

**Research article**

# Public Manager Leadership Model Compatible with Millennials

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**Abstract.**

Millennials are increasingly more prominent in government bureaucracy. Recent public service recruitment has led to an increase of 24% in the number of Generation Y employees in the public service force. These new generations are exposed to a bureaucratic culture that is peculiar to their own character which favors flexibility in terms of working time and venue, as well as being technologically savvy. On the contrary, public service leaders are generally from Generation X and have a leadership style which is at odds with the millennial work culture, resulting in a generation gap. This study, therefore, attempted to explore a leadership model which is compatible with millennials. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected using participant observation and interviews with informants representing millennials. The study proposed four aspects that millennials require from a leader. First, millennials prefer their superiors as coaches who support them in finding solutions to their problems rather than as managers. Second, millennials prefer collaborating in carrying out their tasks. Third, they expect their superiors to be fair and objective in assessing their performance. Lastly, millennials need their supervisors to motivate them.

**Keywords:** leadership model, millennial generation, digitalization and automation

## 1. Introduction

As the world enters the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, millennials are progressively taking a more dominant role in public and private organizations. The millennials are referred to many names such as Gen Y, Gen Next, *Echo Boomers*, *Baby-onBoard Generation*, *Screenagers*, *Facebookers* dan *MySpace Generation* [1]. This millennial generation are highly adept at digital technology, social media, and their communication style is in stark contrast to that of previous generation [2].

As a case in point, of 200,000 total number of employees in Flex company, 68% are millennials. ProPublica reports that IBM targets to fire senior employees despite their high performance. The efficiency gain is used to recruit younger replacements Figure 1 shows the growth of millennials entering the global work force from 2014 and its projection for 2020 [3].

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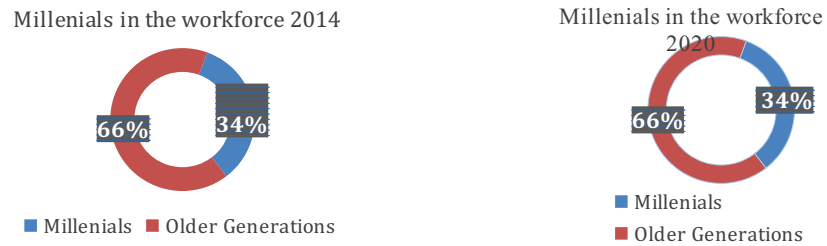


Figure 1: Increasing number of Millennials in the Work Force 2014 & 2020.

Similar trend took place in Indonesia in 2018 whereby 24% of the total civil service population were millennials and the number is still growing. In a much smaller context, at Training and Development for Governance Management Research of National Institute Makassar (NIPA Makassar) where millennials now account for 52% and only 40% and 8% of Gen X and Baby Boomers respectively. This new work force is believed to be a source of new energy for NIPA Makassar in enhancing bureaucracy and administrative reforms.

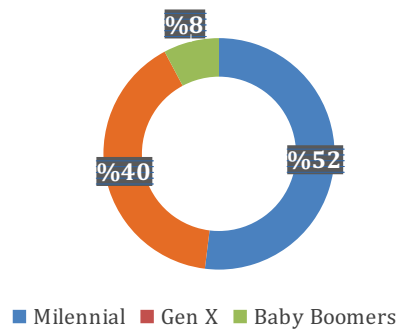


Figure 2: Inter-generational staff at NIPA Makassar in 2019.

The data above indicates that the organization is experiencing a generation shift, resulting in cultural shift as millennials and baby boomers have an entirely different work culture. This phenomenon is in line with the finding of [4], where millennials in an organization is reported to account for about 50-60 percent, and the number is expected to grow to 75 percent by 2025.

This millennial generation are expected to replace the baby boomers and play a major role in Industrial Revolution 4.0. Therefore, both private and public sector organizations must devise new strategies to stay relevant [2]. The millennials are familiar with digital technologies and automation in their life. Nevertheless, many have not been fully aware of the fact.

To ensure that the millennials can play their roles in the age of Industrial Revolution 4.0 characterized by digitalization, they have to be equipped with competencies in problem

solving, quick decision making, adaptation with digital work environment, collaboration, leadership as well as creativity and innovation [5].

On the other hand, *Baby Boomers* are not intensely affected by the effect of information and communication technology development, and therefore they mostly work manually or casually use simple office technology. For example, baby boomers use their smart phone predominantly for texting and voice calls. Their use of social media is generally limited to popular application such as WhatsApp messenger. They only use Youtube for entertainment purposes. Many baby boomers have a low digital literacy and lack of motivation to learn. They tend to enjoy comfort zone.

