

Military Millennials as Next Generation Leaders: Do Leadership Traits Matter?

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## Biographical Sketch

Phillip Michael Green, a native of Badin, North Carolina, received his K – 12 education in the Stanly County public schools. “Michael,” his preferred name, attended Johnson C. Smith University on a music and academic scholarship and played the snare drums in the Marching Golden Bulls. After earning his Bachelor of Science degree in General Business, Michael was awarded an academic fellowship and admissions to the Urban Affairs and Policy Analysis Program of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, where he earned a Master of Science degree (MS). He, later, completed the Master of Business Administration degree (MBA), with a minor in Information and Technology Management, at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Following years of employment in accounting, Michael expanded his career goals to pursue opportunities in information technology. He managed the Charlotte Server Farm for the IBM Corporation and, eventually, moved up the corporate ladder as a project manager and delivery project executive for the firm in e-business web hosting and other projects. Michael also worked with global virtual teams comprised of membership throughout the United States and in China, Japan, and India.

During his longstanding membership in the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church of Charlotte, Michael has served for more than twenty-eight years as a member of the usher board and the coordinating teacher for the Empowered Disciples Sunday School class. As a volunteer for the greater Charlotte community, he has assisted in various capacities for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, United States Department of State Visitors Program, International House, Japanese Elementary Teachers Program, Shelter for Battered Women, Kids Voting for Precinct 145, and the Charlotte Sister City Program with Arequipa, Peru.

## Dedication

I owe my sincere gratitude to God and my family to have reached this stage of the doctoral program. This dissertation is dedicated to my family members for their love and support from the application process to the program completion.

I was informed of my diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma, an incurable cancer, shortly after I received my admissions letter for the Leadership Studies Program. Three years into the Program, with Multiple Myeloma in remission, I suffered from End Stage Renal Disease and began dialysis. My family continued to encourage and support my goal of pursuing the Ph.D. and the educational development and intellectual stimulation of this endeavor.

To ensure I had the energy to sustain, enjoy, and engage in three hours of knowledge acquisition and intellectual invigoration during lectures, dialogues, and discussions of the evening classes, my wife and soulmate of twenty-six years, Cheryl L. Brown, Ph.D., and two sons, Ellington and Zachary, drove me roundtrip from Charlotte to Greensboro twice weekly. The family would drop me off at class and venture across town to have dinner with our daughter, Mackenzie, a student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. After dinner, each family member pursued his or her assignment, project, or homework until my class ended.

My pursuit of the Ph.D. became not only a family affair to enhance our existing strong bond but also another opportunity for me to become an educational role model for my children. As my children grow and mature, they will be able to reflect on my educational experience and not allow excuses to deter them from pursuing higher education regardless of health, money, location, or time. I could not have accomplished the Ph.D. degree without the individual and collective love, support, and sacrifice of my entire family.

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Nicholas Riggins of the Center for Military Families, and Nina Exner of the F. D. Bluford Library of North Carolina A&T State University. Special thanks to my prayer warriors: Timothy Ellerby, Terrance Bamburg, and Janice Jones.

Members of my health care team have always cheered me on to complete the Ph.D. with genuine questions about the doctoral progress and my medical status. I am sincerely appreciative of the medical treatment and ongoing support provided by Dr. Gary P. Frenette, Teresa Carpenter, and the nurses and staff of the Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte, North Carolina. The stem cell transplant unit at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, especially all the doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, and staff at Station 94, cared for me in the midst of my first semester of the doctoral program. I am grateful for the care and services of Dr. Francis K. Buadi, Kim Young, Cady Gossein, and other members of the Hematology Department of the Mayo Clinic from the pre-transplant stage until now. Dr. Gregory Merten of Metrolina Nephrology of Charlotte and Dr. Justin Swartz of The Charlotte Medical Clinic, and their respective nurses and staff, provided medical care as I commuted between Rochester and Charlotte periodically during the doctoral program.

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## Abstract

Employers are constantly evaluating individuals to fill leadership roles within their organizations to extract the highest return from their resources and investments. Millennials, born between 1982 and 2000 (Howe and Strauss, 2000), represent the youngest and newest generation entering the workforce. A sub-population of this generation consists of military veterans returning to the United States after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This quantitative study examines the leadership traits of the military Millennials that have transitioned to civilian life and compares this population segment with Millennials without a military background.

To compare the two groups of the generational cohort, a survey comprised of 14 leadership traits derived from the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) (Northouse, 2010) and 9 demographic and characteristic questions was utilized in this study. The researcher distributed the survey online to 150 potential participants. A total of 53 surveys were completed online, resulting in a response rate of 35.3 %. Among the participating respondents, 43% were military Millennials and 57% were non-Military Millennials with 28.6 years as the average age. There were 52.8% males, and 47.2% females among respondents.

The results from the nonparametric Mann-Whitney (M-W) *U* test indicated a statistical significance for the leadership trait of self-assurance for the military Millennials. The leadership traits of trustworthy and dependable ranked highest for the military Millennials and non-military Millennials, with each of the two traits slightly higher for the military Millennials. The analysis revealed no statistical significance among demographic and characteristic data. The findings indicated the need for additional research on military Millennials and leadership and future research on intra-generational analysis of Millennials and leadership traits.

**(Keywords: Millennials, military, traits, intrageneration, occupations, transitioning)**

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Statement of the Problem

As economies around the world and the United States compete for scarce resources, employers are always looking to reduce costs and increase profits. Additionally, employers are constantly evaluating individuals to fill leadership roles within their organizations to extract the highest return from their resources and investments. The Millennials, those born between 1982 and 2000 (Howe and Strauss, 2000), represent the youngest and newest generation entering the workforce for employers' hiring consideration. Among the Millennial generation is the sub-population of military veterans returning to the United States after the end to the war in Iraq (The White House, 2011) and the announced end to the war in Afghanistan in 2014 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012).

Former United States Army General David Petraeus, borrowing from journalist Tom Brokaw's reference to the "next greatest generation" (Brokaw, 1988; Duke University, 2013), described the returning volunteer service men and women as individuals with special leadership skills. General Petraeus speculated that these veterans would be "our next great generation of leaders" (Klein, 2011). A quantitative study of leadership traits of two comparative groups among the Millennials, military Millennials as one group and non-military Millennials as a second group, can offer insight into the leadership profile of the newest workforce generation and identify differences that stand out to support the speculation of returning military veterans as the next leaders.

Employers contemplating their future employment environment and prospective leadership hires explore strategies to attract the best and the brightest talent, leverage their

current staffs, avert higher costs, and identify leadership traits in individuals that will allow organizations to grow their business, remain profitable, and stay competitive at the same time. This study compared the self-assessment of leadership traits of the military Millennials and non-military, two population groups as future leaders for employers.

According to O'Hanlon and Campbell (2008), there were a total of 122,000 and 171,000 United States troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively, since May 2003. In its presentation of the deployed forces' characteristics, the National Council on Disability (2009), reported the average age of both active military men and women deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan was 27 and of those deployed representing the National Guard or Reserve troops the average age was 33. The findings also indicated that approximately 60% of those deployed were married, more than 50% had children, 88% were male, and 12% were female. In an earlier report, Maxfield (2006) indicated the racial diversity of this population of military personnel as African-American 22%, Latino 11%, Asian 4%, and other 3%. Among the population, 75% represented were the Army, 15% the Marine Corps, and 10% Navy and Air Force. Based on the NCD (2009), reported the average age of 27 for military deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan represented a large segment of Millennials born in or around the year of 1982. By 2014, approximately 300,000 (O'Hanlon and Campbell, 2008) veterans were projected to transition to the civilian job market and become an invaluable resource (King, 2010).

A growing bevy of studies on military veterans, including the millennial cohort, has consisted primarily of strategies to fill the recruitment gaps of military personnel and policies (Fritzon, Howell, & Zakheim, 2007; Stafford & Griffis 2008); anecdotal accounts of military preparation (Fritzon, Howell, & Zakheim 2007); analysis of military veteran officers as CEOs presented in scholarly work (Benmelech & Frydman, 2014) and industry reports (Korn/Ferry

International, 2006); post-war issues of family support, healthcare, disability, finances, and employment (Worthen, Moss, & Ahem, 2012; and Elbogen, Sullivan, Wolfe, Wagner, & Beckham 2013); and veteran support and educational programs in higher education (Brown and Gross, 2011; McBain, Kim, Cook, & Snead, 2012; and Hamrick and Rumann, 2013). A void in the literature exists on military Millennials and prospective leadership in civilian life. As part of his study, the researcher's query of scholarly databases for specific sources on "leadership," "military," and "Millennials" revealed a predominance of studies on health issues, especially post-traumatic stress disorders of military veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One study on military Millennials examined the attitudes of military and civilian attitudes on national defense (Ender, Rohall, & Matthews, 2013). In another project, Peck (2013) reported on Millennials active in the military and their personal views on religion and spirituality. Both Ender et al. and Peck maintained the significance of increasing knowledge on military Millennials, as this sub-population of the generation comprises more than 66% of the U.S. Army (Peck, 2013) and more than 69% in 2012 (U.S. Department of Defense, 2012). However, there remains a void in the scholarly focus on military Millennials as future leaders of civilian organizations.

The dearth of research on military Millennials is off-balanced by a plethora of writings on the millennial generation in the workplace to understand the traits and characteristics of this sector of the population (Alsop, 2008; Espinoza, Ukleja, & Rusch, 2010 and 2011; Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012; Orrell, 2009; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; and Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly 2011) and motivation to engage this generation in the workforce to achieve high performance outcomes (Karsh, 2013; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Marston, 2007; Newman 2012; Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009; and Tulgan, 2009).

Whereas the existing literature combines the entire millennial generation into one category, this empirical research segregates the millennial population into two groups, the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials. According to Wellner (2001), the literature does not take into account the intra-generational differences; people born at the beginning of the generation or the end of the generation do not resemble those born in the middle of the generation. Stafford and Griffis (3008) asserted workforce policies must consider the diversity of the generational cohort. Thus, the entire millennial generation is different and cannot nor should not be aggregated together and painted with a broad brush.

The label of Millennials has been used to generalize an entire generation, identify a lack of fit between the traits of Millennials and the culture of corporate organizations, and emphasize changes corporations must implement to motivate millennial workers to fit the corporate climate. The studies fail to examine intra-generational difference to discern variations within the traits and goals of the millennial population that could prove to be a good fit for the corporate organization. This current research focused on the traits of military Millennials in comparison to the non-military Millennials. The study explored how military Millennials' leadership traits can provide a catalyst for employers seeking persons to fill leadership positions within their organizations. The quantitative study was conducted using empirical research, primarily on the traits of military Millennials, as they competitively seek leadership positions and try to benefit society upon return from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The millennial generation, commonly labeled the Millennials or Generation Y, represents an anticipated wealth of technology acumen, group orientation, and can-do attitude, all skills that are perceived to become utopian competencies for leadership positions in education, business, and government. The Millennials are recipients of the advent of technology and the

programming issues surrounding Year 2000, also known as Y2K, allowing computer programs to abbreviate the four-digit year to two digits to avert massive computer crashes as the computer clocks exceeded the year 1999 (British Standards Institution, 1998).

During their high school years, the Millennials pondered life's direction. As a result of the September 11, 2001, (9/11) terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon building in Washington, DC, and the crashed plane in Pennsylvania, many Millennials enlisted in the various branches of the military. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Millennials' educational experiences included school programs on The Gulf War, also known as Operation Desert Storm, that lasted from August 1990 to February 1991 (Ender, Rohall, & Matthews, 2013).

The events of the terrorist attacks and war time define major experiences of the millennial generation and underscore the need to analyze the intra-generational leadership traits and compare the veterans and non-veterans of this cohort. The purpose of this study details the need to research the leadership traits of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials to examine leadership traits of tomorrow's leaders.

### **Purpose for the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership traits of military Millennials and compare this sector of the Millennials with non-military Millennials to identify variations within the generation. Military Millennials represent a cohort within the millennial generation. Description of traits that are generalized to the entire generation can misconstrue the characterization of the military Millennials. This research examined the similarities and differences in leadership traits of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials.

The return of military personnel to the United States since the start of the two wars has increased enough to have a population of military Millennials to assess for leadership traits for the workplace. The growing presence of military Millennials, coupled with the emergence of the Millennials as the fastest growing generation, has afforded the opportunity for a comparative study of two groups of Millennials: military and non-military. This comparative analysis between military Millennials and non-military Millennials fills a gap in empirical research on Millennials.

The challenges military Millennials experience in transitioning back to civilian life (Fink, Gallaway, and Millikan, 2014) could affect their traits and goals portrayed in the workplace. Borus (1975) found a similar scenario in the case of veterans returning to the United States after combat experience in Vietnam. However, employers want to hire future leaders, and many organizations incorporate a variety of resources to determine whom they will hire. Specifically, employers want to hire people with strong interpersonal skills, fiduciary responsibilities, good ethics, confidentiality, analytical skills, technical skills, computer skills, good work ethic, commitment, and a willingness to perform the job in difficult circumstances (Northouse 2004). An empirical study of leadership traits of military Millennials could provide a profile of leadership potential for employers concerned about the transition of military veterans and a generalized image of Millennials.

To conduct research on the leadership traits of the military Millennials and non- military Millennials, the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) (Northouse, 2010) was utilized to compare the means of the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials. Comparison of the means did not include independent and dependent variables. Rather, leadership traits were observed. This method did not involve performing a regression analysis. The study employed

descriptive and cross-sectional research designs (Creswell, 2014), in which data was collected via an online survey and at a given point in time. The LTQ allowed the researcher to gather demographic and leadership trait data. Bickman and Rog (1998) maintained descriptive research designs enabled the researcher to answer the questions similar to “what is” or “what was,” as well as, describe the narrative of the group individual’s “a typical day in the life” Creswell (2012). The researcher sought to answer “what is” the difference between the two groups.

The Leadership Trait Questionnaire was distributed online via email to 150 subjects, consisting of 75 military Millennials and 75 non-military Millennials with a 35.5% response rate. Chapter 3 of this study presents a chronicle of the LTQ survey and participation level.

### **Research Questions**

This research study was grounded in a postpositivist worldview (Creswell, 2014) and used a quantitative research design to address three research questions:

**Research Question 1.** What leadership traits do non-military and military Millennials possess?

**Research Question 2.** What is the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the Leadership Traits Questionnaire?

**Research Question 3.** What is the difference between demographics and characteristics of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits?

## **Definition of Key Terms**

The following key terms are used throughout this research study:

**Leadership.** “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p.3).

**Millennials.** (Also known as Generation Y) In this study, the term refers to a generation consisting of persons born during 1982 to 2000. The birth year range of Millennials in the literature varies slightly by one to three years depending on the researchers. Strauss and Howe (1977) and Howe and Strauss (2000) used 1982 to 2000. Black (2010) described the generation’s birth span from 1981 to 2001. Cone Inc. (2006) used 1979 to 2001. Meister and Willyerd (2010) categorized the birth span from 1977 to 1997. Myers and Sadaghiani (2101) used the birth year range of 1979 to 1994.

**Military Millennials.** Persons born during 1982 to 2000 (Howe & Strauss, 2000), and served in the military and have transitioned or are transitioning into civilian life and are now veterans.

**Non-military Millennials.** Persons born during 1982 to 2000 but did not serve in the military.

**“We vs. Me” Millennials.** Refers to the dichotomy of the description in the research and anecdotal literature of the Millennials as a We Generation that is civic-minded and engaged in the community (Howe & Strauss, 2000; and Greenberg & Weber, 2008) or a We Generation that is self-centered and materialistic (Twenge, 2006).

## **Significance of the Study**

This research study on leadership traits of military Millennials and non-military Millennials contributes to the gap in the literature on Millennials and military veterans as next

generation leaders. The research findings will benefit public, private and non-profit organizations seeking additional data to assess leadership positions (Northouse, 2004) and Millennials that possess specific leadership traits.

#### Assumptions and Delimitations

This study is based on the assumption that the survey participants, military Millennials and non-military Millennials, provided answers to the survey questions honestly and completely and were able to articulate their leadership traits. Another assumption is that participants were able to articulate their traits and understood and applied the situational scenario of the survey in answering the self-assessment questions of the leadership trait survey.

