

Millennial Leadership as a Determinant of Work Enthusiasm: A Study in Government Institutions

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Abstract

Purpose - This study investigates the influence of millennial leadership on employee work enthusiasm in the context of government institutions. The research aims to understand how leadership styles typical of the millennial generation, characterized by openness, adaptability, and a focus on work-life balance, affect employees' motivation and engagement.

Design/methodology/approach - The study involved a random sample of 50 employees, and data was collected using a questionnaire. The hypothesis was tested using SmartPLS to analyze both direct effects and mediating analysis.

Originality - While previous studies have explored leadership and work enthusiasm in private sector settings, this research offers originality by focusing on government institutions, highlighting how millennial leadership influences work enthusiasm within a bureaucratic context that is often overlooked in leadership studies.

Findings and Discussion - The study revealed that millennial leadership has a significant positive effect on work enthusiasm among employees in government institutions. Furthermore, organizational culture was found to mediate the relationship between millennial leadership and work enthusiasm, indicating that a supportive and adaptive culture enhances the impact of leadership on employee motivation.

Conclusion - Millennial leadership has a positive impact on employee work enthusiasm, with organizational culture acting as a mediator. The practical implication is that leaders in government institutions should focus on fostering an adaptive and supportive organizational culture to enhance employee engagement and motivation, ultimately improving overall performance.

Keywords - Millennial Leadership, Work Enthusiasm, Government, Institutions

Introduction

Work enthusiasm refers to the energy, motivation, and positive attitude individuals exhibit toward their job responsibilities, often influenced by a conducive work environment, recognition, and effective leadership (Junça Silva et al., 2023; Maryanti et al., 2022). In the context of the government institution, work enthusiasm plays a crucial role in realizing the vision and mission of the government's quality. Studies highlight that factors such as work-life balance, perceived fairness, and leadership style significantly impact employees' enthusiasm (Al-Bazaiah et al., 2023; Amin et al., 2024; Uzliawati et al., 2023).

Although previous findings suggested a potential link between enthusiasm and burnout, recent research has refuted this, emphasizing that enthusiasm does not directly lead to exhaustion (Igawa et al., 2024). Instead, work enthusiasm is positively influenced by job satisfaction, government policy, motivation, compensation, work environment, and leadership (Sariwulan et al., 2019; Sufriadi, 2023). In the modern workforce, the emergence of millennial leadership, characterized by collaboration, innovation, open communication, and employee empowerment, aligns well with the values of millennial employees and contributes positively to organizational progress and employee engagement (Hadley, 2024; Kusumawati et al., 2023; Obmerga & de Guzman, 2024). Moreover, effective millennial leadership fosters a supportive and flexible work environment that enhances job satisfaction and work enthusiasm by emphasizing conflict management, workplace adaptation, and career orientation (Folarin, 2021; Minzlaff et al., 2024). Millennial leadership, or leadership led by the millennial generation, can have a significant impact on employees' work enthusiasm, both directly and indirectly. Research on the millennial generation has identified three overarching retention strategy themes: conflict management, workplace adaptation, and career orientation (Rubiarko, 2023).

Millennial leadership tends to encourage employee empowerment and autonomy, providing them with space to innovate and develop new ideas (Obmerga & de Guzman, 2024). Millennial leadership positively influences organizational progress and employees' work enthusiasm (Uzliawati et al., 2023). This is because millennial leaders tend to be more concerned with work-life balance, which creates a more flexible and adaptive work environment, contributing to employee satisfaction and enthusiasm. Research shows that the success of millennial leaders depends on several factors, including providing a clear vision for activities, helping millennials find their "identity" within teams, and guiding them in career development (Folarin, 2021).

Literature Review

Millennial leadership, characterized by its emphasis on empowerment, autonomy, and collaboration, has become increasingly relevant in contemporary organizational settings, particularly in enhancing work enthusiasm among employees. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan (Ryan & Deci, n.d.) motivation is significantly influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Millennial leaders, by promoting a flexible and inclusive work environment, are able to satisfy these needs, which in turn fosters intrinsic motivation and greater employee engagement. This leadership style encourages employees to take ownership of their tasks, develop their skills, and build meaningful relationships within the workplace, all of which are key drivers of work enthusiasm.

Empirical studies have shown that when these psychological needs are met, employees exhibit higher levels of enthusiasm, satisfaction, and overall performance, suggesting that millennial leadership plays a crucial role in

shaping a motivated workforce. Thus, understanding the intersection of millennial leadership and SDT offers valuable insights into how leadership practices can enhance work enthusiasm, contributing to organizational success.