In contrast to *Baby Boomers*, millennials are generally smart, *multitasking*, *techno savvy*, and possess many other non-conventional competencies. They are aware of work-life balance. However, they are weak in nationalism and awareness of threats. Millennials use their *smartphones* to read *ebook*, *market*, scrutinize stocks, finding recreational destinations and so on.

This generational shift has taken place when their different mindsets and work culture requires different leadership models. The task to lead millennial workes is very important because they are the future leaders of NIPA.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Bureaucracy Organization for Millennial

It is undeniable that millennials form the majority in the work force, and this inspires organizations to change accordingly to embrace the digital world. This is because millennials have grown up among internet of things and the ubiquitous cellular gadgets[6]. Given the stark contrast between millennials and baby boomers' characteristics, their physical workplace also requires some adjustment. Each generation requires effective workspace, one which can facilitate their productivity both personally and in collaboration with others. Millennials are exposed to education systems that emphasizes team power and therefore their preference for a more collaborative workspace and flexible workplace. A balance between workload and personal preferences is an important factor for employee satisfaction. Although it sounds paradoxial, hierarchy and bureaucratic structure must provide a way for flexible organization principle. For an organization to succeed in this new era, it has to be flexible in translating its values into practices in a meaningful way for its employees.

Essentially, bureaucracy is governing through bureaus or departments occupied by appointed rather than elected officials. It is organized hierarchically and is highly dependent on absolute authority [7].

In Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia “biro” means office and birokrasi have several meanings; a way of governing where the authority is a public servant and characterised by slow work method and rigid structure, based on rule and custom and is complicated. Ideally, bureaucracy is required by the state to serve its citizens in the best possible way. However, in practice officials do not completely adhere to all these principles.

According to Max Weber bureaucracy is a main characteristic of an organization where the structure is formed in such a way to make it compatible with the local conditions, rational, impersonal, and free from assumptions and employees are recruited based on expertise[8].

## 2.2. Leadership Model

According to Rivai states that: “leadership model is a collection of characteristics used by a leader to influence followers in order to reach objectives, or in other words, behavioral pattern favored and applied by a leader”[9]. According to Brack and Yeager in Moeljono a leadership model is:

1. *Telling (directing/structuring)* - a leader who likes to decide by him or herself and give clear directions.
2. *Coaching* - a leader who likes to involve his subordinates in decision making, willing to share problems with subordinates and listens to problems of subordinates and provide necessary direction.
3. *Participating (developing/encouraging)* - one of the characteristics of leadership is willingness of a leader to give his or her subordinates opportunity to grow and to take responsibility and to provide necessary supports
4. *Delegating* - a leader who delegates responsibility to subordinates and give them opportunity to make decisions [10]

In addition to the leadership models above, Brack suggests that pre-millennial generation are also referred to as “cowboy generation,” is high tempered, and individualistic. In general, *Baby Boomers* and *Gen Xers* believe that leaders’ approach should be directive and controlling, work individually, see leaders as experts, and depend on superior for career planning. This type of leaders like clear definition and have generally

inward perspective which is in contrast with that of millennials. Furthermore, Brack explains the difference between *Workplace Expectations of Baby Boomers dan Gen Xers* versus *Millennial* as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Workplace Expectations of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers vs Millennials**

In addition to Brack, Morton describes that millennials prefer a leader who is a multitasker, expert on many areas and priority simultaneously. Millennials understand the value of handling priorities and leader's expectation to balance many priorities. Social pressure and convenience of technology make way for multitasking which is not the case before millennials era. Millennials want their leaders to speak the same technological language with them[11]. They also have a high expectation of their leaders, they prefer a fair and competent leader, and even prefer more educated and motivated leaders. Millennials expect leaders to evaluate them based on work performance, without seniority biased. Educated millennials seek organizations that invest of education and training for employees[12].