The study considered some initial delimitations. One delimitation was the use of the self-assessment part only of the Leadership Traits Questionnaire (LTQ) for assessment of participants' leadership traits. The study did not utilize the selected observer perception portion of the LTQ for participants to have others complete an assessment of the participant as leader. The two populations of the survey are samples of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials, respectively. The researcher pursued one hundred fifty persons representing the two groups: 75 military Millennials and 75 non-military Millennials with a response rate of 35.3 %. The military Millennials were seeking directions from educational and veteran-friendly organizations located on the campus of community college in a metropolitan area of the southeastern United States. The other group in the study, the non-military Millennials, consisted of students attending the College of Business at a research doctoral university in the southeastern United States.

A future study could utilize the second part of the LTQ to examine beyond the respondents' self-perception of their leadership traits. This second part of the LTQ would require

participants' associates to complete an assessment of the respondents' leadership traits. This inclusion could allow a comparative study of self-perception and observer-perception of each group and ask if there is an association between self-perception and observer-perception of Millennials in the two distinctive groups.

The sample population of military Millennials participating in community college programs was another delimitation of this research. The study's demographic questions included a query of the educational level of all respondents. The total population of participants had graduated high school with the military Millennials attending community college and the non-military Millennials matriculating in a master's level business program at the time of the data collection. Inclusion of military Millennials in a master's-level program could have consisted of military millennial veterans that had attended a military academy or university and were commissioned into the U.S. Army. A comparative analysis of this population of Millennials and a population of master's-level non-military Millennials could have yielded significant information on self-perception of leadership traits among military Millennials with higher educational levels because of leadership experience as commissioned officers. These veterans are acknowledged in programs to recruit junior military as civilian leaders (O'Keefe, 2010).

### **Organization of the Study**

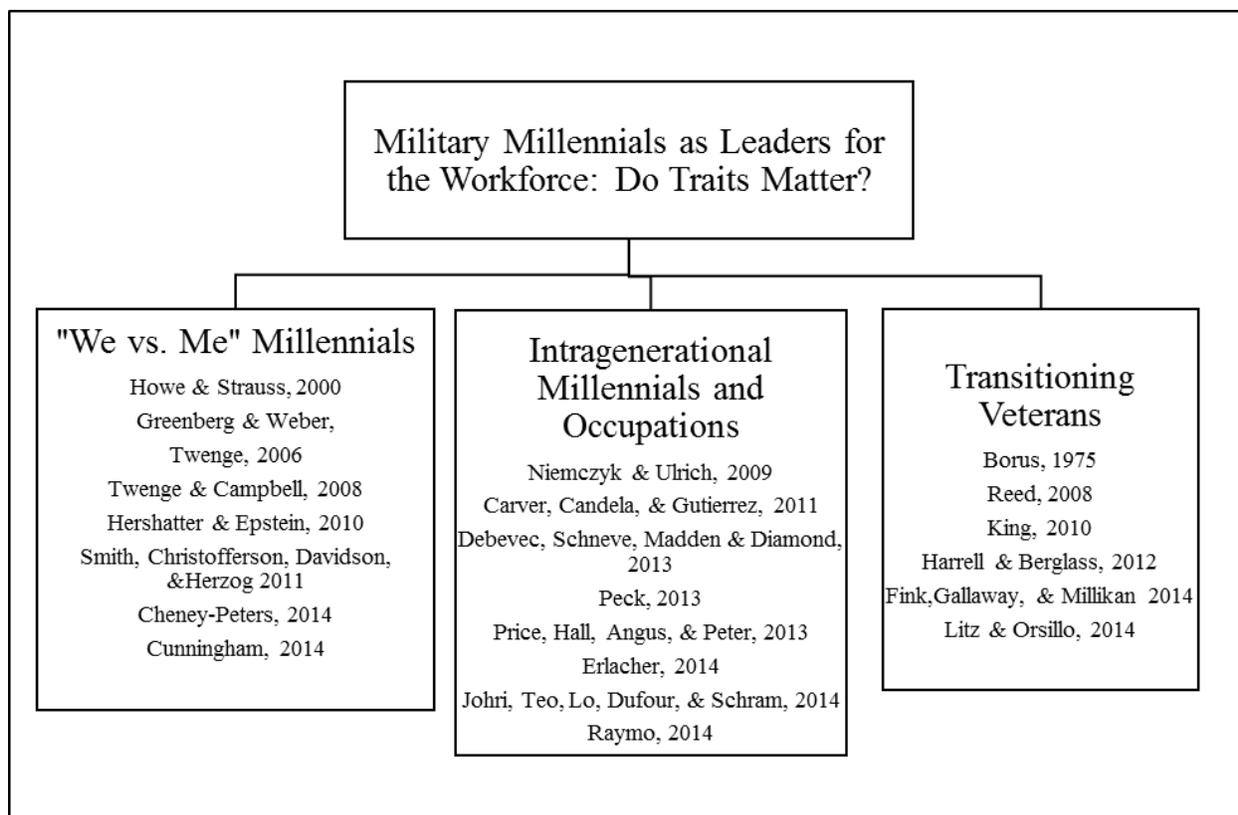
This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the focus and significance of the research, guiding questions of the research, and definitions of key terms. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the research study's theoretical and conceptual framework. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology utilized in this study. Chapter 4 details the study's data analyses and research findings. Chapter 5 presents the summary of results, overview of the findings, and implications and recommendations for future research and policy.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

The previous chapter presented the focus and purpose of the research, which is to examine the leadership traits of military Millennials and the implications for this sub-population as the next generation of workforce leaders. The sub-population of non-Military Millennials offered a comparative, intra-generational group for the study. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework and three related literary strands for an analysis of self-perception of leadership traits among military Millennials in comparison with non-military Millennials. The leadership trait approach is the conceptual framework for the research study.

To understand leadership perception of military Millennials, a population with a particular occupation or experience that has transitioned from volunteer service to civilian life, and compare another millennial population, it is crucial to review literature on the characteristics of Millennials, intra-generational Millennials, and veteran transition. The three strands of related literature consist of the “we” vs. “me” Millennials, intra-generational Millennials and occupations, and military veteran workforce transition. The literary strand of the “we vs. “me” Millennials focused on the dichotomy of the presentation and labeling of Millennials in the literature. Intragenerational Millennials and occupations examined related literature on the significance of vocations in studying intra-generational groups of Millennials. Transitioning military veterans into the civilian workforce explored related literature on the traits and characteristics of volunteer service men and women who have left the military and are working or seeking employment in the public, private or non-profit sector. Figure 1 portrays the three literary strands and selected relevant works presented in this chapter along with the conceptual framework of the leadership trait approach.



*Figure 1.* The related literary strands.

This study employed a quantitative research design (Creswell, 2012) to examine the leadership traits of military Millennials and a comparative group of non-military Millennials. Millennials represent the average age of these veterans at twenty-seven years of age and the majority of the workplace population following the retirement of the aging Baby Boomer generation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The trait approach has the distinction of being one of the earliest systematic efforts to study leadership (Northouse, 2013), as it has evolved from the 1900s to current time. The initial focus of this approach in the 1990s stemmed from the great man theory of leadership (p.19), which posited that some people were destined to be leaders from birth and possessed certain innate traits and individual characteristics that differentiated leaders from non-leaders (Bass &

Stogdill, 1990). Following Galton's (1869) examination of hereditary background of great men, other studies, notably Woods (1913) and Wiggam (1931), began to link leadership traits to hereditary background. In a quantitative study of European monarchs, Woods (1913) conducted a correlation between the rulers and state of their respective nations during their reign as advancement, decline, or doubtful. Of the 354 cases Woods analyzed, he found 105 strong rulers associated with the respective country's advancement and a correlation between 87 weak rulers and a decline in the respective country. His findings revealed 31 cases of doubtful rulers and status for their respective countries. He found a "genuineness of the hereditary factor" (p. 271). Wiggam (1931) supported the heredity background factor and maintained the survival and intermarriage of the fittest produced an aristocratic class that differed biologically from the lower class.

A focus on qualities that differentiated leaders and followers gave rise to a bevy of literature on traits to identify superior leadership traits and led to the leadership trait theory. Kohs and Irle (1920) contributed to identification of five traits and characteristics and supported the focus on specific traits in the traits leadership theories. In a study of 116 college students' promotion from private to major in the U.S. Army and U. S. Navy, Kohs and Irle introduced the five traits of physical qualities, intelligence, leadership, personal qualities, and value to the service (p. 74). The scholars analyzed the students' marks in college courses and faculty assessment of students on the five traits to find the predictability of the progress of students who entered the army or navy. The studies of Bernard, (1926), Bingham (1927), Tead (1929), Page (1935), and Kilbourne (1935) yielded a proliferation of traits that, according to their research, distinguished leaders from non-leaders. In his review of 20 lists of traits, Bird (1940) found that no one trait appeared on all lists. This finding questioned if any one trait or set of traits

distinguished leaders from followers. Other studies linked traits with leaders in occupational groups. Smith and Krueger (1933) created a list of personality and character traits related to educational leaders. In a report initially prepared for the Army Air Forces Aviation Psychologists, Jenkins (1947) emphasized traits primarily in the selection of military leaders.

The trait approach met a significant challenge leading to the incorporation of and emphasis on situation in leadership studies after Stogdill (1948) reviewed and analyzed 124 trait studies and found no universal association between certain traits and effective leadership. He identified eight traits of alertness, initiative, insight, intelligence, persistence, responsibility, self-confidence, and sociability that related to individuals becoming leaders based on the situation. Stogdill also maintained the significance of a situation in which the leader functioned in understanding traits and leadership. An effective leader in a military situation might not be an effective leader in a business situation. Stogdill's research revealed traits were important but situation mattered.

Mann (1959) acknowledged the relevance of traits and situation in his review of 1400 findings of personality and leadership studies of small groups from 1900 to October 1957. He examined seven personality traits: adjustment, conservatism, dominance, extroversion, intelligence, interpersonal sensitivity, and masculinity-femininity (pp. 247-250). Mann associated strong leadership with traits but presented the case for situational impact. He viewed his research findings as allowing for "a new bifurcation of the field" (p. 246). In reviewing the overall assessment of his work and the traits vs. situation approach, Mann posited, "From all this work has emerged some such summary formulation as that an individual's leadership status in groups is a function of his personality and the particular group setting" (p. 247).

A revitalization of the trait theory in leadership occurred with a reassessment of the studies of Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959). The review of Stogdill's 1948 critique of leadership trait theory stemmed from the author's second survey in 1974, which he compared to his initial survey in 1948. His 1974 analysis of 163 studies revealed the significance of traits and situation in understanding leadership effectiveness and emergence. Leadership scholars Northouse (2010) and Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) have assessed Stogdill's 1974 findings as a balanced consideration of the significance of traits and situation in leadership rather than leaning toward situation. Stogdill (1974) identified 13 traits significant to leadership: adaptable to situations, alert to social environment, ambitious and achievement-oriented, assertive, cooperative, decisive, dependable, dominant (in desire to influence others), energetic, persistent, self-confident, tolerant of stress, and willing to assume responsibility.

Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986), in their critique of Stogdill and Mann, added to the resurgence of trait theory. Following a meta-analysis of previous research, the authors contended that reviews of Stogdill and Mann's works had misinterpreted their findings. Lord, DeVader, and Alliger maintained Stogdill and Mann focused on leadership perception in groups without a formal leader and leadership emergence and not leadership effectiveness. The researchers also highlighted methodological shortcomings in Mann's analysis and findings (p. 402). Lord, DeVader, and Alliger's meta-analysis revealed a significant association between leadership perception and three of Mann's six traits from 1959: intelligence, dominance, and masculinity (p. 406).

In their qualitative analysis of trait approach studies, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) maintained that traits matter for leadership but only as a precondition not guarantee for leadership success. The authors emphasize: "Traits only endow people with the potential for

leadership” (p. 56). Their six core traits of focus consist of drive, motivation to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and business knowledge. The authors contended whether individuals are born with the traits or acquire the traits later the traits represent the ‘right stuff’ (p. 58) that leaders must have and separate leaders from non-leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke identified three additional traits of charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility but could not ascertain their significance to leadership nor their relevance for different types of leaders. According to Kirkpatrick and Locke, individuals must have the additional factors of skills, vision, and implementation to fulfill the leadership potential that traits identify.

The focus on traits shifted from heritable qualities to complex qualities developed in the decade following Kirkpatrick and Locke. Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader (2004) addressed the complex nature of leader traits with the definition of “relatively coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics, reflecting a range of individual differences that foster consistent leadership effectiveness across a variety of group and organizational situations (p.104). The approach expanded the inclusiveness of leader traits of personal qualities along with “motives, values, cognitive abilities, social and problem-solving skills and expertise” (Zaccaro, 2007, p. 9). Zaccaro (2007) identified the inclusive traits as cognitive abilities, extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, transparency (openness), agreeableness, motivation, social intelligence, self-monitoring, emotional intelligence, and problem solving.

Four of the leadership traits from Zaccaro’s inclusive list comprised the five factors used in five-factor personality model and leadership studies beginning with Tupes and Christal (1961) and Norman (1963). The five factors, commonly referred to as the Big Five, are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism for the acronym OCEAN (Wortley, 2011). In their qualitative review and meta-analysis of personality and leadership

studies, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) found strong relationships between leadership and extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness in that order. Their findings revealed a weak correlation between leadership and agreeableness and low neuroticism.

Of the multiple lists of leadership traits and a review of the literature assessing the relationship between the traits and leadership, five traits have emerged as the major leadership traits. The five major traits consist of intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (Northouse, 2013). The definition Northouse provides of each of the five traits includes reference to two or more of the 14 items in the Leadership Traits Questionnaire (LTQ) (p. 38) and does not include dark traits (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). The LTQ is an instrument to assess self-perception and selected observer perception of an individual's leadership trait. Figure 2 shows the categorization of the 14 items based on the definitions of the five traits. Chapter 3 presents details on the LTQ and its use for this study.



*Figure 2.* Five major relationships and 14 LTQ items

Based on the literature of traits and leadership, the leadership trait theory has the advantages of offering a century of research and reflection, projecting the image of leaders as different from non-leaders, focusing on the leader feature of the leadership process, and providing indicators of the traits necessary and best for leadership. Nichols and Cottrell (2014)

examined traits and leadership to refine the differences between traits and leaders' fit within low-level organizations or high-level organizations.

Notwithstanding the assets of the trait theory, criticisms of this approach remain. Multiple lists of traits from leadership studies have yielded an abundance of traits to consider. Recent studies produced additional traits of gender, charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility.

Another criticism emerging from the literature is the failure to focus on situational influences on leadership. Additionally, the traits that foster leadership emergence might not successfully allow for leadership effective throughout the process.

A third criticism is a lack of theoretical and empirical studies in determining leadership traits and relationship to outcomes. Although the void remains, recent research has increased quantitative studies associating trait desirability and leadership fit with organizations (Nichols & Cottrell, 2014) and theoretical modeling such as the Leader Trait Emergence Effectiveness (LTEE) (Judge et al., 2009) and Integrated Model of Leader, Traits, Behaviors, and Effectiveness (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011).

Another shortcoming in the trait approach is the void of quantitative research on leadership traits and the Millennials as the newest generation of potential leaders to enter the workforce. The corporate industry (Ketchum, 2014) and workforce support institutes (Rikleen, 2011) have sponsored research on traits and characteristics of Millennials but the academic studies on leadership traits and Millennials are lacking. In a phenomenological study comparing the leadership perceptions of the G.I. generation, born between the years of 1901 and 1924, and the millennial generation, Gage (2005) contributed to leadership studies of the millennial generation. The study found Millennials view leadership as positive and negative. It allows individuals to give back to others and focus on the goals and needs of the group. Some

respondents indicated a negative view because of the association of leadership with government. The Millennials acknowledged the significance of respect and interaction in leadership. Gage recommended the need for studies applying trait and personality theories to a generational cohort to identify generational attributes. The research on military Millennials and non-military Millennials and leadership traits addressed that need.

This study adopted the trait approach as the theoretical framework and reviewed the literature on the specific leadership approach. As the study's focus is Millennials of a specific intra-generational cohort, the military Millennials as veterans, it is crucial to provide a literary foundation on the traits and characteristics of Millennials, the occupation experiences in the generational cohort, and the military veterans transitioning to civilian life for the workforce as military Millennials.

### **“We vs. Me” Millennials**

The term “Millennials” represents one generational cohort, but the literature and anecdotal reports suggest two disparate categorizations of this generation. Millennials have been branded with a mixture of positive and negative labels addressing their technological acumen, work ethics, civic involvement, and social outlook. Literature has labeled the millennial generation with terms such as “Net generation” (Tapscott, 1998); “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001); “trophy kids,” “baggage,” “arrogant,” and “fickle” (Alsop, 2008); and “civic minded,” “diverse,” and “tech savvy” (Winograd & Hais, 2008). A sample of other descriptions included “job hoppers” (Twenge et al., 2010); “entitled,” “brash,” and “smart” (Espinoza, Ukleja, & Rusch, 2011); “materialistic” and “disengaged” (Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011); and “narcissistic” (Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2012). The Millennials benefited from the technological advances during their lifetime as digital natives (Prensky,

2005). This group of individuals also has received a participation trophy alongside the winner of the competitive sport.

