Post box, emails works better and its paperless

I would like a better intranet

paper communication needs to change to a digital platform, I would not change email or something like Slackware but rather incorporate draconic systems like paperwork into it.

I would change the generic physical telephone lines and use Microsoft Teams which you can use to make calls (video and audio), live chats, and perform planning and project management activities all in one tool.

Change the printed internal news boards

to be honest, nothing maybe just updates/updates on the current communication systems. By that I mean more of latest channels.

Email-

The emailing system because of the paper trail, your word could be recorded

People no longer phone one another. Everything is via email. So there is a lack of fundamental people skills.

There is not much I would change. I think there is a role for every form of communication system.

I do not like getting work notifications via WhatsApp. I would love to leave our work group chat.

One thing I would improve is outlook for mobile. It needs to be more directed at mobile usage than just a direct version accessible on mobile.

Face to face meetings, they are laborious. Emails, they are outdated. I would like to see the use of chat rooms and digital bulletin boards.

Mail - should not be the go-to means of communication. Should not always be formal and should not be a 9 to 5 means of communication

What types of communication barriers do you experience at work, with reference to the communications systems your organisation uses?

Not have regular meetings with managers. - not having a platform that allows for feedback or performance appraisals

The failure of the executive teams to cascade information successfully.

I'm happy with all current communications systems as stated in previous question.

Often people are not given protocol to follow when using these communicative software programs

Time delays in emails

A lot of our work force does not have pc access at work due the nature of their work which often **delays the information filtering down to everyone.**

During covid, emails became excessive which became detrimental to efficient communication.

Having a **poor communication structure**

Emailing system

No barriers now with COVID-19

People not reading their emails, or not checking their WhatsApp.

Load shedding is a pain, especially when using video-conference platforms.

Language barrier for dealing with African countries.

Difficulty to operate in the social network systems. Confidentiality of information.

Time and attendance, more digital or electronic kiosks for self service

the older generation

Language barriers in some cases, lack of access to internet

Before lockdown systems and processes were quite archaic and mostly (in some parts even only) compatible for face to face engagement with clients. All this has had to be drastically changed over the past few months, and our organization has come up with many innovations and online tools to aid virtual engagements.

Most of the time when you use something new the **older generation don't understand** stuff and then it's hard to get your point across and that's when communications barriers start because they don't know what you are trying to say.

I think there is no communication barriers I experience at work, all communications are all relevant. But I would like **information to be clearer.**

Misunderstanding emails

Slow network

The only barrier I experience are colleagues that let emails pile up on Microsoft Outlook and respond over a long period of time. As opposed to communication over a call.

Ease of access and the availability to everyone

time it takes for feedback or responses in general

Meetings, and all the physical interaction needed- prefer online

Land line phone verbal communication is an essential part of workflow

Email vs phone calls

Internet connection issues.

A barrier for me is that I am is now acceptable for working purposes and may serve as proof documents. WhatsApp should not be used for official work documentation.

The formality of the written word, the slowness, the time it takes and the lack of follow up hampers the instruction to a team and overloads their time out of the expected work hours per day.

Language barriers (working with Swiss)

Slow internet. Bad communication from management

Older people, not really moving with the times.

Annexure 5: In-depth Interview Sample

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions will be asked, allowing for the participant to take the interview in the direction they see fit, while exploring the deeper truths regarding their thoughts and feelings about communication in their workplace.

1. Where do you work?
2. Can you describe the environment, in terms of demographics?
3. What do you value in the workplace?
4. Do you think your workplace speaks to these values?
5. When you think of communication in your workplace what are your first thoughts?
6. Does communication matter to you?
7. Do you feel hindered by older generations?

Annexure 6: In-depth Interview Transcript (Zoom call)

Saturday 22 August 2020

20:00-20:30

Interviewer: Evening Yusuf, thank you for agreeing to the interview, I really appreciate your input for my research project. So, as you know my focus is all around communication in the workplace, specifically with reference to millennials. So, let's jump into it, please don't feel any pressure to sugar coat anything, you can be as real and honest as you'd like, again, this is anonymous.

Interviewee: Okay, thank you. I don't mind speaking the truth so not to worry.

Interviewer: Okay, so let's get into it- Where do you work?

Interviewee: I work for Western Cape Government

Interviewer: Can you describe the environment, in terms of the age demographics?

Interviewee: Okay, wow, it ranges from 18-60 years. From graduate interns that are absorbed by each department, and then 60 is the retirement age limit. And as you know its government people tend to stay for their full time.

Interviewer: Do you intend to stay the full term, until you retire?

Interviewee: I do intend to stay until I retire, yes.

Interviewer: And why would you say that?