Millennials expect a fast promotion, leaders who asses and synchronize their professional or personal performance and behavior. Millennials aspires for a fast promotion and seek for a balance between life and career.[13]

Entering the work force, millennials have a high expectation towards their leaders. They want direct feedbacks from their leaders, but they lack loyalty towards organization [14]. They do not hesitate to move out to different organizations and adapt to leaders who provide them platform to grow and develop in their career. Millennials will not waste time in their current job if they believe their career prospect is not promising. [15]

### 2.3. Millennial Generations

The current generation is referred to as millennials or millennium. The term Generation Y has started to be used in the US in August 1993. It is by this generation where instant technologies are put into intensive use such as short message services, email, and even social media such as twitter, facebook and online games. The intensive use of technologies in communicating by Generation Y is because they have experienced first hand the emergence of the Internet. Popularity of social media [16]. Furthermore, Naim & Lenka suggest that the majority of Generation Y have parents who have stable financial security. They are nurtured in multicultural and technology intensive environment. Naim and Lenka also state that contextual environment has a significant influence on their joyful, pleasant, and risk-taking personality. These affect their values, ethics, and work style which are in sharp contrast to those of Generation X and Baby

Boomers. However, Generation Y employees are prone to failure as they are generally too ambitious and opt for an instant success although on the other hand generation Y are learners.[17] Therefore, they prefer inclusive leadership style who offer supervision through mentoring and decision making.

## 2.4. Coaching for the Millennials

Brack states that millennials are nurtured with coaching and constant feedbacks and they expect that these extend to their workplace. Training for them must be contextualized to their work environment. Spiegel notes that *coaching* does not have to be too formal. "Training," he says, "can be as simple as a quick response through email, text, or a two-minute conversation". Willyerd finds in his research that millennials want to develop in their career by constantly connecting to their managers so that it is easy to get their feedbacks. Willyerd adds that millennials do not expect their supervisors to act as managers, but rather as personal help givers. [18]

## 2.5. Collaboration for the Millennials

Collaboration for the millennials is part of their habit, including their collaboration in a wider scope. This is due to the fact that this generation live with social media alongside their daily activities. The millennial generation is the one who revolutionizes social media. They grow up using social media as a means of communication that send messages to the global population. Therefore, it is not surprising that Gen Y are natural network enthusiasts. They create a collaborative work environment so that they can share their creative and innovative ideas. Furthermore, as collaboration is important for them, organization must allow room for them to develop their own way of working and to create the collaborative environment they like. [19]

## 2.6. Performance of the Millennials

According to Wolor, employee performance is work output of someone in executing a job entrusted to him or her and how much contribution he or she makes for the organization. The positive traits of the millennials are optimistic, confident, and do not shy away from giving their best performance and get promotion and reward in return from their company [20]. Millennials are hungry for challenges to pursue what they want [21].

Rahmawati suggest that millennials do not take jobs as a life priority, instead they value more flexible work hours within supportive work environment. They expect their company to pay them remuneration according to their workload, professional development, and supportive work environment[22]. According to Gichuhi & Mbithuka, millennials value rewards such as acknowledgement from organizations or supervisors much more than remuneration. Organizations need to provide feedbacks to the millennials about the extent to which they have contributed to the growth of the organization. The general attributes of millennials when they work according to Schwartz et al. are ethic and work values[23]. Millennials tend to be multitasking, have a high work motivation, objective oriented, and realistic; *view on authority*, foster team collaboration; communication both direct or through short message services, skype, and other virtual media.; interactive style, and more participative compared to the previous generation; they want immediate feedback of their work. *work-life balance*, they need flexibility, choices in work; working with smart and creative team is a motivation factor for the millennials.

## 2.7. How to Motivate the Millennials

Every activity in which one is involved has a motive and attitude attached to it. Motive is a power from within someone that compels him or her to do something. Motive may emerge from within because of a basic and universal needs, but it may also be stimulated from outside. The external stimulation may be in the physical or non-physical form which is known as motivation [24]

Alderfer believes that someone tends to increase his or her needs if the lower-level needs have been fulfilled. He declares three groups of needs which comes to be known as ERG theory (*Existence, Relatedness, and Growth*):

1. Needs for existence. This is related to basic and physiological needs, such as a good balance between jobs and wages, work facilities and comfortable working space.
2. Needs for affiliation or relatedness *needs*. These needs emphasize the importance of interpersonal needs and social relations at work, such as harmonious relation among staff or between staff and supervisors, and involvement in discussion.
3. Needs for growth. Needs for personal development to improve personal capability, such as appreciation or reward from supervisors, or other special rewards.[25]

Motivation is a key element of employee performance and productivity and is an important part of human resource management[15]. Work motivation consists of intrinsic factors, that is an internal drive to do something, and extrinsic factors which are external and non-work-related influence towards an individual. At workplaces, intrinsic motivation emphasizes on reward from the work itself, and require appreciation, performance, and creativity. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand emphasizes on external rewards such as salary, financial compensation, benefit, characteristics of workplace, and relationship with fellow workers and organization[26]. When one is motivated by various needs, different motivation theories are developed to capture various aspects of motivation and productivity. In the area of public administration, experts have developed public service motivation (PSM) which suggests that employees of public sector are more likely motivated by intrinsic rewards than those in the private sector.