The growing literature on this generation comprises a mixed perspective on the positive and negative images of the Millennials as “Generation We” (Greenberg & Weber, 2008) or “Generation Me” (Twenge 2006), respectively. As proponents of the “Generation We” approach, Howe and Strauss (2000) presented the picture of young people that were not only upbeat and engaged but demonstrated increasing involvement in volunteerism. In their speculation on the emerging generation of Millennials, Howe and Strauss drew parallels to the G.I. generation, a cohort born during 1901 to 1924 and characterized as having high community involvement and government interest. In the case of Howe and Strauss (2000), the authors’ study did not include surveys of young people nationwide but rather relied on a restricted sample of teens in Virginia. Gage (2005) also found similarities between the G.I. generation and Millennials along the lines of government and leadership perception. Gage’s phenomenological study of six respondents in the two generational cohorts remains exploratory but contributed to the comparison of the millennial and G.I. generations.

Based on mixed-methods research, including in-depth survey results of 2,000 Millennials and 12 focus groups of geographic and demographic diversity, Greenberg and Weber (2008) coined the term “Generation We.” The authors referred to the Millennials as independent in the political, social and philosophical realms and described this generation as having interest in and concern for the larger population of people and their needs. “They are also a caring generation, one that appears ready to put the greater good ahead of individual rewards. Hence, Greenberg and Weber (2008) named the Millennials --Generation We” (p. 13).

Winograd and Hais (2008) predicted strong involvement of the Millennials in the 2008 presidential election. The authors' research support Howe and Strauss' speculation of generational cycles with the Millennials resembling the G.I. generation. Winograd and Hais identified comparisons in the level of political involvement. One major difference is the millennial generation's high level of technological power and access that facilitates communication and involvement. The Millennials could use viral sociopolitical networking to effect change in society and leadership. Burstein (2013) characterized the 80 million Millennials as a generation of high ideals with a strong commitment to values and beliefs and many of whom are emerging leaders in a global world. The author contended the technological access and millennial mindset facilitate the leadership emergence for interested Millennials. Winograd and Hais (2011) further emphasized the millennial generation's ability to use technologies from social networks to smart phones to challenge the typical hierarchical structure of organizations. The technology acumen also allows Millennials to communicate with others around the world and remain knowledgeable about and participate in foreign affairs (Cone, Inc., 2006; and Winograd &Hais, 2011).

Proponents of "Generation Me" (Twenge, 2006) reveal different characteristics of the millennial generation. Based on a nationally representative, intergenerational study of Baby Boomers, GenXers, and Millennials, Twenge found low evidence of civic involvement among Millennials contrary to the speculations of Howe and Strauss. Twenge maintained among the three generational cohorts, Millennials were the least likely to express interest in politics and government, work in political campaigns, think about social concerns, or communicate with public officials. Although their numbers reflected an increase in volunteerism, Twenge noted it coincided with high school graduation requirements of service projects.

In an intergenerational study of psychological traits in the workplace, Twenge and S.M. Campbell (2008) found higher levels of self-esteem among Millennials but also higher narcissism, depression, and anxiety. The authors' insight for workplace managers suggested they would see more employees needing praise, having unrealistic expectations, wearing casual dress, involved in ethics scandals, job-hopping, and having problems accepting criticism. Twenge and W.K. Campbell (2009) elaborated on the trait of narcissism. Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) furthered the research on generations and values in the workplace. The authors' finding of behavior similar to dark leadership traits (Judge et al., 2009) would suggest negative behavior that could offset Millennials' measures of the positive or bright leadership traits of the LTQ and yield low scores. Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) contended the future retirement of older workers and their replacement with younger workers make it imperative for organizations to clearly understand the values of the new generation. As this study maintained, organizations need to know the traits and characteristics of the potential leaders who will emerge from this new generation. This study examined the traits and characteristics.

Hershatter and Epstein (2010) presented a similar comparison of the "We vs. Me" dichotomy of Millennials in the workplace as the "Greatest Generation" or "Generation Whine" (p. 211). A proliferation of mainly anecdotal and theoretical literature acknowledged the need for further research on the millennial generation to aid organizations in managing Millennials in the workplace in the United States (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Lipkin and Perrymore, 2009; Marston, 2007; Meister & Willyerd, 2010; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Rikleen, 2012; Tulgan, 2009; Gentry, Griggs, Deal, Mondore, & Cox, 2011; and D'Souza, Yoon, & Islam, 2011) and other countries (Bucic, Harris, & Arli, 2010; and Ketchum, 2014). Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, and Herzog (2011) added to the "me"

perspective of Millennials. Based on their research, the authors characterized the generation as materialistic, disengaged from civic and political life, and having confusion in moral reasoning.

The military is included among workplace organizations addressing the retirement of existing personnel and replacement with new recruits from among the millennial generation, especially during an era of an all-volunteer force (Drago & Cunningham, 2006). The emerging literature on Millennials and the military resembled the mixed “we vs. me” of the general millennial studies in questioning the fit of military recruits in the workplace organizational culture (Cunningham, 2014) and debunking the negative stereotypes of Millennials in the military as self-centered with low work ethics (Cheney-Peters, 2014). Similar to other workplace organizations, the military has explored adapting the environment to attract Millennials into the military in a cross-generational atmosphere (Fritzon, Howell, & Zakheim, 2007; Hibbard, 2011). Strategies have included introducing dynamic teaching through critical thinking and short lesson sessions; using smart phones, electronic book readers, and mobile apps (Schloesser, 2010) to reach a tech-savvy generation; and fortifying communications, deemed crucial for leadership, through technologies that minimize cyber threats in use but are attractive to Millennials that have joined the Army (Hibbard, 2011), Gentry, W. A., Griggs, T. L., Deal, J. J., Mondore, S. P., & Cox, B. D. (2011).

The literature examined on Millennials was inclusive of mixed descriptions of the generation’s characteristics but void of quantitative studies on Millennials and leadership traits of this newest generation and future leaders of these organizations. Newsletters and blogs have begun to add to the characterizations of Millennials to foster research and augment the existing trait studies. One online newsletter on the millennial generation (Mertz, 2014), for example, identified Millennial leadership traits as conscious, future oriented, transparent, collaborative,

and problem-solving. This study of military Millennials and non-military Millennials examined team orientation and self-starter, characteristics beyond the 14 traits of the LTQ. Findings on these characteristics, coupled with the quantitative assessment of the LTQ and Millennials, could yield future studies on revised leadership traits addressing the millennial generation and leadership. A paradox of traits (Judge et al., 2009) could suggest the LTQ and other trait studies do not include the necessary traits for contemporary demands of leaders during the generational shift. As a result of the gap in the academic literature, this quantitative study of leadership traits and characteristics of Millennials contributed to the literature on this generation.

### **Millennials in Intragenerational Occupational Groups**

Although the existing literature on Millennials has primarily aggregated the entire millennial generation into one category with dichotomous descriptions of their behaviors and characteristics, studies have begun to examine various occupations and explore intra-generational differences within this cohort. The entire millennial generation is different and cannot nor should be lumped together and painted with a broad brush. The failure of studies to examine intra-generational differences to discern variations within the traits and characteristics of the millennial population eliminates the opportunity to study associations between the traits in a segment or occupation of Millennials and the fit or right stuff (Kirkpatrick & Lock, 1991) for leadership in a particular organization. This empirical research separated the millennial population into two groups, the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials, and investigated differences between the two. This literary strand examined literature on Millennials in various occupations and segments as an initial effort to add to intra-generational research.

Niemczyk and Ulrich (2009) studied the workplace atmosphere preferences of millennials in the aviation industry, which allowed a comparison of generational cohorts and

specific organizations. The findings indicated Millennials in the aviation industry have a preference for a work setting in which they receive in-depth details of the rules and are allowed flexible decision-making. The military Millennials have worked in a disciplined job environment, established proven work ethic, and developed tested leadership skills that would be assets to an employer.

Carver, Candela, and Gutierrez (2011) focused on nursing faculty as a millennial occupational group and found the millennial generation's technological skill set will bridge the varied generations and organizational cultures with a new purpose and cohesiveness. The Millennials also introduce a teamwork orientation to the various organizational structures within the public, private and non-profit sectors. Teamwork or collaboration has emerged in the anecdotal literature as a leadership trait of Millennials (Mertz, 2014). Their acclimation to advanced technology and social networking exceeds the introduction to technology that the digital natives Prensky (2001) growing up with the Internet experienced before the millennial generation. Price, Hall, Angus, and Peter (2013) introduced another study on nurses and Millennials to understand the characteristics of students choosing this career and improve recruitment and retention strategies.

In his study of military Millennials still in active service, another occupational group, Peck (2013) also acknowledged the "We" vs. "Me" positions in the literature but downplayed the significance of the dichotomy in his focus on spirituality and religion in the U.S. Army. Peck viewed the cohort of U.S. Army millennial soldiers, "the Army leaders of tomorrow" (p.31), as different from other generations in the Army. He also mentioned their military occupational experience exposed the soldiers to different religions, cultures, ethnicities, regions, and deployments. Peck asserted these developments, coupled with the devastation of millennial

soldiers witnessing life, death, violence, and personal hardships, could have a different influence on their spirituality in comparison with their civilian millennial cohorts. He suggested an occupational difference between Millennials of military and non-military categories, but acknowledged a lack of research to discern any difference. This comparative research of military Millennials and non-military Millennials addressed the difference within the generational cohort to explore the influence of occupational experience.

In additional research of the intra-generational cohort of Millennials, Johri, Teo, Lo, Dufour, and Schram (2014) conducted a study of engineering students to understand any habits, perceptions, and experiences regarding technology of this group as reported in previous literature and studies. Research abounds on the millennial generation's use of and access to technology. The scholars found a significant use of mobile devices and low use of Twitter among engineering majors.

In a qualitative study of 30 Millennials in ministry positions and missions, Erlacher (2014) found values significant to job satisfaction and retention. All participants had graduated a Christian university. The ministers valued family, relationships, and mentoring relationships with older adults, people rather than programs, relationships rather than products, conversations over presentations. These Millennials viewed the church as a family instead of a business. Erlacher's study revealed an association between the church in sync with their values and job satisfaction and retention. Raymo (2014) described the "We vs. Me" dichotomy of the millennial generation and highlighted characteristics of multicultural, technological acumen, friendly, rule-following, socially self-correcting, and achievement-oriented among Millennials preparing for global mission work.

According to Wellner (2001), the literature does not take into account the intra-generational differences and that people born at the beginning of the generation or the end of the generation do not resemble those born in the middle of the generation. Debevec, Schewe, Madden and Diamond (2013) examined vertical differences of age groups among Millennials to discern differences within the cohort. The researchers conducted an online survey of college juniors and seniors to assess the values of older Millennials (aged 27 – 31) during summer 2010 and younger Millennials (aged 17-23) during fall of 2009 and 2010. Findings revealed younger Millennials were less patriotic, less thrifty, and less concerned about politics and life's mistakes than older Millennials. The younger sub-cohort also was more secular and sexually permissive than the older Millennials. The Millennials overall valued teamwork, diversity, ambition, and entrepreneurialism. Four of the same researchers, along with two other scholars, examined young Millennials globally and found consistent value clusters to live simply, safe and secure, accomplish, good job, well-behaved, global, team spirit, control destiny, and live for today (Schewe, Debevec, Madden, Diamond, Parment, & Murphy, 2013). Understanding intra-generational differences of the Millennials was crucial to the studies. The age range in this comparative study of military Millennials of the volunteer service occupation and non-military Millennials did not afford an examination of age differences within the generational cohort but furthered the research on intra-generational occupations of Millennials.

### **Transitioning Veterans into Civilian Life**

A third literary strand examined the transition of military Millennials, as veterans, into civilian life entering workforce organizations. This process, as presented in the literature and media, is not without obstacles and has involved the public, private and non-profit sectors. Although most studies examined health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorders of military

veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a growing focus is on the employment of or preferred employment of veterans because of special experiences including leadership.

Borus (1975) examined the challenges of transitioning from military to civilian life in his study of Vietnam, in which he found a lack of programs to facilitate the change in the lives of soldiers. In the *Iraq War Clinician Guide*, Litz and Orsillo (2004) maintained surviving the war can prove a rewarding experience yielding “greater self-efficacy, enhanced identity, and sense of purposefulness, pride, camaraderie” and can also be “traumatizing, spiritually and morally devastating” (p. 21) throughout life. Litz and Orsillo reported the psychological, social and psychiatric experiences will vary based on the individual, culture, and context. Reed (2008) found programs to support post-deployed veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. His research prior to the economic downfall in 2008, revealed a low unemployment rate of only 2.6 percent for these veterans. These military veterans had the advantage of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), which allowed employers to rehire former employees, who left civilian jobs for duty.

Notwithstanding the supportive employment programs, King (2010) found a “lack of cultural fit” as an obstacle to veteran hires in non-military organizations that led to early voluntary resignation. The author maintained the need for training and development to allow veterans to translate their unique strengths of loyalty, values, discipline, leadership, strategy, organization, and diverse experiences into characteristics that offset challenges. In examining military Millennials, this study sought to identify leadership traits that could facilitate overcoming veterans’ obstacles in transitioning to the non-military workplace. The transition is a necessary process to demonstrate leadership in any organization.

Harrell and Berglass (2012) interviewed representatives from 69 companies that had hired veterans and found favorable results. The respondents reported leadership and team building experiences as the primary factors for offering employment to military veterans. Approximately half of the company representatives stated that traits of trustworthy, dependable, integrity, and maturity made veteran hires attractive as employees. The traits of trustworthy and dependable are two of the LTQ traits under integrity in the main leadership traits (Figure 2).

To support the transition for veterans, Fink et al. (2014) found improvement in programs to enhance postdeployment experiences and yield positive outcomes. The authors' research revealed associations between positive deployment transition and factors of occupational support, unit cohesion, and personal support. Soldiers' perceptions of decreased stigmas to and barriers against pursuing care were likely to have positive transitions due to behavioral healthcare services. The onboard training and development King (2010) yielded positive and negative aspects of transition. This empirical study of leadership traits of military Millennials sought to provide a profile of leadership potential for employers concerned about the transition of military veterans and a generalized image of Millennials.

### **Summary**

The literature review outlined a varied, scholarly narrative of the theoretical and conceptual approaches of the leadership trait theory and described three literary strands to relate the study of military Millennials and non-military Millennials. This study's examination of military Millennials warranted an exploration of this generational cohort in the literature. The increasing number of military Millennials returning after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, coupled with the speculation of this population as future leaders, makes it imperative to investigate their leadership traits.

Chapter 2 presented the literary focus and previous studies that provided the theoretical and conceptual framework for this research. Chapter 3 describes the methodologies used to conduct the quantitative research study. Chapter 4 portrays the data analysis and study results. Chapter 5 outlines the summary results, discussion findings, association of findings to previous research, and implications for future research and leadership.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Methodology for Evaluating Leadership Traits**

The literature review in Chapter 2 presented the theoretical and conceptual framework of the leadership trait theory and outlined three literary strands relevant to the study of military Millennials and non-military Millennials: the we vs. me dichotomous description of Millennials, the intra-generational focus on Millennials and occupations, and the transitioning of military veterans into civilian life and into the workforce. This chapter describes the research methodology by delineating the research design, population and sample, data collection, instrumentation, reliability and validity, and data analysis.

The purpose of this research was to determine if there are any discernable traits among military Millennials in comparison with their non-military cohorts as measured by a survey that comprised the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) and demographic and characteristic questions. The LTQ is a quantitative instrument used in prior research to identify key traits that characterize leadership ability. The survey was utilized in this study to assess two groups of Millennials: military Millennials and non-military Millennials. As Figure 4 presents, the study's population was a smaller, convenience sample (Battaglia, 2008) of 53 persons from two groups: 23 military Millennials and 30 non-military Millennials. Given the vast number of the troop population of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, this research effort focused on a group of military Millennials that had transitioned to further educational development and seek guidance from veteran-friendly organizations located on the campus of community college in a metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. The non-military Millennials for the research consisted of students attending the College of Business at a research doctoral university of the southeastern United States. The convenience sampling (Battaglia, 2008) technique was

utilized in the study based on accessibility and proximity of the locations to the researcher. These two groups have very similar demographic traits but different educational backgrounds.