Interviewee: In terms of the responsibilities that I have, job security is very important to me right now. The cost of living is very high here in Cape Town, and South Africa. So, I know me and my friends value job security so much. In terms of government, there's so much room for growth- even though it's difficult to get your foot into the door initially. Government also has great benefits, like bursaries, housing benefits, car allowance, medical aid..so ya, I don't see myself leaving anytime soon, like I said I am gratefully and privileged to have a job, especially in our bleak economic environment currently, and COVID-19 has also obviously impacted that thoroughly.

Interviewer: 100%, I hear you. It is scary for young people today and COVID has placed extra stress, so I know exactly what you're saying. Okay cool, moving along, Interviewer: What would you say that you value in the workplace?

Interviewee: I would say sharing responsibility, transparency, and something around remuneration, I don't have the word right now uhm...appropriate remuneration.

Interviewer: Do you think your workplace speaks to these values of yours?

Interviewee: Uhm, because of the size of the organisations, I can't speak to all departments. I definitely know the organisation makes an effort to look at these values, but I wouldn't say they're completely there. But even so, when I think about it, I could put my thoughts on my values aside because this is my job, I would like a perfect picture story but that doesn't always happen in life.

Interviewer: Okay, but like you say they're trying, and are you happy that they are trying, or do you feel it's not enough?

Interviewee: I am appreciative that they try, but I guess at some point it is going to reach a breaking point, we cannot wait around forever, and again in terms of remuneration. But as mentioned, I do intend to stay the full term, because I need my job, I need to provide for my family, and it is just too risky to be moving around from job to job.

Interviewer: Yes, so money is an important factor to you?

Interviewee: Yes, again, I am newly married, so I mean, we trying to get our lives on track and eventually start a family you know?

Interviewer: Yes, of course. Cool, so getting back to the workplace, when you think of communication in your workplace what are your first thoughts? Just off the top of your head.

Interviewee: Hmmm, I think of adapting to new means of communication, especially now during COVID, so we have had a major increase in mobile communication and because we are all working remotely. WhatsApp is a major player of course, and then MS Teams and Zoom has taken the place of physical contact. I also think COVID has really been an enabling factor in changing the mindsets of people who were reluctant to change prior to the pandemic taking over our lives.

Interviewer: So, do you think it's had a positive effect on you and your colleagues, this adapting to new ways?

Interviewee: Yes, I really do. It has shown how these new ways of communication, it has ripple effects on work productivity and lifestyle productivity. Obviously, we are doing the same job, but with more flexibility. I know a lot of us, especially me prefer to work on digital platforms, because it honestly just makes my life easier. There is less time spent on logistical arrangements, and more time on actual work. We are still highly productive, but have more time on our hands which can now be channeled in to work or other things, whereas normally we would be limited by time, either because of traveling etc.

Interviewer: Yes, yes, I get you. So, you have seen a real improvement, or not improvement, but just a better and more efficient way of achieving the same results.

Interviewee: Yes, and in a way I think we are actually working much harder, because we aren't distracted by phone calls and the random office drop-ins by people etc. which can also overload your day and prevent you from completing your daily works tasks timeously.

Interviewer: So, if things were to go back to normal once we are clear of COVID, would you be happy to remain communicating this way?

Interviewee: Most definitely, it's been a change for the better. Before the communication was a bit slow, I think because you're in the office and you know you will have time to get to things, but with people at home and at ease they tend to be more active and faster to reply.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say, 'at ease'?

Interviewee: Well, a lot of us use public transport, or live in the northern suburbs so it's that stress of the daily commute, the stress of worrying about kids and just life in general. A lot of the younger guys I know have side hustles, so the 9-5 job is just a means to make sure you get a basic, but we definitely out there trying to make a living through other means.

Interviewer: Okay I see, great. So with regards to the shift in communication would you think your department/ organisation would feel the same as you do?

Interviewee: I think so, because we've actually had a recent survey which was conducted by the Western Cape Government (WCG). There were 1800 participants. 75% felt valued

and trusted by their employer. 88% loved the flexibility of working from home (WFH) and 86% had access to the necessary resources to do the job.

Interviewer: Hmmm that's very very interesting, would you mind if I asked what the demographics were?

Interviewee: Sure, more than half were 30-49 years old, 59% were female and 41% male.

Interviewer: Oh wow, this is super cool, could I get access to those results perhaps?

Interviewee: Certainly, I'll e-mail you. Just to add the top **three methods of communication were e-mail, WhatsApp and MS Teams**- just in case you wanted to know or could use that in your research. And 70% would prefer to continue WFH in the future (post-COVID).

Interviewer: This is very cool, thank you for that insight. So that answers my next questions regarding what types of communication your organisation currently uses, thanks for that. So, given all that you've already told me, can I ask you seriously- does communication matter to you, honestly?

Interviewee: Yes, it really does.

Interviewer: How so, in what way? So, you have mentioned **transparency**, but what else in terms of how you are communicated with matters to you?