Millennial Leadership refers to a leadership style adopted by individuals from the millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996. This style is generally more collaborative and emphasizes innovation, technology, and employee development. Millennial leaders tend to be flexible, participative, and prioritize work life balance (Harrison, 2017). They also maintain strong interpersonal relationships within the workplace, including with colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors (Wolor et al., 2021). As societal dynamics and environmental factors continue to evolve, so too does leadership, often influenced by shifting conditions and policies (Amin et al., 2024).

Work enthusiasm is a positive emotional state characterized by high energy, interest, and dedication toward one's job. According to Sufriadi (2023) in his article *Work Enthusiasm in Supporting Employee Productivity*, it involves a deep sense of engagement and meaning in one's tasks, along with the motivation to perform at one's best. This enthusiasm is often linked to feelings of pride and satisfaction at work, as well as a strong desire to take on challenges. Dwidienawati et al (2023) emphasize that work enthusiasm fosters intrinsic motivation, encouraging employees to remain resilient and proactive when facing job-related difficulties, ultimately enhancing productivity and organizational success.

Millennial leadership has a significant impact on work enthusiasm in the workplace. This leadership style, known for being collaborative and inclusive, encourages employee participation in decision-making and fosters an open, supportive work environment. Such an approach enhances employees' sense of belonging and engagement, which in turn boosts their motivation and enthusiasm for work. Driven by the belief that traditional leadership models are no longer relevant for the millennial generation, new leadership styles have emerged to better align with their values and behaviors (Yin & Mahrous, 2022). As millennials now make up nearly half of the global workforce, organizations—particularly in Indonesia—are increasingly required to adapt their work culture to fully harness this generation's potential (Pimenta et al., 2024).

Methods, Data, and Analysis

The sampling technique employed in this research was the census method, in which the entire population relevant to the study was included as respondents. The population consisted of 50 employees working at a government agency in one of the provinces in Indonesia. Since the population size was relatively small and manageable, the census method was considered the most appropriate approach to ensure comprehensive data collection and accurate representation of the organizational environment. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire, which was distributed to all employees within the organization. The questionnaire was carefully designed to capture various dimensions relevant to the study, such as work

enthusiasm, leadership style, work-life balance, and organizational commitment.

To measure the constructs of interest, the researcher utilized a Likert type scaling technique, which is widely recognized in quantitative research for its ability to gauge attitudes, perceptions, and opinions. The Likert scale used in this study ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This ordinal scale format enabled respondents to express the degree of their agreement or disagreement with a series of standardized statements. Each statement was constructed to reflect specific aspects of employee experience and organizational dynamics. The use of a five-point Likert scale was chosen to strike a balance between simplicity and response variability, thus allowing for easier interpretation and analysis of the data while minimizing response fatigue. In addition, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test involving a small subset of the target population to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability of the items. Feedback from the pilot test was used to make necessary adjustments to the wording and structure of the questions before the full-scale distribution. The final questionnaire ensured alignment with the research objectives and provided valid insights into the behavioral and organizational factors under investigation.

Results

The respondents of this study consisted of 50 individuals, with 16 males and 34 females. In terms of age, 15 respondents were between 30 and 39 years old, while 35 were over 40 years old. Regarding educational background, 18 respondents had completed high school (SMA), 8 held a diploma (D3), and 14 had a bachelor's degree (S1). The respondents' work experience varied, with 6 having worked for 1–5 years, 17 for 6–10 years, and 27 for more than 10 years. All participants were employees of a government institution. The inferential analysis in this study employed Partial Least Squares (PLS), a variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique, using SmartPLS version 4. Software structural models presented in Figure 1.