Members of both groups range in age from 23 to 32 and graduated from high school. After high school, many Millennials enlisted in the Army, while others enrolled in a community college or four-year college environment. All of the non-military Millennials were students pursuing a master's degree. Both groups, regardless of their path, possessed a level of technological, problem solving, and communicative advantages previous generations were not afforded. The results of this research could provide future employers with information to assist them in identifying the leadership traits among military Millennials as opposed to non-military Millennials for leadership positions.

### **Research Questions**

This study utilized a quantitative research design (Creswell, 2014) and postpositivist worldview (Creswell, 2014) that addressed the following research questions:

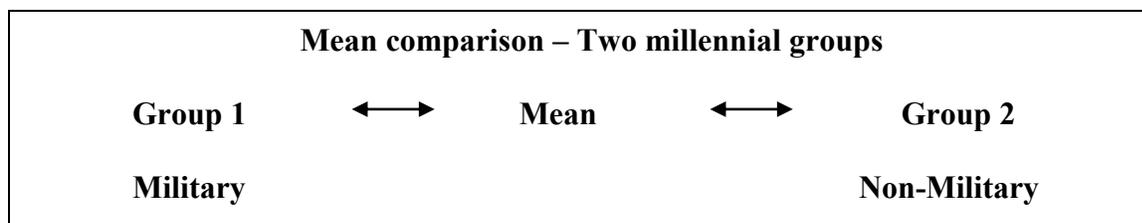
**Research Question 1.** What leadership traits do non-military and military Millennials possess?

**Research Question 2.** What is the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire?

**Research Question 3.** What is the difference between demographics and characteristics of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits?

## Research Design

This study examined the leadership traits of two separate groups through the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (Northouse, 2010). This quantitative instrument was used to compare the means of the military Millennials (Group 1) and the non-military Millennials (Group 2) (see Figure 3). Comparing the means did not include independent and dependent variables. Therefore, a regression analysis was not performed. Apart from the LTQ, the survey included demographic and characteristic items for participants to indicate. This study employed a descriptive and cross-sectional research design (Creswell, 2014), in which data was collected via an online survey and at a given point in time. The survey allowed the researcher to gather demographic, characteristic and leadership trait data. According to Bickman and Rog (1998), descriptive research designs enabled the researcher to answer the questions similar to “what is” or “what was” as well as describe the narrative of the group individual’s “typical day in the life” (Creswell, 2012). The researcher sought answers to “what is” the difference between the two groups. Wright (2005) stated ease of access and cost efficiency as an advantage for online surveys. The disadvantages ranged from multiple email addresses to spamming (Andrews, Nonnecke, and Preece, 2003). Administering the questionnaire to two separate institutions were most challenging. To minimize this issue, the researcher segregated specific questions for the non-military Millennials and the military-Millennials. The mean of group 1 is mutually exclusive of group 2. This research is not causal or rational.



*Figure 3.* Research design diagram.

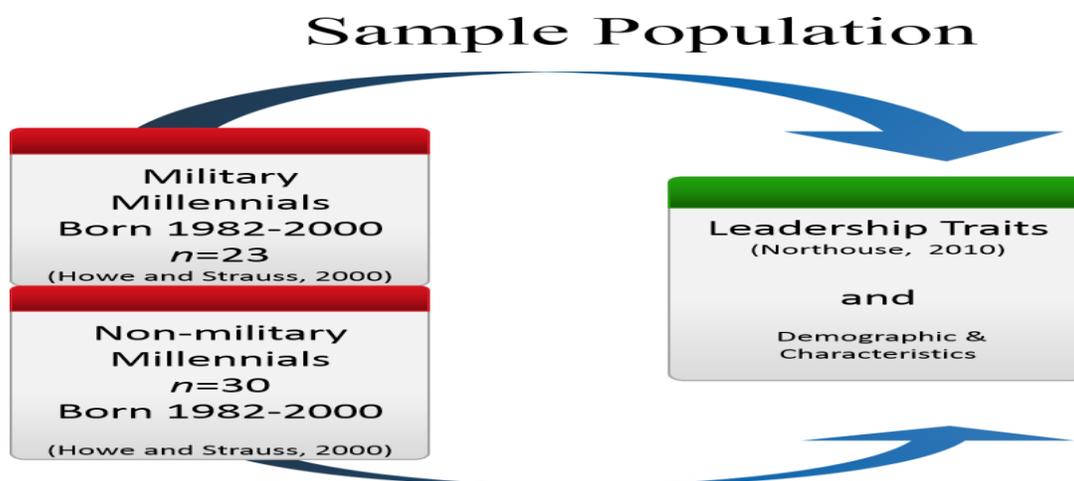
## Population Sample and Data Collection

The total population sample size ( $n=53$ ) persons representing the two groups. Given the vast number of the troop population of the Iraq and Afghanistan war, this research effort focused on two small representative groups: 23 military Millennials seeking directions from educational and veteran-friendly organizations located on the campus of a community college in a metropolitan area of the southeastern United States. The second group consists of 30 non-military Millennials of students attending the College of Business at a research doctoral university in the southeastern United States.

The total population for this study was  $n=53$ , among whom 23 participants were classified as military Millennials and 30 participants were classified as non-military Millennials. An online survey consisting of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire and demographic and characteristic questions were distributed via email to 150 potential participants with 53 were responses, resulting in a response rate of 35.3%. Given this level of response, the researcher ran the non-parametric Mann-Whitney  $U$  Test, which assumes there is an underlying low and high in the dependent variable before categorizing and ranking survey results. The assumption extends to the independent data scores which “are not dependent on the scores of others” (Morgan et al., 2013, p.177). The researcher examined the  $r$  values of the two groups military Millennials and non-military Millennials through the mean ranks. According to Cohen (1992),  $r$ 's standardized measure of strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables will range from -1 (indicating a perfect negative relationship) to 1 to indicate a perfect positive relationship. Furthermore, Cohen's (1992) table of effect size (p. 102) was used to assess the interpretation of the  $r$  value :  $<.10$ : trivial;  $.10 - .30$ : small to medium;  $.30 - .50$ : medium to large; and  $>.50$ : large to very large. The  $p$ -value, however, was used to determine the statistical significance of

variables. Morgan et al. (2013) maintained when the probability or ( $p$ ) is small (.05), we can establish that the results are statistically significant (p.99). Additionally, Morgan et al (2013) argued that a Fisher's exact test instead of chi-square is run for small samples, especially if the two variables are being related and have only two levels because it can tell the relationship of the variables and whether they are statistically significant (p.136). Crosstabs and frequencies were run to better interpret the data.

Data was collected through an online survey tool. Both groups were sent an email invitation through the listserv of the respective institutions starting second summer session through the beginning of fall 2014 classes. The researcher asked the contact affiliate at each institution to distribute the email invitation to the email listserv of the respective institutions. The email invitation contained a cover letter, a consent form, and a username and password for participants to access the questionnaire. Email reminders were sent via listserv to encourage participation because both populations were completing classes in the summer and starting lasses in the fall.



*Figure 4.* Sample population.

## **Instrumentation**

The researcher implemented the use of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) from Northouse (2010). The researcher employed an online survey service collector and adhered to the request of SAGE Publishers to utilize password protection for the survey (Northouse, 2010). See questionnaire in Appendix B.

The questionnaire results were measured via a Likert-type scale ranking where (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and incorporated into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 software for further analysis. Additionally, coding for non-Likert scale questions equal one (for yes) through two (for no) and was reported as labeled next to the questions as shown in the questionnaire in (see Appendix C).

The participant provided answers to 24 demographic and characteristic questions, of which the study utilized 9, along with the 14 items from the Leadership Trait Questionnaire. The demographic questions included birth year, ethnic background, gender, educational level, original residence, marital status, number of children, college level. The questions also comprised military-specific questions such as whether the military Millennial, as a soldier, was in the category of enlisted, support personnel, combat duty, or administrator.

As the participants progressed through the questionnaire, they were presented with the following characteristic questions:

- Do you prefer to work on a team?
- Are you a self-starter?
- Have you ever traveled outside of the United States?
- How often do you purchase things for yourself?
- Do you like being told what to do?

These questions are designed to gain additional demographic and characteristic data and to assess the literature which paints the millennial generation as the me generation, focusing on self and job hopping, or the “we generation,” emphasizing the social good and teamwork. Both aspects of the “we” vs. “me” literature acknowledge foreign travel as a characteristic of the Millennials.

The survey results were constructed to complete a profile of the study participants. The LTQ has a Likert-type scale format that asks the participants to evaluate their own leadership abilities on items of articulate, perceptive, self-confident, self-assured, persistent, determined, trustworthy, dependable, friendly, outgoing, conscientious, diligent, sensitive and empathic (Northouse 2010). The LTQ is not without its shortcomings; for example, there is no list of leadership traits from which the observer can choose. Although highly subjective, the experiences, observations, and self-perceptions of the participants become a baseline for measuring leadership. This consideration is appropriate because most organizations have their own level of expectations for their leaders. The LTQ does not claim any linkage between the 14 traits and leadership outcomes and is not recommended to use in employee training and development (Northouse 2010).

### **Reliability and Validity**

The Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) has a well-established reputation and is considered highly reliable. Various traits were used in previous studies (Stogdill, 1948 and 1974); (Mann, 1959); (Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986); and (Kirkpatrick & Lock, 1991) with the aggregation representing the 14 traits (Northouse, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha was run to determine the internal consistency of Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) and alpha reported at the .83

level, indicating the scale items have good internal consistency and reliability (Morgan et al., 2013).

### **Data Analysis**

Cronbach's alpha was utilized with the questionnaire. The small sample size ( $n=53$ ) prevents the use of a chi-square test. Instead a Fisher's exact test (2x2 tabulation) to understand the relationship among variables and the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* Test was used. The nonparametric nature of the data prevents the use of t-test for the difference between group means. The assumptions of t-test were markedly violated "...the variance of the variables in the two populations are not equal, the variables are not normally distributed within each population and the data are not independent where scores of one participant are not related systematically to the scores of others..." (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 177). For nonparametric test, alpha was set at 95% for statistical significance. A thorough review of the output from the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) and the demographic and characteristic data was observed and findings presented in chapter 4.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I do not have a military background. However, as a former delivery project executive and project manager with a Fortune 500 company, I have had to identify talented people, who produced quality and timely work in spite of barriers, especially as members of global virtual teams or as leaders in virtual settings. Some of the challenges included extended work hours across geographic time zones, limited or no face-to-face access to clients, and only virtual interaction with team members. Additionally, I chose to focus on the Army because I have observed classmates and other individuals change their lives and overcome many difficulties through their military involvement, indicating experience mattered. In the work environment of

a Fortune 500 company, I encountered military veterans of former war deployments that had emerged as higher-level and lower-level leaders. As diverse generations increased in the corporate setting, I observed strategies to work across generations to include Millennials, many of whom were emerging as leaders. The return of a growing number of Millennials from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and other posts of deployment drew my focus to the comparison of different groups of Millennials in the workforce and the consideration of the Millennials as leaders. The statements of Former U.S. Army General David Petraeus on the special preparation and unique skills of military service men and women returning from deployment enhanced my focus on the leadership traits of the military Millennials in civilian life. General Petraeus stated in a Time magazine interview that, "...these soldiers had to rebuild communities and make difficult decisions under huge pressure. They had to show incredible flexibility, never knowing if they would be greeted with a handshake or a hand grenade. They've been exposed to experiences that are totally unique, compared with most Americans" (Klein, 2011). I sought to compare the leadership traits of this sample population, military Millennials, with a sample population of non-Military Millennials.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 established the research methodology for capturing the leadership traits of both military Millennials and non-military Millennials through the LTQ questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire yielded findings that are beneficial to the participants as well as public, private and non-for-profit leaders seeking to recruit future leaders within their organization.

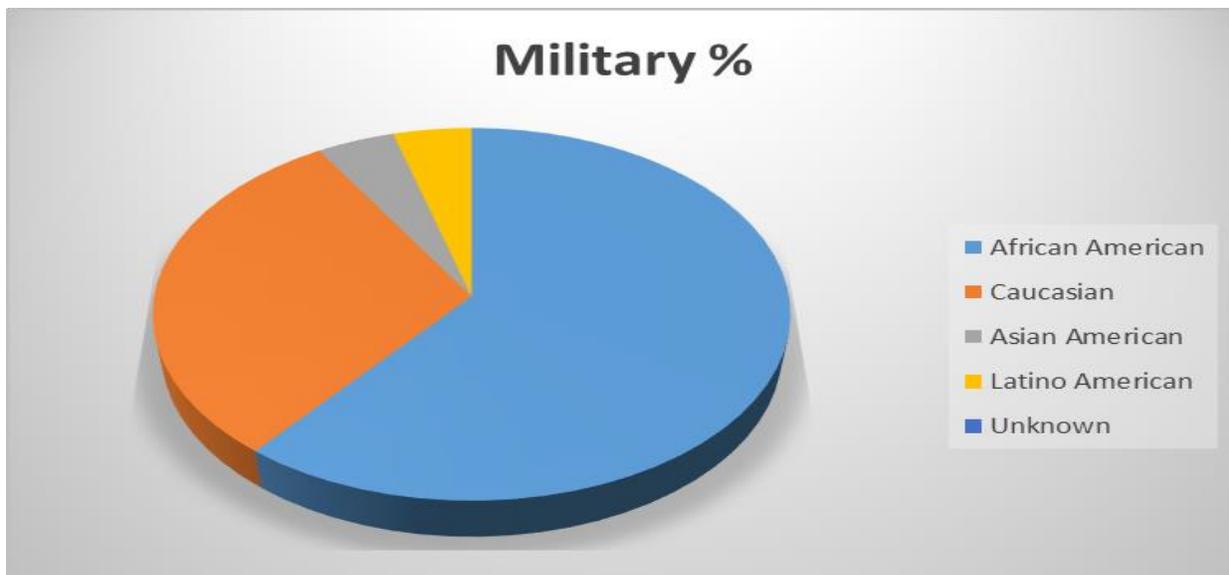
## CHAPTER 4

### Results

In this chapter, the researcher examined the results of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The purpose of this study was to explore similarities and/or differences in leadership traits between military Millennials and non-military Millennials. Data were collected from a population of 53 persons from two groups: 23 military Millennials and 30 non-military Millennials. This research effort focused on a group military Millennials that were seeking directions from educational and veteran-friendly organizations located on the campus of a community college in a metropolitan area of the southeastern United States. The other group in the study comprises non-military Millennials of students attending the College of Business at a research doctoral university in the southeastern United States. This chapter concludes with a summary of the research findings.

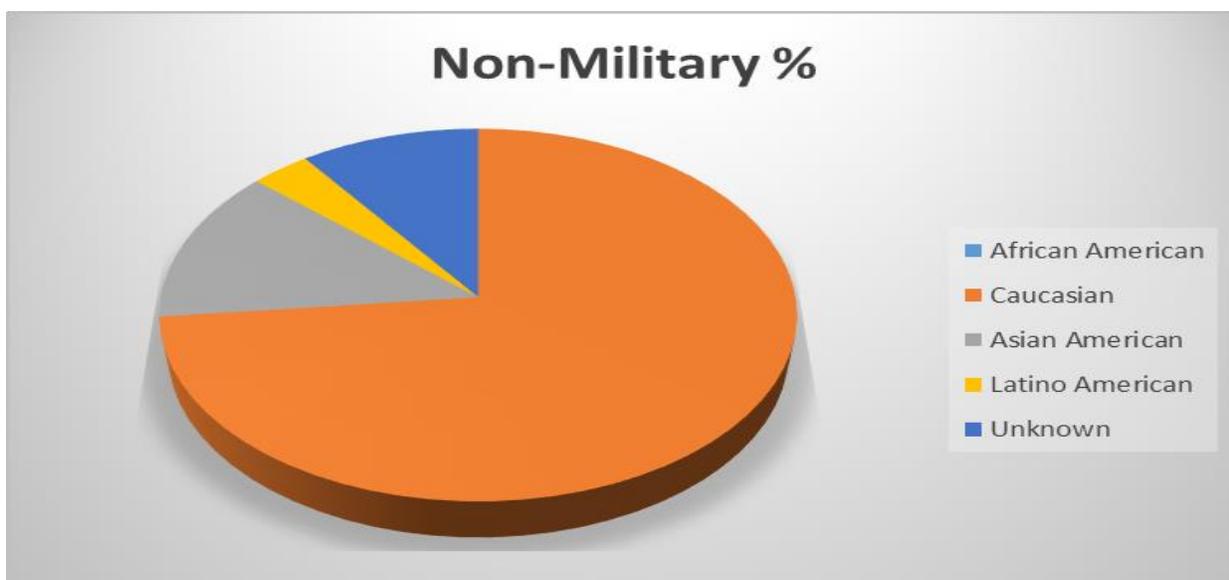
#### **Demographic Characteristics**

Participant submitted their exact age, and this information is disclosed in Table 5. Gender was coded as (1) male and (2) female as seen in Table 5 below. Based on the 53 participants' responses to the gender question, there were 53% males, 43% females, and 4% respondents left the question blank. In Figure 5, military Millennials consisted of 61% African Americans, 30% Caucasians, 4% Asian Americans, and 4% Latino Americans.