It is no secret that millennials have different characteristics from previous generation. They are also known as “dream community”, which is different from the apathetic inclination of generation X or confrontative one of baby boomers. Therefore, the most highly motivating factor for millennials is opportunity to grow, having a supervisor to report work results to and professional career opportunities. While traditional motivating factors such as salary, benefits, and security are not highly demanded and neither is the commitment toward social responsibility [15].

### 3. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Phenomena about Leadership model for the millennial era at the Center for Training and Development and Governance Management Research (NIPA Makassar) were explored.

Data were collected through: Interviews with informants consisting of millennials who were born between 1981 and 1994 who work at NIPA Makassar. Data collection was carried out using *google form* distributed to informants or in some cases used as interview instrument. In addition, data were collected by means of direct observation or observing the interaction between millennial employees and other generations such as generation X. Secondary data were collected from documents such as annual reports, strategic planning, employee profiles and relevant regulations.

Data were analyzed using interactive model by Miles. Collected data from interviews, observations and secondary data from documents were selected based on the focus of this study. Data were then presented in the forms of tables and graphs. Next, data were analyzed, and conclusion were drawn based on research problems put forward



previously in the introduction. Triangulation of data collection source and methods was carried out to ensure validity.[27]

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Coaching

The result of the study suggests that millennials at NIPA Makassar expect their supervisors to act as their coach. They especially expect such a leadership role to help them in their tasks and finding solution to their work-related problems. Millennials, in carrying out their tasks, need guidance rather than orders and controls from their supervisors. This is reflected in an interview with a millennial employee, YS, who says “ideal leadership should be nurturing, flexible, empathetic, problem solving oriented”. A slightly different account was made by AS, “...a preferred leadership model is one involving a relaxed coaching, empathetic and is capable of providing the best solution. Another millennial informant, AM, also expect supervisors to provide guidance and the guidance is carried out through coaching sessions and a more personal discussion. Furthermore, they reveal that they prefer coaching with flexible schedules, in a comfortable room free from distraction. In addition, they admit that coaching can be equally effective in a face-to-face mode or online. This reflects their preferences for flexible coaching sessions to accommodate availability of supervisors and staff.

The finding above supports the theory put forward by Brack whereby millennials prefer coaching in an informal situation. In addition, millennials have a highly dynamic character and therefore they prefer short coaching sessions. Millennials at NIPA Makassar especially prefer one coaching model, that is GROW, short for Goal, Reality, Option, Wrap-Up because it is simple and structured enough to elicit their creative ideas. They believe that this method could help them maximize their potential. An informant, YS, says that the GROW steps are an initial stage where they can formulate objectives, then see what are their thoughts and emotions which are related to coaching objective, after that they can specify alternative actions to take before finally chose and execute those actions accurately.

From data analysis it was revealed that leadership model preferred by millennials in relation to coaching is not simply guidance but also care and solutions to new work-related problems. This is in line with Back and Yeager in Moeljono who say that a leader should be open to share problems with his or her staff and listen to their staff as a basis for giving direction about what should be done [10].

The current leadership model at NIPA Makassar in coaching is one that involves personal approach to sharpen potential skills of each employee. More precisely, this is done by predominantly listen, ask if they have complaints and what kind of work method convenient for them so that they can maximize their work effort.

## 4.2. Collaboration

Another characteristic attributed to millennials is their preference to work collaboratively. Therefore, they expect involvement from their supervisors and opportunity to offer ideas. In decision making as YS says, millennials at NIPA Makassar prefer a work relation based on mutual respect of ideas of those involved in a collaboration. Furthermore, YS explains that in collaboration they expect their supervisors to distribute tasks based on qualification, not on favoritism basis. They also like to be involved in decision making. Millennials also expect that their supervisors are more tolerant. Similar to YS, AS also expects their supervisors involve staff in decision making based on staff capacity. Millennials also appreciate opportunity to contribute solution alternatives for every problem faced. Another informant, AM expects a fair and equitable tasks distribution and be provided with a clear direction so that the staff are not confused. AM also expects take and give kind of work relation with his supervisor.

Collaboration is often used to describe a pattern of mutual relation among more than one person[4]. It is a form of social interaction. Collaboration involves supervisors to distribute tasks and responsibilities and suggestions for decision making. Leaders play a challenging role in collaboration. The leader effective style and techniques in distributing tasks and responsibilities is tested based on how well instructions are understood by subordinates. In collaborating, a leader must be able to create good relations and pleasant work environment. Collaboration is not a one-shot event but is needed for as long as there is a mutual need with other parties.