Interviewee: Yes, I guess just to have **better dialogue with me/ us through the various levels of management**.

Interviewer: So, do you ever feel hindered by older generations, management at all?

Interviewee: **There is the old mentality of the 'the less they know, the better', which is not the way we operate today. Age is but a number. And it is not in the best interest of the company to hide these types of things, so why do it?**

Interviewer: Yeah, so what you've just described- how does that make you feel? Are you happy to work for a company where there is that mentality and way of doing things?

Interviewee: I guess I feel sort of nothing anymore, it's been happening for so long..you kind of just get used to it after a while. It's definitely made me feel less happy at times, that why I leave work exactly on the dot, I sort of feel like why do I need to put in extra effort when no matter what the **older management will continue doing things the way they have been doing**.

Interviewer: Yep, I see what you are saying. Well thank you for your time I think I have what I need, it was insightful and great to hear your thoughts. Thank you again, keep well, stay safe!

Interviewee: Thank you, you too!

End

Annexure 7: Consent Form- Interview



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants To whom it may concern, My name is Erin Joy Human and I am a student at VEGA: Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Donna Bernhardt about <i>the communication preferences of millennials in the workplace</i>, within the South African context. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of How South African millennials feel about workplace communication, and whether they feel it is a barrier to their development and why? I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study? I would like to invite you to participate in this research because your input will prove to be valuable in gaining data relevant to the research topic. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to have you complete a simple Google Forms survey which will look at your experiences within the workplace, thereafter, upon your acceptance I would like to have interview with using one of the online platforms Zoom or Skype. You can decide whether to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer certain interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study? Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your current or past employment and your experience in the workplace, particularly around communication systems. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study? • Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary. • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so. • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected? I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at VEGA, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Honours: Strategic Brand Communication. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Erin Human
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Donna Bernhardt
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I [REDACTED]

Agree to participate in the study, and am aware of all of the above.

Sign [REDACTED]

Annexure 8: Originality Report

Report is automatically generated when submitting assignment online.

Annexure 9: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

Title: *Millennial' Preferences of Communication Systems in the Workplace.*

Research Purpose/ Objectives	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The purpose of this study is to explore how the 'traditional' communication systems resonate with Millennials in the workplace.	Are 'traditional' communication systems barriers in the workplace and if so, why?	Millennials in the workplace will make up majority of the workforce for the next 3 decades. Millennials value communication. Little research has been done around Millennials in the workplace-within the South African context.	Manheim, K, 1952. <i>Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge.</i>	Theme 1: Millennials at Work Theme 2: Communication Divide between Generations Theme 3: Millennial Qualities Theme 4: Millennial Qualities in the Workplace Theme 5: Work-life Balance Theme 6: Communication Preferences Theme 7: Communication in the Workplace Theme 8: The Millennial Generation	Interpretivism Ontology: Reality is viewed as a social construct, changing, and being changed by people's perceptions and beliefs. Millennials experience the workplace differently in different contexts. Axiology: Research should uncover and attempt to understand why millennials have the preferences they do in the workplace. Key concepts will be used as 'value' benchmark.	Qualitative Population Population Parameters Males and females who fall between the ages of 22-36 years and have experienced corporate employment, live in South Africa, with access to internet, smart phone, laptop.	Online Survey (Google Forms) In-depth interviews (one-on-one) via Skype/ Zoom online platform	•The confidentiality of participants •Participation in the study is voluntary and participants •Full, informed consent must be given •Collection of data done in an ethical manner •Sensitive information pertaining to the participant is kept private •Objectivity and carefulness when conducting the research •Acknowledgement of the works of other authors will be given	Traditional systems are not the barrier, 'traditional' way of doing things is the barrier. This also resulted in a 'communication divide' between generational cohorts Millennials value transparency and open communication in the workplace. Millennials prefer online platforms for communication.	Widen the sample size and expand study to include all millennials in the various provinces within South Africa. Further research to address areas which were not explored deeply enough during the study. Use focus groups in addition to online surveys and interviews.
Research Problem	Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
To uncover South African Millennial' Preferences of Communication Systems in the Workplace, and whether or not 'traditional' systems could be a barrier to progression- and if so, why?	To uncover and understand what Millennials seek in communication systems. To uncover whether there is communication divide between generations. To explore and understand factors that affect millennials development.	Millennials Workplace Communication Preferences Generational gap Collaboration Technology Communication systems Work-life balance Leadership Barriers	The 'Theory of Generation s' (Karl Manheim, 1952).			Non-probability Sampling methods: Convenience and volunteer Size: Survey: 100 Interviews: 12	Unit of Analysis:- people Data Analysis Method(s): Thematic Analysis	Accessibility Time Constraints Bias	Uncover barriers to communication in the workplace. To identify what Millennials value. Discover how to engage Millennials in workplace.	