*Figure 5.* Military percentage ethnic distribution.

In Figure 6 below, non-military Millennials consisted of no African Americans, 73% Caucasians, 13% Asian Americans, and 3% Latino Americans and 10% unknown.



*Figure 6.* Non-military Millennials' percentage ethnic distribution.

### Statistical Test

The principle leadership traits consisted of articulate, perceptive, self-confident, self-assured, persistent, determined, trustworthy, dependable, friendly, outgoing, conscientious,

diligent, sensitive and empathic. Research question 1 required the researcher to compare the means of two groups: the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials. For Research question 2, the researcher ran the non-parametric Mann-Whitney (M-W) *U* test and the assumptions were met to compare the means of two groups: military Millennials and non-military Millennials. Starting with the assumptions where an “underlying continuity from low to high in the independent variable before ranking and the data were based on a Likert (e.g. 1,2,3,4 and 5) scale rating” (p.177) and, the “...data are independent where scores of one participant are not dependent on scores of the others” (p.177). The participants were asked to rank their leadership traits based on a hypothetical leadership position of a multinational corporation. The Likert rankings are based on a 5 point scale where: Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4 and Strongly Agree=5. The 23 military Millennials have higher mean ranks 29.93% than the 30 non-military Millennials 24.75% based on the responses from the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ). Research question 3 required running a Fisher’s exact test because of small sample sizes (e.g.  $n=53$ ) (p.136) with a response rate of 35.3% where (2 x 2) cross-tabulation (p.137) for related variables were evaluated as shown in Table 2 and 3 below.

## **Statistical Results**

**Research Question 1.** What leadership traits do non-military and military Millennials possess? Figure 7 below illustrates the mean chart which portrays the leadership traits as examined using the (LTQ). Frequencies were run on military Millennials and non-military Millennials along with the 14 traits. Additionally, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney (M-W) *U* test was used to compare the means of two groups: military and non-military Millennials (Morgan et al., 2013). Table 1 below,

illustrates the distribution of fourteen traits of the LTQ contained 14 items for which both non-military Millennials and military Millennials demonstrated a close percentage distribution among traits.

Table 1.

*Distribution of Fourteen Traits*

<b>Traits</b>	<b>MILITARY Mean</b>	<b>NON- MILITARY Mean</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Articulate	(4.22%)	(3.96%)	.24	NS
Perceptive	(4.30%)	(4.06%)	.28	NS
Self-confident	(4.39%)	(4.00%)	.09	NS
Self-assured	(4.39%)	(3.93%)	.05	SS
Persistent	(4.39%)	(4.33%)	.53	NS
Determined	(4.61%)	(4.50%)	.34	NS
Trustworthy	(4.87%)	(4.80%)	.51	NS
Dependable	(4.87%)	(4.73%)	.48	NS
Friendly	(4.56%)	(4.53%)	.87	NS
Outgoing	(4.17%)	(4.17%)	.77	NS
Conscientious	(4.30%)	(4.40%)	.60	NS
Diligent	(4.61%)	(4.43%)	.17	NS
Sensitive	(4.08%)	(4.03%)	.65	NS
Empathic	(4.13%)	(4.10%)	.87	NS

Figure 7 below illustrates the mean ranks of the leadership traits for both military Millennials and non-military Millennials and displays the traits of trustworthy and dependable to have ranked highest on the Leadership Trait Questionnaire and the Likert scale. However, only self-assurance reveals a significant difference between the two groups of millennials with a  $p=.05$ .

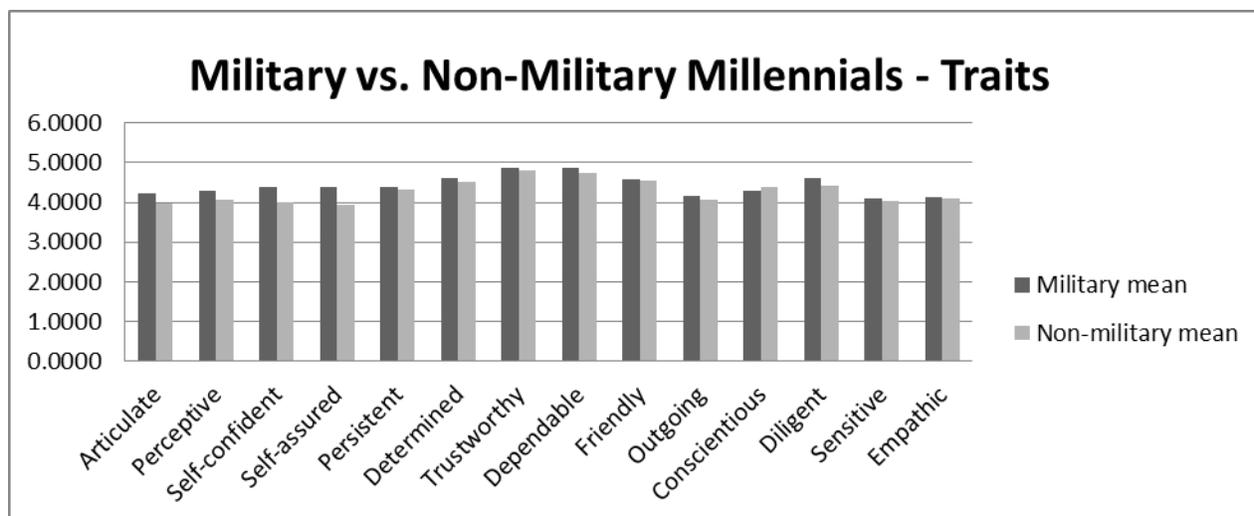


Figure 7. Mean chart – Military and non-military

Note: The y-axis above represents the Likert scale ranking (i.e. 1.0=strongly disagree, 2.0=disagree, 3.0=neutral, 4.0=agree and 5=strongly agree). The x-axis represents leadership traits.

**Research Question 2.** What is the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the Leadership Traits Questionnaire? Assessment of Research Question 2 required a comparison of nonparametric mean ranks from both the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials and their leadership traits based on the self-assessment provided via the survey. In order to address this question, a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test was run on all of the traits, which included an overall sample size ( $n=53$ ); however, the analysis was segregated to include 28 military and 30 non-military Millennials. The Mann-Whitney  $U$  test required a comparison of the mean ranks to determine significance and was used to calculate the (M-W)  $U$  test for each of the first of 14 traits (dependent variables) starting with: articulate with a  $U=286.5$  ((M-W)  $U$ ),  $p=.24$ ,  $r= -.16$  ( $r = z / \sqrt{n}$ ) which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (Morgan et al.,

2013, p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean ranks of military Millennials (29.54) and non-military Millennials (25.05) for the trait - articulate.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the second of 14 traits continuing with the trait: perceptive presented  $U=288.5$ ,  $p=.28$ ,  $r= -.15$  which was not a statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was not a statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 30% and non-military Millennials 25% for the trait - perceptive.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the third of 14 traits self-confident presented  $U=258.5$ ,  $p=.10$ ,  $r= -.23$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is large or larger than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 31% and non-military Millennials 24% for the trait - self-confident.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the fourth of 14 traits self-assured presented  $U=243.0$ ,  $p=.05$ ,  $r= -.27$  which was a statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is large or larger than typical (p. 102). There was also a significant difference, which was statistically significant, in the mean of military Millennials 31% and non-military Millennials 24% for the trait - self-assured.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the fifth of 14 traits persistent presented  $U=313.5$ ,  $p=.53$ ,  $r= -.09$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance in the mean of military Millennials 28% and non-military Millennials 26% for the trait - persistent.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the sixth of 14 traits determined presented  $U=299.5$ ,  $p=.34$ ,  $r= -.130$  which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$

effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 29% and non-military Millennials (25.48) for the trait - determined.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the seventh of 14 traits trustworthy presented  $U=321.0$ ,  $p=.51$ ,  $r= -.09$  which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials (28.04) and non-military Millennials (26.20) for the trait - trustworthy.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the eighth of 14 traits dependable presented  $U=319.5$ ,  $p=.48$ ,  $r= -.10$  which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials (28.11) and non-military Millennials (26.15) for the trait - dependable.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the ninth of 14 traits friendly presented  $U=337.5$ ,  $p=.87$ ,  $r= -.02$  which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 27% and non-military Millennials 27% for the trait - friendly. The (M-W)  $U$  test for the tenth of 14 traits (dependent variable) outgoing presented  $U=330.0$ ,  $p=.77$ ,  $r= -.04$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 28% and non-military Millennials 27% for the trait - outgoing.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the eleventh of 14 traits conscientious presented  $U=318.5$ ,  $p=.60$ ,  $r= -.07$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in

the mean of military Millennials 26% and non-military Millennials 28% for the trait - conscientious.

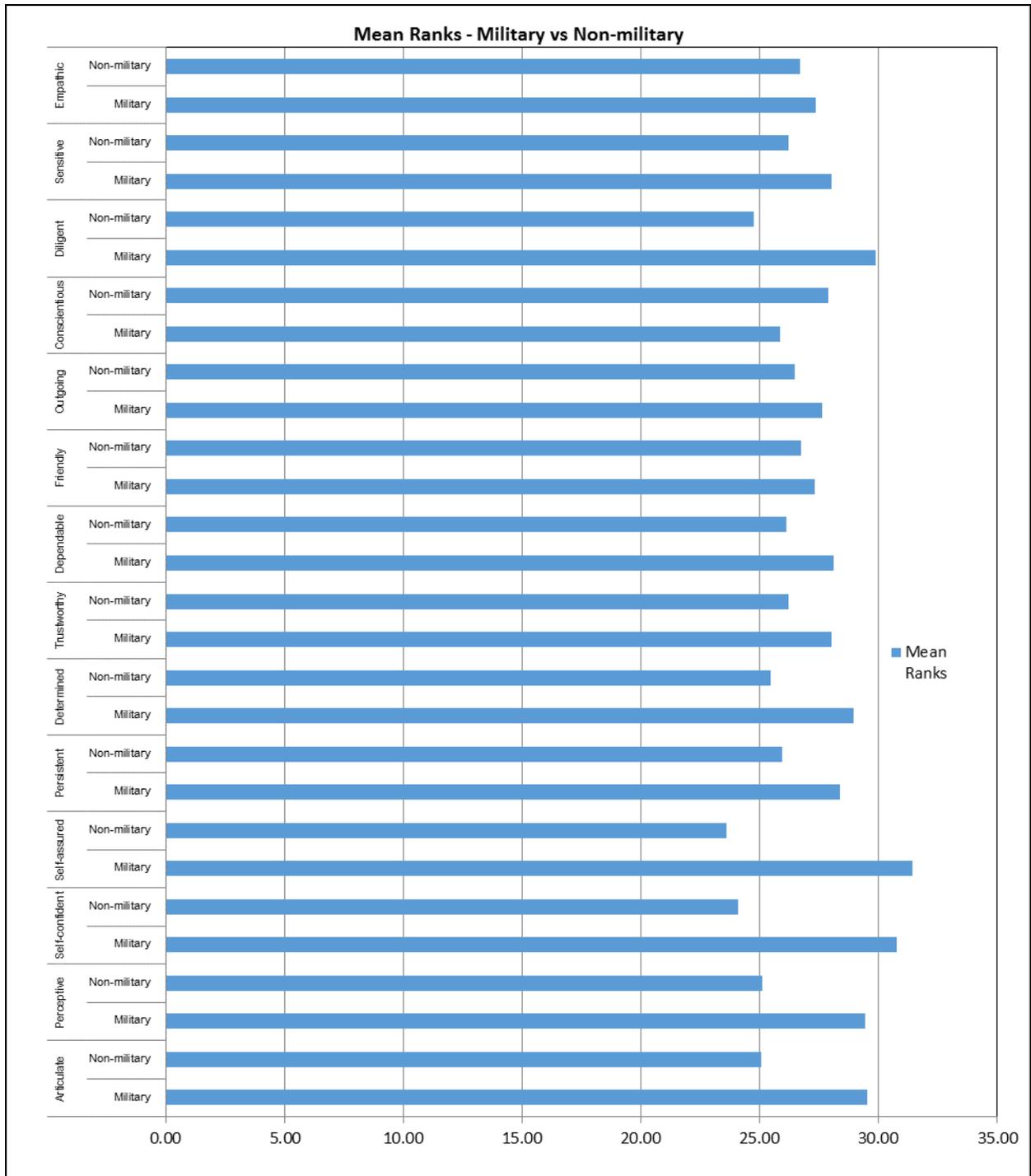
The (M-W)  $U$  test for the twelfth of 14 traits diligent presented  $U=278.0$ ,  $p=.17$ ,  $r= -.19$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance in the mean of military Millennials 30% and non-military Millennials 25% for the trait - diligent.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the thirteenth of 14 traits sensitive presented  $U=321.0$ ,  $p=.65$ ,  $r= -.09$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance in the mean of military Millennials (28.04) and non-military Millennials (26.20) for the trait - sensitive.

The (M-W)  $U$  test for the last of the 14 traits empathic presented  $U=336.5$ ,  $p=.87$ ,  $r= -.12$ , which was not statistically significant difference and, according to Cohen (1988), and the  $r$  effect size is small or smaller than typical (p. 102). There was no statistical significance, in the mean of military Millennials 27% and non-military Millennials 27% for the trait - empathic.

Table 2

*Comparison of mean ranks of military vs non-military*



*Note: Self-assured was statistically significant for military Millennials.*

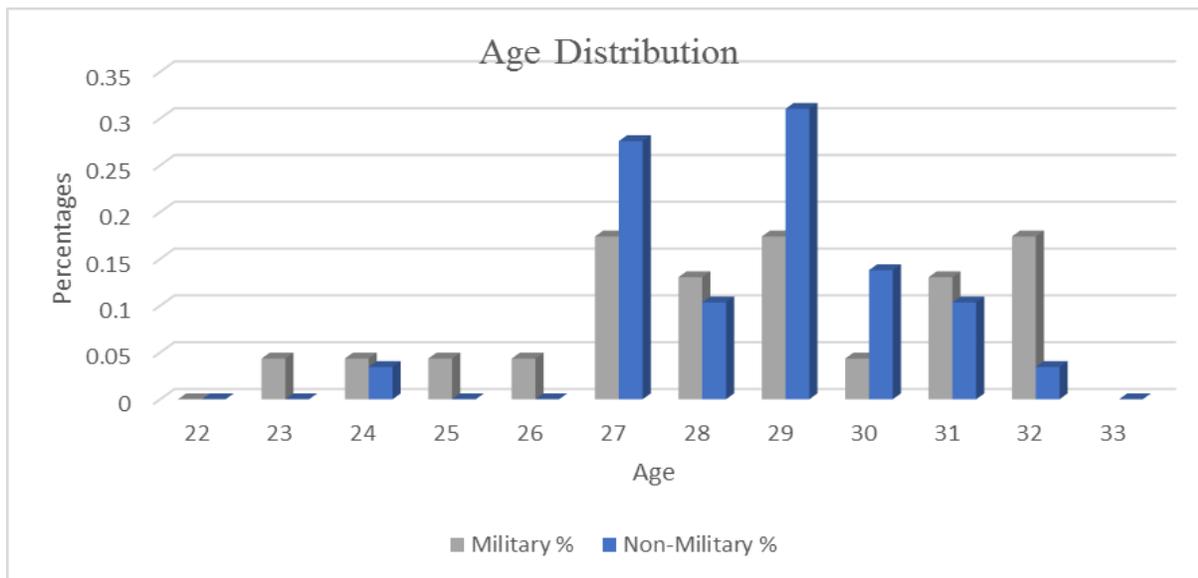
Table 3 "