Mutual respect, honesty and trust are among important aspect in collaboration. Collaboration must be supported by responsible work environment. Everyone can involve in discussion while carrying out works in order to create a new agreement that must be obeyed so that mutual respect, honesty, and trust can be established. According to informants in general, support of an environment that respect ideas of employees, allowing some autonomy in executing tasks is a precursor to success in collaborating.

### 4.3. Performance Appraisal

One of the most important things in an organization is how supervisors evaluate his or her subordinates' performance. This is especially important as millennials often consider occupation from financial reward perspective. At NIPA Makassar, employees' take home pay has been determined by regulation. Therefore, performance appraisal is very important as it will determine how much monthly pay each employee gets. YS says, "The performance appraisal is carried out at the end of each month, it is objective based on real performance, and uses special application called *absen.lan.go.id*."

According to another informant, AS, in addition to performance appraisal, obstacles impeding performance also need to be considered. AS also wants "objective appraisal based on real performance of employees. He wants supervisors to closely examine relevant documents containing performance evidence." At the beginning of every month and end of semester it is important to identify progress and impediment to performance. It is important that employees understand objectives, and how to achieve them, able to identify problems and find solutions themselves, able to cooperate and to collaborate with others. Apart from direct observation, appraisal can be performed by supervisors through examining documents containing evidence of performance.

Managers at NIPA Makassar appraise staff in cascading manner whereby supervisors appraise subordinates. The appraisal process is facilitated by a computerized application called SKKP which is used by all units within NIPA.

### 4.4. Motivation

Apart from the three aspects discussed above, other leadership quality expected by millennials of a leader is the ability to motivate subordinates. In relation to motivation, an informant, YS, reiterates that safe and comfortable work environment and performance feedback given by his supervisor can increase his work motivation. In addition to comfortable work environment, they also need freedom and trust in creating innovative solution in their work. They appreciate a quite work environment, non-intimidating, and provide a room to express their ideas.

Similar to YS, another millennial employee AS expects his supervisor to trust and to give him freedom in executing his tasks, to appreciate extra efforts he made. AS adds that opportunity to develop competence is also a motivating factor.

In other words, leadership model applied by managers at NIPA Makassar in motivating employees is freedom and trust in accordance with each employee's level of ability.

Some employees can be allowed to be more independent, and some others need to be provided with close assistance at work.

As an example, a more senior trainer allows their more junior colleagues to sit in and observe in his or her classroom sessions. This facilitates transfer of knowledge. On the other hand, senior trainers get helps from their junior colleagues in using learning technology.

Motivation arises from inner drives or from external environment of someone to do his or her job by using all his ability with an objective to gain work results to satisfy his or her need. An employee needs motivation to achieve quality results.

Work environment is very important factor that must be taken into account by managers because it affects employees directly. Unpleasant workplace will undermine staff work motivation. In line with motivation theory by Abraham Maslow who argues that a need for safety is not limited to just a physical safety but also a psychological one and a fair treatment at work. It can even be extended to include safety at home, on the way to work, and at workplace.

Managers at NIPA Makassar motivate subordinates by allowing more freedom for them to do their jobs and opportunity to develop competency according to needs. Supervisors provide feedback as a form of appreciation and to motivate staff.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that four aspects are related to leadership model of managers at NIPA Makassar which are favored by millennial employees. First, in coaching, supervisors do not only provide guidance but also closely assist and taking care of millennial employees. For coaching, these millennial employees prefer the GROW model with short sessions each lasts no more than an hour. Second, collaborative leadership, that is supervisors' ability to create nurturing relationships. In addition, supervisors are willing to involve staff based on qualification. Furthermore, supervisors appreciate staff ideas when discussing works. Third, millennials prefer supervisors who are objective and open in assessing performance. The assessment result should be instantly announced so that performance impediments can be evaluated. Fourth, leadership model which is suitable and motivating for millennials is the one allowing some freedom and trust to staff so that they can produce ideas and innovation for the benefit of the organization. They also like supervisors who act as role models, committed to work, and appreciate staff after finishing their responsibility. In coaching and collaboration among employees, supervisors are expected to develop communication and pleasant cooperation and

provide staff with opportunity to express ideas so that they feel appreciated. In addition. Other expectation of millennials towards their supervisors are trust and flexibility to express their ideas and appreciative towards job done well.

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