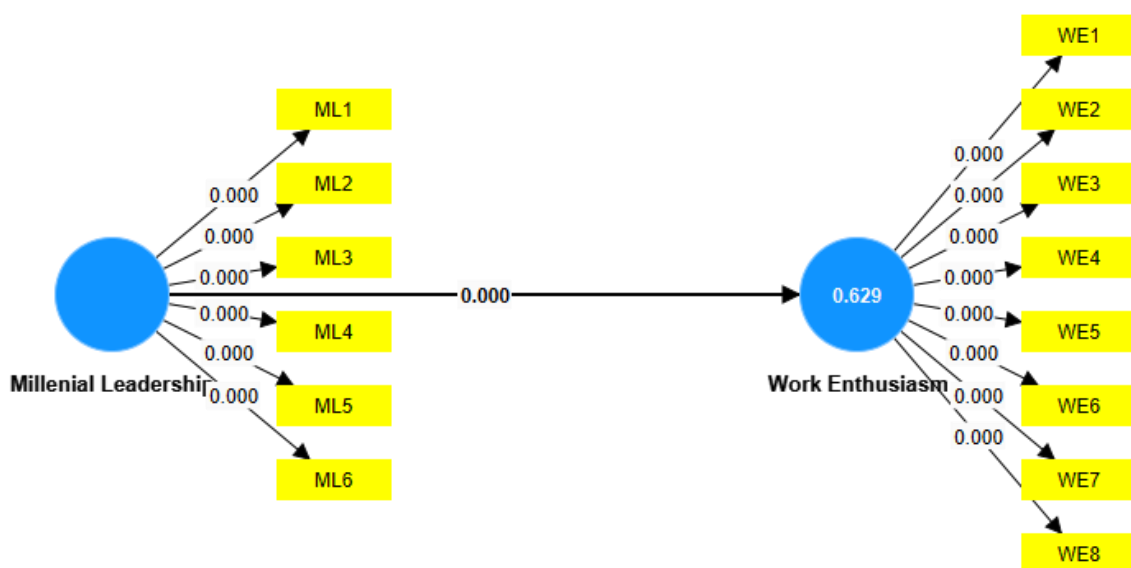


Figure 1 SmartPLS Structural Model

The direct effect of millennial leadership on employee work enthusiasm shows that millennial leadership has a significant influence on employee work enthusiasm. This is supported by the P-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the hypothesis is accepted. Additionally, the T-statistic value for the effect of millennial leadership on work enthusiasm is 10.768, which is greater than the T-table value of 1.96, further confirming that the hypothesis is accepted as presented in Table 1.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Millennial Leadership -> Work Enthusiasm	0.793	0.800	0.074	10.768	0.000

Discussion

Millennial leadership has a significant impact on work enthusiasm (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05), aligning with numerous existing studies. Rubiarko (2023) found that millennial leadership directly contributes to increased work enthusiasm. This is also supported by studies such as Harrison (2017) and (Wolor et al., 2021) which provide evidence that millennial leadership significantly enhances work enthusiasm. Similarly, Pandia et al (2023) emphasized that millennial leadership strongly influences work enthusiasm, leading to heightened employee motivation. McCleskey (2018) explained that with rising expectations for more collaborative, shared, and adaptive leadership, along with the importance of technological integration in leadership processes, organizations must transform to meet the expectations of the millennial workforce.

Paais & Pattiruhu (2020) highlighted that when motivation, leadership, and organizational culture are well-managed, employee work enthusiasm increases significantly. Lastly, Kurnia et al., (2023) underlined the role of organizational culture in fostering adaptability and collaboration, which are essential traits of millennial leadership. These deeper perspectives suggest that the absence of significant relationships in certain studies may be attributed to contextual factors such as cultural norms, organizational policies, or interpersonal dynamics. Further exploration that incorporates mediating and moderating variables could enrich the theoretical framework and contribute to a deeper understanding of how millennial leadership operates in various contexts. The findings of this study challenge existing assumptions and invite further research into the boundaries and conditions under which millennial leadership affects employee enthusiasm.

Conclusion

Millennial leadership has a positive influence on work enthusiasm when supported by a strong organizational culture that values open communication, recognition, emotional well-being, and collaboration. Although its direct impact may be limited, this leadership style can enhance

employee motivation in the right cultural context. In government institutions, inclusive cultures that appreciate individual contributions further strengthen this effect, leading to higher engagement and performance. Future research should explore mediating factors and institutional contexts to better understand the link between leadership and work enthusiasm.

Limitation

To increase work enthusiasm, organizations should enhance the socialization and understanding of millennial leadership, as many respondents remain neutral about its impact. This can be done through open communication, training, and involving employees in decision-making. Focusing on emotional and spiritual well-being, aligning work with personal values, and improving work-life balance also contribute positively. Additionally, improving questionnaire clarity, providing leadership training, and establishing structured reward programs will further boost motivation. A follow-up survey is recommended to explore factors behind the neutral perceptions and refine leadership strategies for better employee engagement.

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