*Mann-Whitney U Test Comparison of Military and Non-Military Millennials*

Trait	Military vs. Non-military	Mean Ranks	Sample size	(M-W) U	Z	Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	$r = Z / \sqrt{N}$																																																																																																																																										
<b>Articulate</b>	Military	29.54	23	286.50	-1.176	0.240	$U=286.5, p=.240, r= -.161$																																																																																																																																										
	Non-military	25.05	30					<b>Perceptive</b>	Military	29.46	23	288.50	-1.091	0.275	$U=288.5, p=.275, r= -.149$	Non-military	25.12	30	<b>Self-confident</b>	Military	30.76	23	258.50	-1.671	0.095	$U=258.5, p=.095, r= -.229$	Non-military	24.12	30	<b>Self-assured</b>	Military	31.43	23	243.00	-1.965	0.050	$U=243.0, p=.050, r= -.269$	Non-military	23.60	30	<b>Persistent</b>	Military	28.37	23	313.50	-0.622	0.534	$U=313.5, p=.534, r= -.085$	Non-military	25.95	30	<b>Determined</b>	Military	28.98	23	299.50	-0.949	0.343	$U=299.5, p=.343, r= -.130$	Non-military	25.48	30	<b>Trustworthy</b>	Military	28.04	23	321.00	-0.662	0.508	$U=321.0, p=.508, r= -.091$	Non-military	26.20	30	<b>Dependable</b>	Military	28.11	23	319.50	-0.702	0.482	$U=319.5, p=.482, r= -.096$	Non-military	26.15	30	<b>Friendly</b>	Military	27.33	23	337.50	-0.159	0.874	$U=337.5, p=.874, r= -.022$	Non-military	26.75	30	<b>Outgoing</b>	Military	27.65	23	330.00	-0.287	0.774	$U=330.0, p=.774, r= -.039$	Non-military	26.50	30	<b>Conscientious</b>	Military	25.85	23	318.50	-0.525	0.600	$U=318.5, p=.600, r= -.072$	Non-military	27.88	30	<b>Diligent</b>	Military	29.91	23	278.00	-1.379	0.168	$U=278.0, p=.168, r= -.189$	Non-military	24.77	30	<b>Sensitive</b>	Military	28.04	23	321.00	0.459	0.646	$U=321.0, p=.646, r= -.089$	Non-military	26.20	30	<b>Empathic</b>	Military	27.37	23	336.50	-0.162
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	Non-military	23.60	30					<b>Persistent</b>	Military	28.37	23	313.50	-0.622	0.534	$U=313.5, p=.534, r= -.085$	Non-military	25.95	30	<b>Determined</b>	Military	28.98	23	299.50	-0.949	0.343	$U=299.5, p=.343, r= -.130$	Non-military	25.48	30	<b>Trustworthy</b>	Military	28.04	23	321.00	-0.662	0.508	$U=321.0, p=.508, r= -.091$	Non-military	26.20	30	<b>Dependable</b>	Military	28.11	23	319.50	-0.702	0.482	$U=319.5, p=.482, r= -.096$	Non-military	26.15	30	<b>Friendly</b>	Military	27.33	23	337.50	-0.159	0.874	$U=337.5, p=.874, r= -.022$	Non-military	26.75	30	<b>Outgoing</b>	Military	27.65	23	330.00	-0.287	0.774	$U=330.0, p=.774, r= -.039$	Non-military	26.50	30	<b>Conscientious</b>	Military	25.85	23	318.50	-0.525	0.600	$U=318.5, p=.600, r= -.072$	Non-military	27.88	30	<b>Diligent</b>	Military	29.91	23	278.00	-1.379	0.168	$U=278.0, p=.168, r= -.189$	Non-military	24.77	30	<b>Sensitive</b>	Military	28.04	23	321.00	0.459	0.646	$U=321.0, p=.646, r= -.089$	Non-military	26.20	30	<b>Empathic</b>	Military	27.37	23	336.50	-0.162	0.871	$U=336.5, p=.871, r= -.120$	Non-military	26.72	30																												
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**Research Question 3.** What is the difference between demographics and characteristics of military and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits? Based on the Morgan, et al., (2013), chi-square requires a large sample size. Therefore, given the small sample size of ( $n=53$ ), 23 military Millennials and 30 non-military Millennials, the Fisher's exact test is appropriate for small samples and this study (p.136).

The study yielded findings on demographics (e.g., age, ethnic background, gender and marital status). A Fisher's exact test was run on (2 x 2) crosstab was run on age and 23 military Millennials verses 30 non-military Millennials and the data reported the ages ranging from 23 to 32 years of age. The military Millennials reported one each as being 23, 24, 25, 26 and 30. There were 4 reported as being 27, 3 as being 28, 4 as being 29, 3 as being 31, and 4 were the elders of the group at 32 years of age. Among the non-military Millennials, one respondent did not report age but did indicate being born during the year of 1982 to 2000. One respondent was the youngest of this group at the age of 24. Eight respondents reported they were 27 years old, 3 respondents indicated being 28 years old, 9 respondents stated they were 29 years of age, 4 respondents reported being 30 years of age, 3 respondents stated they were 31 years of age, and one respondent reported being 32 years old as seen in Figure 8 below Age 32 was the oldest age in the group and beginning of the birth snap of 1982 for the millennial generation as defined by Howe and Strauss (2000). The average age is 28.6 years for the military Millennials and the non-Military Millennials. The analysis did not generate any output for the Fisher's exact test. There is no statistically significant difference between the age of military Millennials and non-military Millennials.



*Figure 8.* Age distribution for non-Millennials and military Millennials.

A Fisher's exact test was run on (2 x 2) crosstab on military Millennials and non-military Millennials and gender, and there were no expected count less than 5 with a minimum expected count of 9.5. Fisher's exact Test reported 6% (2-tailed test) and .3 (1-tailed test) making gender not statistically significant to military Millennials and non-military Millennials at neither the (2-tailed test) nor (1-tailed test) level. Figure 9 illustrates the demographics by gender of Millennials consisted of 57% males and 35% females and 9% unknown. The population of 30 non-military Millennials comprised 50% males and 50% females.

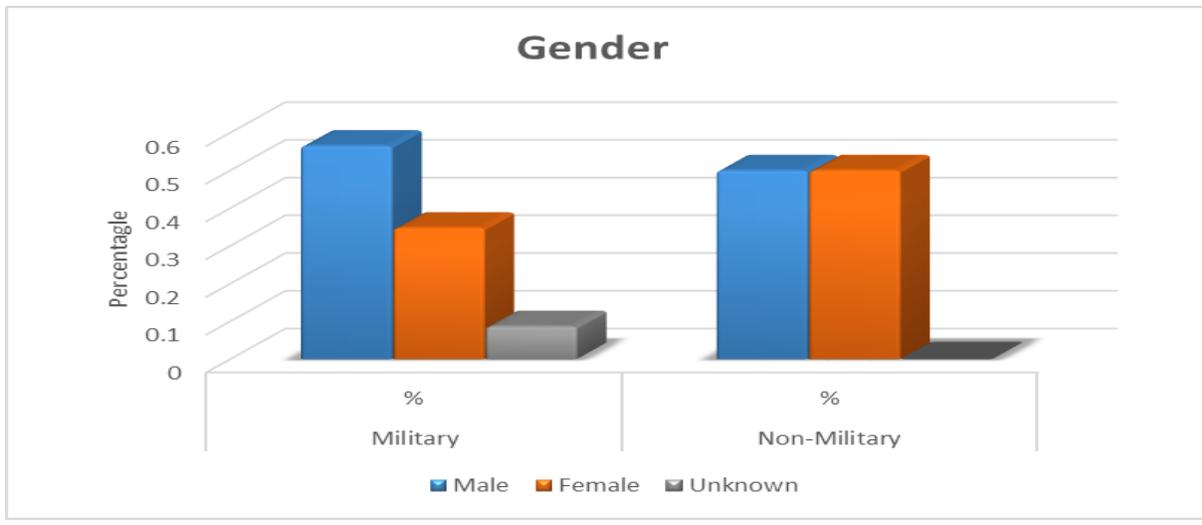


Figure 9. Demographics by gender

Figure 10 reflects the ethnic background, where a (2 x 2) Fisher's exact test was run. The analysis did not generate any output for the Fisher's exact test and 4 cells 50% had expected counts less than 5 and the minimum expected count is .94, rendering ethnic background not statistically significant.

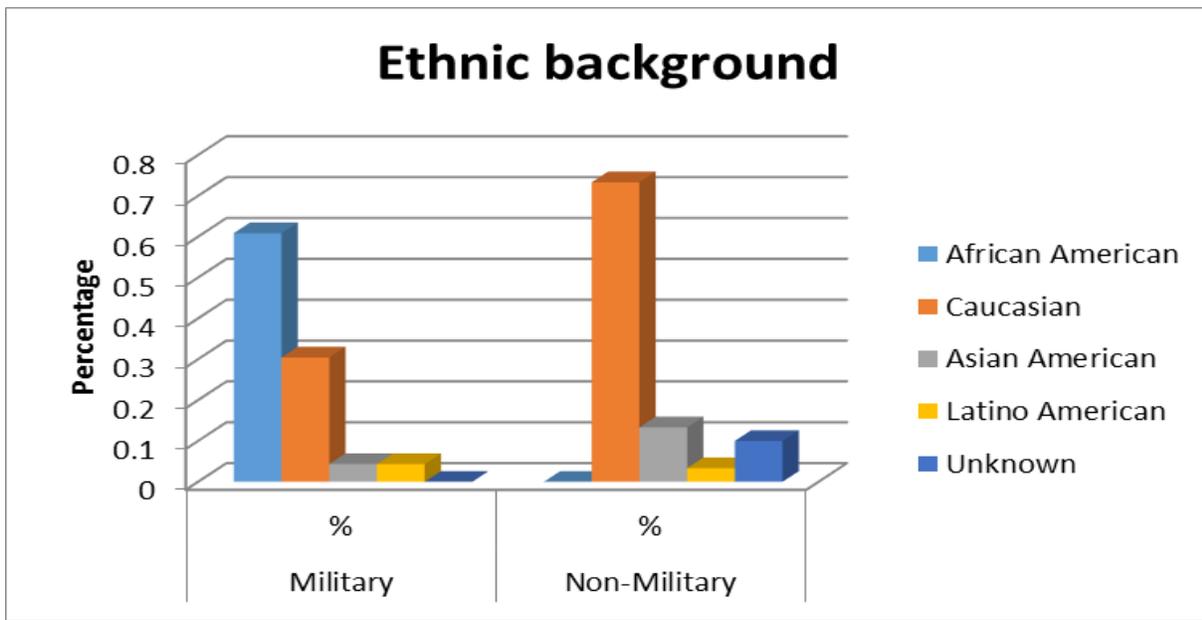
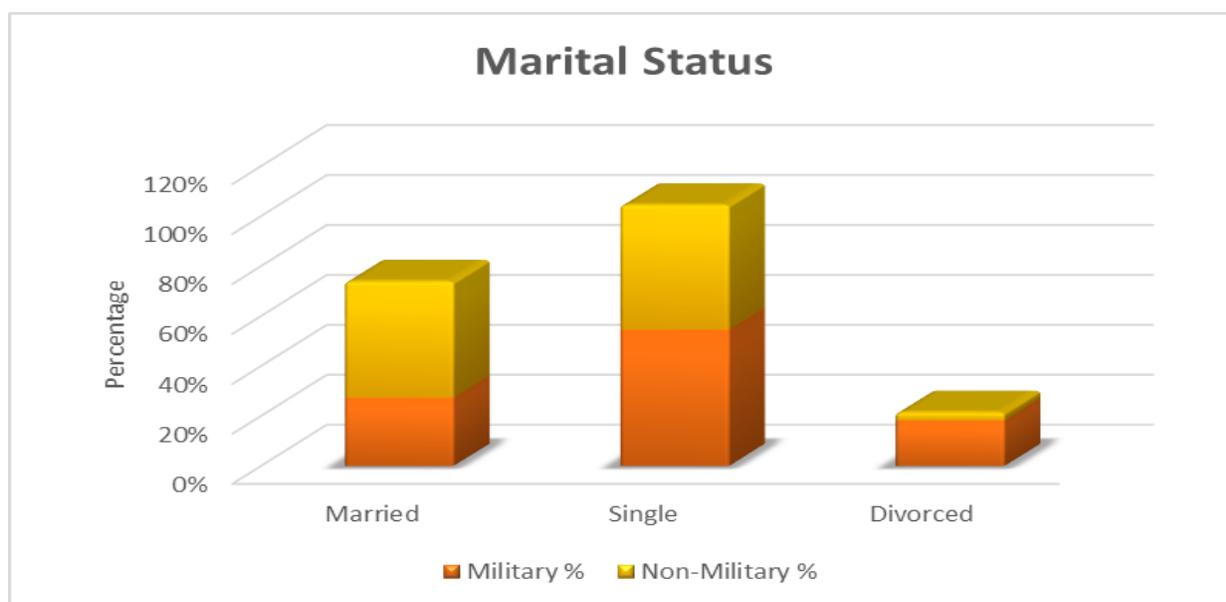


Figure 10. Ethnic Background

Figure 11 reflects the marital status, where a (2 x 2) Fisher's exact test was run. The analysis did not generate any output for the Fisher's exact test and 2 cells 33% had expected counts less than 5 and the minimum expected count is 2.12 rendering marital status not statistically significant.



*Figure 11. Marital Status*

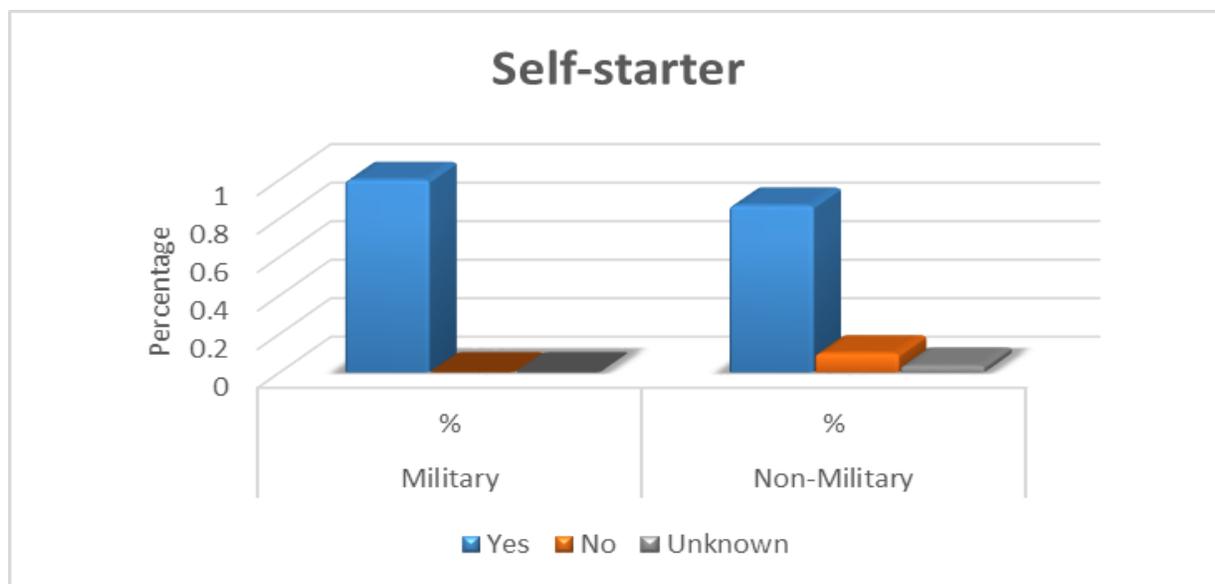
*Characteristics (e.g. teamwork, self-starter, and foreign travel)*

The researcher ran a (2 x 2) crosstab on military Millennials and non-military Millennials to evaluate preference to work on a team. The count consisted of 17 military Millennials and 22 non-military Millennials that preferred to work in teams. There were 14 participants, 6 military Millennials and 8 non-military Millennials that did not prefer to work in teams. Fisher's exact test reports  $p= 1.00$  on the (2-sided) and  $p=.61$  on the (1-sided) tailed graph revealing no statistical significance. Figure 12 reflects no statistically significant relationship between military and non-military Millennials and their preference to work on a team.



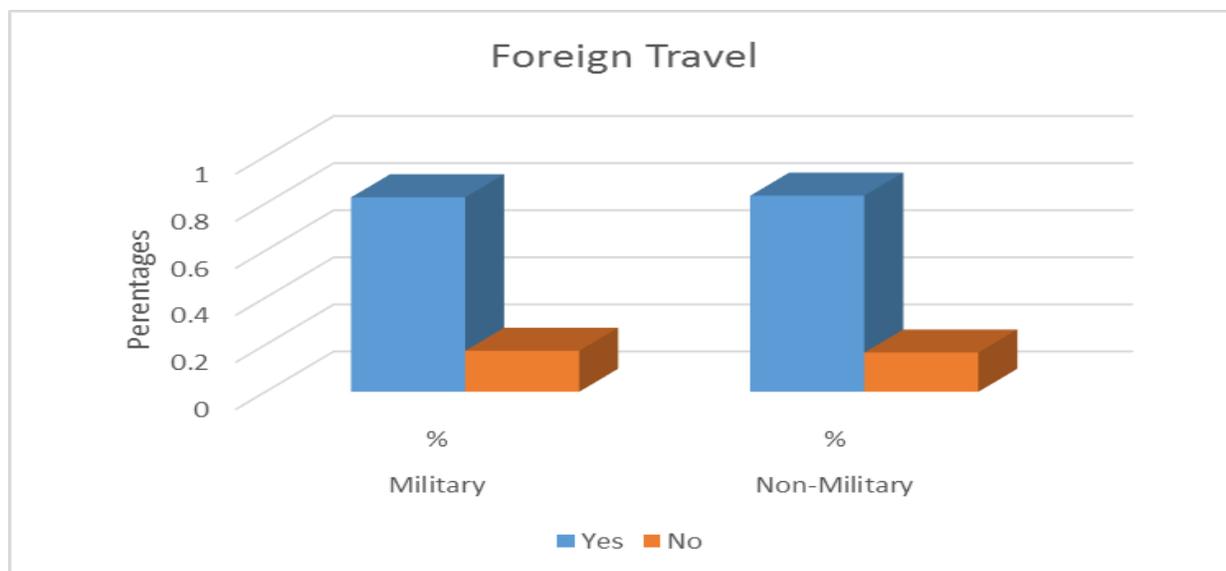
Figure 12. Prefer to work on a team characteristic

The researcher continued to seek a better understanding of the differences between military Millennials and non-military Millennials by running a (2 x 2) crosstab on military Millennials and non-military Millennials to see if they were self-starters. The count revealed 23 military and 26 non-military that indicated they were self-starters. Only 3 non-military indicated “no” they were not self-starters as illustrated by Figure 13. Fisher’s exact test reports  $p=.25$  on the (2-sided) and  $p=.17$  on the (1-sided) tailed graph. There is no statistical significant relationship between military Millennials and non-military Millennials as self-starters.



*Figure 13.* Self-starter characteristic

When the survey participants were asked if they traveled outside of the United States as shown below in Figure 14, the Fisher's exact test reported for foreign travel  $p=1.00$  on a (2-sided tailed test) and  $p=.61$  for a (1-sided tailed test) making no statistical significant relationship between military Millennials and non-military Millennials. Additionally, there was one cell 25% with an expected count less than 5 and a minimum expected count of 3.91. The non-military 83% and military Millennials 83% both reported extensive travel to locations in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Mexico, and Canada. Only 17% military Millennials and 17% reported there was no foreign travel. These responses, however, could be traced back to the early encouragement of middle and junior high school study abroad programs.



*Figure 14.* Foreign travel characteristic

In pursuit of researching the difference between military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their narcissism (Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2012), the researcher ran a Frequency (2 x 2) to see whether these two groups compared with their purchasing habits and the results are presented below in Figure15. The data consisted of the answers of 23 military Millennials and 30 non-military Millennials. Both groups had combined daily purchases for themselves at 19%. Of the total participants, 70% made purchases every now and then and only 12% indicated they seldom made purchases for themselves. This question may not fully capture the measure of narcissism because, in addition to being selfish and self-centered, the narcissist may feel entitled. Participants may not purchase items for themselves if they encourage and convince others to buy items for them. The individuals could not only purchase items for themselves but also seek ways to acquire items through others without paying a personal cost. The researcher acknowledged future studies incorporating data gathered on the sample population groups using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979) and revised scoring schemes for the NPI (Witt, Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, & Kashy, 2011)

could advance the understanding on narcissism and military Millennials and non-military Millennials.



*Figure 15.* How often do you purchase things for yourself?

Figure 16 below reveals 70% of the non-military Millennials did not like being told what to do; whereas, 35% of the military Millennials preferred being told what to do. However, 39% of the military Millennials also did not like being told what to do. Among the military Millennials, 26% participants did not answer this question. Additionally, there were 10% on the non-military Millennials who did not answer this question. Military Millennials are acclimated to an organizational culture accustomed to taking orders. There is a sign of fall out among the military Millennials with 39% indicating they do not like being told what to do. Whereas, non-military Millennials are more accustomed to pursuing an individual direction free from a strict and orderly structure similar to the military. The military Millennials are told what to do through their daily orders. Contrarily, non-military Millennials are not in a structured setting with an authority figure controlling the decision making.

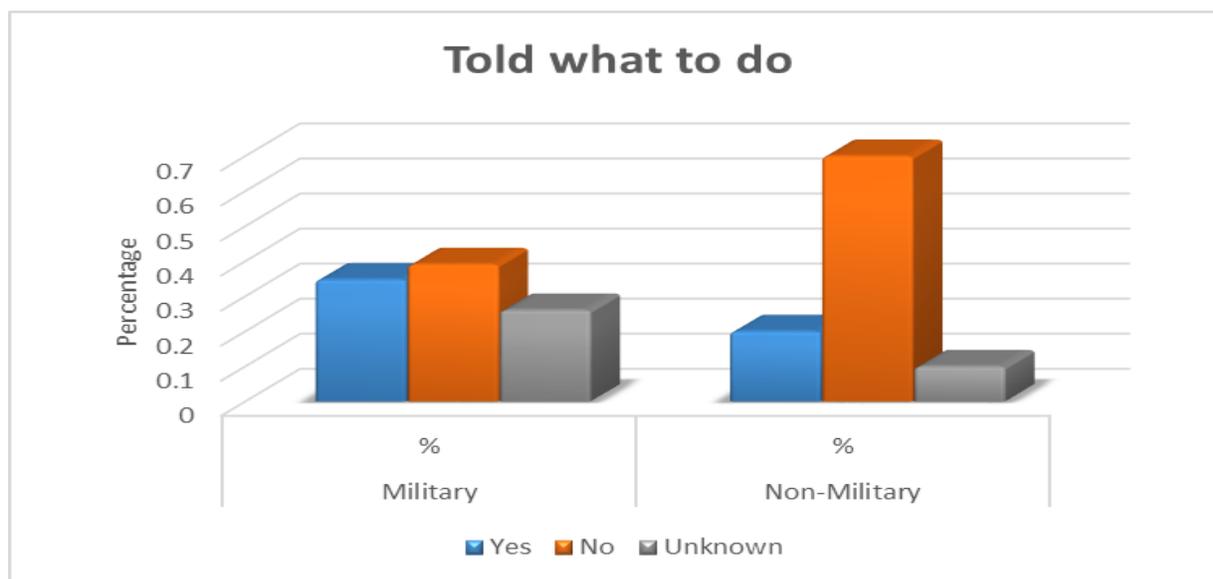


Figure 16. Do you like being told what to do?

### Summary

This chapter identified the findings for each of the three research questions. The survey population included a total of 53 participants comprised of two groups including 23 military Millennials, seeking directions from educational and veteran-friendly organizations located on the campus of community college in a metropolitan area of the southeastern United States, and 30 non-military Millennials, attending the College of Business at a research doctoral university in the southeastern United States. Fifty-three surveys were completed and used in the analysis. The average age is 28.6 years of age. The 53 participants consisted of 27% African-Americans, 53% Caucasians, 9% Asian-American, and 4% Latino. The overall groups consisted of 53% males and 47% females.

The results of the data for both Research Questions 1 and 2 revealed (M-W) *U* test reporting statistical significance at the  $p=.05$  level for self-assurance. The data for Research Question 3 revealed no statistical significance among the demographics (e.g., age, gender, ethnic

background, and marital status) and characteristics (e.g., teamwork, self-starter, foreign travel, personal purchasing, and ordered directions) and the military Millennials and the non-military Millennials.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Discussion**

Chapter 4 presented the data analyses and results of the study. Chapter 5 was organized to delineate a summary of the study, discussion of the findings and conclusions, relationship of findings to prior research, implications for leadership, recommendations for future research, and implications for policy. The final section described the limitations of the study and conclusion.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study of military Millennials and non-military Millennials was to examine their leadership traits based on the self-perception of 14 traits rooted in the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) (Northouse, 2010). Additionally, the study included demographic and characteristic items for participants to indicate. The comparative approach separated the two groups to determine if there were mean differences in leadership traits. Among the fourteen separate leadership traits, the research findings revealed the military Millennials outscored their non-military Millennials cohorts in the leadership trait of self-assurance. The analysis revealed no statistical significance among demographic and characteristic data.

The research aimed to gather data to better understand the leadership traits of the military Millennials that had returned home from deployment and reentered civilian life. For the non-military Millennials, this research sought to compare the mean scores of their leadership traits as both groups compete for the scarce employment opportunities. This research effort was not to suggest any competition between military Millennials and non-military Millennials. Rather, it was to juxtapose the two groups to evaluate traits that reflect the unique exposure and skill set military Millennials reportedly acquired during their military occupation. These research

findings could be beneficial to private, public and non-profit organizations seeking highly qualified women and men, who represent the next generation of leaders.

This study employed a descriptive and cross-sectional research design Creswell (2014), and data was collected via an online survey at a given point in time. The online survey comprised of 14 LTQ items and 9 accompanying demographic and characteristic questions was utilized in this study to assess data on the leadership traits of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The researcher distributed the survey online to 150 potential participants via an email listserv invitation of two institutions, a community college and a College of Business of a research doctoral institution, both in the southeastern United States. The first listserv was sent to military Millennials, which consisted of military veterans that had transitioned or were transitioning to civilian life. The second listserv was distributed to non-military Millennials, which consisted of master's-level students in the business major. A total of 53 surveys were completed online, yielding a response rate of 35.3 %. Among the participating respondents, 43% were military Millennials and 57% were non-Military Millennials with 28.6 years as the average age. There were 52.8% males and 47.2% females among respondents.

Data was downloaded from the online survey tool into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Statistical analyses of frequencies, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* Test, Cronbach's alpha, and Fisher's exact test were run to understand the relationship of the demographic and characteristic items and the two groups and between the traits and the two groups. The previous chapter outlined the data analysis and data results from the study. However, to facilitate further discussion of findings and implications of the study, the researcher also incorporated the data analysis and results into this chapter.

The three following questions were the basis for the discussion on military Millennials and non-military Millennials:

1. What leadership traits do non-military Millennials and military Millennials possess?
2. What is the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire?
3. What is the difference between demographics and characteristics of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits?

Following the delineation of the findings and conclusions based on the research questions, the relationship of findings to prior research, implications for leadership, recommendations for future research, and implications for policy were discussed. The final section presented the limitations and conclusion of the study.

### **Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions**

To examine the self-perception of leadership traits among the military Millennials and non-military Millennials, the 14 traits of the Leadership Trait Questionnaire were the main emphasis of the research. These traits consisted of articulate, perceptive, self-confident, self-assured, persistent, determined, trustworthy, dependable, friendly, outgoing, conscientious, diligent, sensitive, and empathic. The demographic and characteristic questions enhanced the research findings. The descriptive and cross-sectional research designs (Creswell, 2014) were used to seek answers to “what is” the difference between the two groups. The following sections detail the findings from the three research questions. Question 1 examined the 14 leadership

traits and the means ranked from both the military Millennials and non-military Millennials. Question 2 examined the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the Leadership Traits Questionnaire. Question 3 addressed the difference between demographics and characteristics of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits.

**Research Question 1.** Among the 14 traits of the LTQ, the findings revealed the traits of trustworthy and dependable had the highest rank on the Leadership Trait Questionnaire using a Likert scale ranging in responses from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. This finding was consistent for both military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The rank for military Millennials and non-military Millennials on the trait of trustworthy was 4.87% and 4.80%, respectively. The rank for military Millennials and non-military Millennials on the trait of dependable was 4.87% and 4.73%, respectively.

**Research Question 2.** Examining the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the LTQ was a major inquiry of the study. The comparative analysis revealed there was a statistically significant difference only for the trait of self-assurance between military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The mean rank for military Millennials and non-military Millennials was (4.39%) and (3.93%), respectively. Mann-Whitney *U* test reported statistical significance at the  $p=.05$  level for the trait of self-assured for the military Millennials. Although the mean ranked

chart indicated the highest levels on the LTQ were for trustworthy and dependability, only the trait of self-assured was statically significant in comparing the two groups.

**Research Question 3.** The research approach for Question 3 was to analyze the difference between demographics and characteristics of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and their self-assessment of leadership traits. The researcher sought answers to “what is” by examining the demographics of age, gender, ethnic background, and marital status and the characteristics of teamwork, self-starter, foreign travel, personal purchasing, and ordered directions of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The objective was to determine if there were any outliers that provided significance to the leadership traits of either group. Participants provided answers to 24 demographic and characteristic questions, of which 9 were utilized for this study, along with the 14 items of the LTQ.

The research revealed the average age is 28.6 years of age of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The findings indicated the gender of non-military Millennials as equal with 50% males and 50% females. The non-military Millennials consisted of 57% males and 35% females and 9% unknown. There population of 30 non-military Millennials comprised 50% males and 50% females. African Americans represented the largest percentage of military Millennials at 61%, followed by Caucasians at 30%, and small percentages of 4% for Asian Americans, and 4% for Latino Americans. Non-military Millennials consisted of 73% Caucasians, 13% Asian Americans, 3% Latino Americans, no African Americans, and 10% unknown. Non-military Millennials reported to have experienced more foreign travel than their generational cohorts of military millennials. The majority of the non-military Millennials was single as compared to their counterparts of the military Millennials. The non-military

Millennials ranked higher on the characteristics of self-starter and preferred team work in comparison to the military Millennials. The military Millennials rated higher in directed orders, which asked: “Do you like being told what to do?” In assessing narcissism among the two populations, less than 10% of each group, military Millennials and non-military Millennials, reported making daily purchases for themselves. The researcher acknowledged future studies warrant including the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979) for measurement of narcissism.

Based on the results from the findings of demographics and characteristics, the researcher concluded the sample size was too small. There was no determination of significance of demographics and characteristics of the military Millennials and non-military Millennials.

### **Relationship of Findings to Prior Research**

The relationship of findings from this study advanced the development of scholarship on leadership traits, military Millennials, and non-military Millennials. Significant previous studies on the traits approach and three literary strands related to military Millennials and non-military Millennials have created the foundation for this research discussion. A plethora of prior research on leadership traits finds parallel focus in this study as research on the significance of traits in leadership. Among the numerous seminal works from the body of previous literature, this study stemmed from the contemporary research following the revitalization of the traits approach through Lord, deVader, and Alliger’s (1986) reassessment of Stogdill (1948 and 1974) and Mann (1959). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) and the emphasis on traits as the “right stuff” (p. 58) for leadership; Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader (2004) and their recognition of the complexity of leadership traits; Zaccaro’s (2007) expansion of the list of inclusive traits; Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka (2009) in their modeling on trait emergence and effectiveness and assessment of dark

traits; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, and Humphrey's (2011) modeling of incorporating leader, traits, behaviors, and effectiveness; Northouse's (2013) Leadership Trait Questionnaire of 14 traits that fit the categorization of five major leadership traits; and Nichols and Cottrell's (2014) research on leadership trait desirability and the right fit in low-level and high-level organizations all contributed to the development of this study on leadership traits. However, another previous research work, by Andrea Gage (2005), corresponds with this study's focus on traits and generations.

Andrea Gage (2005) has offered a lead into the avenue of research on traits and the millennial generation. Gage's phenomenological study compared the traits of the G.I. generation (born between the years of 1901 and 1924) and the millennial generation on leadership perceptions, in which Millennials emphasized the significance of respect and interaction in leadership. Gage acknowledged the dearth of studies on actual leadership traits and Millennials and recommended a focus on studies applying trait theories to this generational cohort to identify generational attributes. This study compared the leadership traits of military Millennials and non-military Millennials and addressed that emphasis on traits and generations. However, the findings suggested the need for further research on this area of leadership and generation. The findings of significance in self-assured for the military Millennials and the high rankings of trustworthy and dependable for military Millennials and non-military Millennials would benefit from a larger number of participants in the study. However, the study suggested traits matter in leadership and warranted future studies given the void in empirical research on traits and Millennials, the next generation of leaders.

The first literary strand of previous research related to this study is the "We vs. Me" dichotomy of the presentation of Millennials. The generation is characterized as "Generation

We,” meaning engaged, caring, civic-minded (Howe and Strauss, 2000; and Greenberg & Weber, 2008) or “Generation Me,” indicating low civic engagement and entitled (Twenge, 2006), narcissistic (Twenge, and W. K. Campbell, 2009; and Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2012), and disengaged (Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011). The tech-savvy characterization is applied to the “We” and “Me” perspective of Millennials in the acknowledgement of the “Net generation” (Tapscott, 1998) and the technological advancement of Millennials as digital natives (Prensky, 2005). The bevy of prior research has captured descriptions and analysis of Millennials in the dichotomy, but a void remained in designing leadership traits to assess the self-perception of this generation. This study connected the research on Millennials to the leadership traits approach to assess the next generation of leadership. Additionally, the high ratings of trustworthy and dependable, both which come under the category of Integrity of the five major traits, suggest that Millennials do not always fit the category of dark traits (Judge et al., 2009) as presented in a segment of the previous literature.

A second literary strand of prior research related to this study is the Millennials as part of intragenerational occupational groups and age divisions. A growing literature has examined lateral intragenerational activity among Millennials and different occupational groups of this generational cohort. The diversity of occupational sectors has included aviation industry (Niemczyk & Ulrich, 2009); nursing (Carver, Candela, & Gutierrez, 2011; and Price, Hall, Angus, & Peter, 2013); active military duty (Peck, 2013); engineering (Johri, Teo, Lo, Dufour, & Schram, 2014); and ministry and missions (Erlacher, 2014). Another intragenerational difference focused on vertical divisions of age sub-cohorts within the millennials (Debevec, Schewe, Madden and Diamond, 2013). This study advanced the knowledge of intragenerational sub-cohorts in comparing a group of military Millennials that enlisted in the volunteer service and

has transitioned or is transitioning to civilian life and a group of non-military Millennials with no military experience. The findings of this study revealed the difference between military Millennials and their leadership traits and non-military Millennials and their leadership traits as measured by the self-assessment scale of the LTQ was a major inquiry of the study. The comparative analysis revealed a statistically significant difference only for the trait of self-assurance between military Millennials and non-military Millennials. The mean rank for military Millennials and non-military Millennials was (4.39%) and (3.93%), respectively. Future studies could combine the occupational groups with leadership traits assessment that include traits of Millennials to examine the relationship between leadership traits and situations.

This study of military Millennials has benefited from a third literary strand, which is the transitioning of veterans into civilian life. The prior work of this evolving literary stream has established a basis for this study. Civilian transition has emerged in studies of deployed military as Borus (1975) presented in a review of transition after the Vietnam War. Litz and Orsillo (2004) reported variation in the social, psychological and psychiatric experiences in post-Iraq transition to and survival in civilian life based on the individual and situation. Public, private and non-profit programs to assist veterans in returning to jobs and acquiring new positions varied. An important consideration was the lack of fit in a non-military organizational culture (King, 2010). A positive finding in the transition has been the companies seeking to employ military veterans mainly because of their team building and leadership experiences. Harold and Berglass's (2012) study of 69 companies revealed 50% of company representatives indicated the traits of trustworthy, integrity, maturity, and dependable made veterans attractive as new hires. The traits of trustworthy and dependable ranked high among the leadership traits of military

Millennials and non-military Millennials. Both traits are categorized under integrity, one of the five main leadership traits (Northouse, 2013).

This empirical study of military Millennials focused on the traits that could profile the leadership potential of military veterans and challenge the problems of cultural fit in the post-deployment organization. Recruiting future leaders could be affected by employers' anxiety about incorporating veterans into the workplace, concerns about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2015), lack of knowledge of factors influencing positive deployment transition (Fink et al., 2014), and a generalized image of Millennials, especially the "Me" component.

Prior research on leadership traits and the three literary strands forged a diverse body of literature to provide a framework to use empirical data to assess the leadership traits of Millennials and not rely on generalizations. Additionally, this study provided an evaluation of the leadership traits of the military Millennials, who represent the bulk of volunteer enlisted service men and women that have transitioned to civilian life with leadership potential.

### **Implications for Leadership**

Northouse (2013), in his outline of the traits approach, emphasized its role in incorporating new leaders into the organization. This reinvigoration of leadership could strengthen it. A key element is a personality assessment to match the leadership profile of characteristics or traits desired by the organization with individuals possessing these traits. This approach focuses on the leader, and it is particularly useful if the organization must have a particular set of traits. Additionally, operations of the organizations are improved if managers have designated profiles. Personality assessments assist organizations in selecting the right people.

Organizations will increasingly select their employers and future leaders from the millennial generation. Fry (2015), in a Pew Research Center study, reported this new generation of leaders is speculated to surpass the Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964) in population during 2015. Leadership from the millennial cohort is critical to the advancement of national and global economic growth and stability as the United States meets the challenges of two long combat wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and an increasingly global, interdependent society. Many organizations have headquarters or facilities in off-shore locations. Organizational leaders at all levels can have international interactions, especially as organizational success relies on the leadership of global virtual teams and virtual transactions occurring across geographical boundaries, time zones, foreign languages, and other cultures (Kayworth, 2002).

Although their label of the Millennials emphasized the “Me Generation” aspects, Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) contended the future retirement of older workers and their replacement with younger workers makes it imperative for organizations to clearly understand the values of the new generation. As this study maintained, organizations need to know the traits and characteristics of the potential leaders, who will emerge from this new generation. Future research on the characteristics and personality of the millennial generation and its leadership traits serves as a catalyst for employers seeking people to fill leadership positions. This study examined the traits and characteristics.

To assess potential leaders and recruit these individuals into organizations, these organizations will require a revised version of traits assessment that will allow for actual evaluation of the Millennials. Definitions of traits must incorporate the Millennials and large occupational and intragenerational groups such as the military, especially with the growing population of Millennials in the military (U. S. Department of Defense, 2012).

Existing leaders will need to transform the culture of organizations, which consist of diverse generational cohorts of exiting Baby Boomers, continuing Generation Xers (born 1965 to 1980 or 1981) , and the increasing Millennials. Burns (1978) maintained the organization must be in agreement on the strategy for change to successfully transform the organization. For successful transition of the organization during the generational shift, it is imperative for organizations to understand the changing population. Empirical studies of traits incorporating the characteristics that are reflective of the population of the generation would help to address the needs of the organizations.

Organizational leaders also must learn how to manage and change the existing work environment to adopt and attract the highly technical and strategic planner skill set found among the military Millennials by investing in new training and on-the-job training programs. D'Souza, N. et al, (2010)'s research expressed the need for employers to develop new learning tools and techniques and creative environments and domains, specifically for the Millennials. These changes demand individuals who can make synergistic connections between different techniques and tools. D'Souza, N. et al (2010)'s focused their aim at employers that are undertaking slow and deliberative change in the face of financial crisis.

The need for structural change within organizations, specifically in leadership and management, requires leadership and direction. To underscore this assertion, Gentry et al. (2011) interviewed managers from different generations (Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials). Their research concluded the generations, regarding their management styles, are more similar than they are different in leadership practices. However, there were gaps that could potentially help managers, organizations, consultants, and practitioners understand what managers of all generations need to focus on for development. Specifically, the research

revealed that leadership development initiatives should focus on how to lead employees better, how to manage change, and how to build and mend relationships at work.

Gentry et al.'s (2011) research provided another call for change with a narrative directed at managers and leaders to place greater emphasis on leadership initiatives, better communications, and better management of people and relationships within a multi-generational work environment, especially with the onset of the Millennials that require and demand greater clarity, feedback, and affirmation in their work effort.

Gentry et al. (2011) and D'Souza, et al. (2010) articulated the need for leaders to change their organizational infrastructure to attract, promote and retain members of the millennial generation. The results of this study has the potential of influencing structural and organizational changes that will attract, reward, promote, and retain talented Millennials. The implications this study has on leadership in relating to Millennials as future leaders is challenging in utilizing the postpositivist methodology (Creswell, 2014).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

A longitudinal study with a larger number of participants over time would contribute to an intra-generational examination of sub-cohorts of Millennials according to age groups. The birth span of the survey participants did not warrant using the demographic and characteristic question categories not included in the analysis of this study. The question categories comprised number of children, rank and position in the military, rate of pay, length of duty tour, defense contractor role (if any), educational level, educational major, and original residence.

In future research efforts, there should be a larger sample population and the inclusion of the exact traits various organizations seek in future leaders, either the military Millennials or the non-military Millennials. The study would be a longitudinal study on military Millennials

associating their leadership traits with leadership emergence and effectiveness. Future research should develop a leadership evaluation tool that does not require self-assessment.

Additionally, research should include the development of new traits such as teamwork and self-starter to associate closely with the millennial generation. There is a need to expand intra-generational studies to explore millennial traits and create revised leadership traits more appropriate for this generational cohort and competencies, including team building, problem-solving, and digital literacy. This type of study would contribute to the void in the literature on traits and leadership outcomes. It could offer an empirical analysis application of the theoretical modeling such as the Leader Trait Emergence Effectiveness (LTEE) (Judge, et al 2009) and Integrated Model of Leader, Traits, Behaviors, and Effectiveness (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey 2011).

### **Implications for Policy**

Findings from this study can draw attention to the self-assured trait of the military Millennials and garner support for the ongoing programs and initiatives for addressing PTSD. However, the number of participants in this study are too small to effect policy change with definitive findings. The focus on traits could strengthen educational programs for military veterans on onboarding and civilian transitioning.

### **Limitations**

The leadership trait approach is void of quantitative research on the military Millennials. This research effort generated a small sample size ( $n=53$ ) that restricted the researcher from running  $t$  tests and chi-square. The fast paced environment of potential survey participants registering, changing, and adding classes between second summer and fall 2014 semesters between two institutions prevented the researcher from garnering a larger population for

research. Additionally, survey participants from both institutions conducted self-reporting in the questionnaire, along with the different levels in the two institutions, a community college and a doctoral issuing institution with MBA students, could have influenced the findings. According to Crowne and Marlow (1964) self-reporting on questions dealing with personal or social sensitive content could lead to social desirability where a person's individual need for approval results in the response, thus, creating a social desirability bias. Crowne and Marlow (1964) conclude only certain individuals exhibit this personality variable.

The birth year range for Millennials prevents longitudinal analysis. According to Pew Research Center (2010), there are different scholars that have different age ranges for Millennials. Some of the ranges include Generation X years in the study of Millennials.

## **Conclusion**

The study findings and the relationship with previous research exposed the gap within the literature detailing the advantages of the military Millennial as compared to their non-military millennial cohorts. Of the 14 Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) questions, this study concluded statistical significance in self-assurance for the military Millennials based on the comparison of both the means of military Millennials as compared to non-military Millennials. However, the study identified key areas of information that will form the foundation for future study. The literature gap concerning military Millennials separate from the entire millennial generation as future leaders within public, private and non-profit organizations will prove to be valuable to recipients of highly skilled and motivated men and women.

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## Appendix A

### CONSENT FORM



#### Interview Consent Information Sheet

**Purpose of the research:**

This research endeavor will allow the researcher to capture the leadership traits of seventy-five current military millennials and seventy-five graduate students attending the College of business at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

**What you will do in this research:**

Each participant, a volunteer to participate in the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) and their input will be held confidential with no identifying markers for the participants.

**Time required:**

There are a total of fourteen (15) questions that will be administered on-line via SurveyMonkey.com. The entire questionnaire should not take no more than ten (15) to fifteen (15) minutes of the participants' time. The limited number of questions will drastically reduce the time drained from those who volunteer their time for my research.

**Risks:**

This research endeavor is risk averse as detailed above. No one will be identified when participating in the questionnaire. No identifying markers will identify their participation.

**Benefits:**

This research endeavor provides a vehicle for the military millennials to articulate their unique experience with America as only told by them.

**Confidentiality:**

The researcher will provide full disclosure up front that their confidentiality will remain confident, primarily because there are no identifying markers to the questionnaire and no follow-up for clarification to their answers.

The researcher will inform the participant their responses, along with others, will be retold as one response in my dissertation, and possibly for the documentation of a peer-reviewed articles, books, or presentations as they are deemed necessary to enhance my career as a professor or consultant.

**Participation and withdrawal:**

All participants will volunteer their time and input in the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ).

The instructions will encourage the participants to answer all of the questions and if, they have to end the questionnaire prior to completion, if questions are not answered, we will also take the questionnaire to its point of completion.

**Contact:**

If you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Phillip Michael Green at 704-497-6360, 6524 Moonlight Lane, Charlotte, NC 29269 or at [pmgreen@aggie.ncat.edu](mailto:pmgreen@aggie.ncat.edu) or [mgreen3@carolina.rr.com](mailto:mgreen3@carolina.rr.com).

You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work: Dr. Comfort Okpala, Professor and Interim, Chair Department of Leadership Studies, School of Education North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University (336) 285-4365 or [cookpala@ncat.edu](mailto:cookpala@ncat.edu)

**Whom to contact about your rights in this research:**

If you have questions or concerns about how you were treated during your participation in this research, contact the IRB through the Compliance Office at 336-334-7995 or [rescomp@ncat.edu](mailto:rescomp@ncat.edu).

**Appendix B****Permission to use Leadership Trait Theory from SAGE Publications.**

From: Binur, Michelle <Michelle.Binur@sagepub.com>; on behalf of; permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com>  
To: P. Michael Green <mgreen3@carolina.rr.com>  
Subject: Permission to use questionnaire  
Date: Mon 11/4/2013 1:23 PM

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your request. You can consider this email as permission to reprint the material as detailed below in your upcoming dissertation. Please note that this permission does not cover any 3<sup>rd</sup> party material that may be found within the work. If you would like to post the questionnaire online, we ask that you do so in a password protected environment.

We do ask that you properly credit the original source, SAGE Publications. The permissions service is used for granting or denying permission for reuse of material; we do not provide material. Please contact us for any further usage of the material.

Good luck with your dissertation,

Michelle Binur

## Appendix C

### Demographic and Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ)

#### Demographic information

1. Were you born between 1980 and 2000? Yes=1, No=2
2. What is your exact age? (List\_\_\_\_\_).
3. Were you ever a member of the United States Military? Yes=1, No=2

If not military or military contractor, please skip questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

4. Were you a (an) \_\_\_\_\_ in the Army?
 

Enlisted soldier	Yes=1,	No=2
Defense contractor	Yes=1,	No=2
Combat duty	Yes=1,	No=2
Support personnel	Yes=1,	No=2
Administrator	Yes=1,	No=2
Reserve	Yes=1,	No=2
National Guard	Yes=1,	No=2
Other	Yes=1,	No=2
5. How long was your tour of duty?
  - 2 years?
  - 3 years?
  - 4 years?
  - 5 years or more?
6. If you were a defense contractor, did you have prior military experience? Yes=1, No=2
7. Whom did you work for as a defense contractor?
 

Halliburton	Yes=1,	No=2
GE	Yes=1,	No=2
Lockheed Martin	Yes=1,	No=2
EA Systems	Yes=1,	No=2
Boeing	Yes=1,	No=2
Northrop Grumman	Yes=1,	No=2
Other (List) =0 _____.		
8. What was your rank?
9. What was your rate of pay?
10. Were you in combat or a support position? 1= combat, 2=support

11. What is your ethnic background? African-American=1, Caucasian=2, Asian- American, Latino =3
12. Gender – Other = 0, Male=1, Female =2
13. Major – Business=1, Computer science=2, engineering=3, Other=4
14. Are you a graduate student at the university? Yes =1, No=2
15. Original residence – City limits=1, suburbs=2, rural=3, shelter=4, homeless=5, Other=6
16. Marital status – Married=0, single=1, divorced=2
17. Children – none=0, one=1, two=2, three=3, more=4
18. Do you like to be told what to do? Yes=1, No=2
19. Are you a self-starter? Yes=1, No=2
20. What was your educational background when you enlisted into the Army?
 

= High school graduate?	Yes=1,	No=2
= Two-year college graduate?	Yes=1,	No=2
= Four-year college graduate?	Yes=1,	No=2
= Master's degree graduate?	Yes=1,	No=2
= Doctoral degree graduate?	Yes=1,	No=2
21. Have you ever traveled outside of the United States? Yes =1, No=2
22. If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_ (list only three locations).
23. If given the opportunity, do you prefer to work: Individually = 0, on a team=1
24. How often do you purchase things for yourself?  
Every payday =1, Every now and then =2, Seldom=3

### **Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ)**

*Instructions:* Participants will be asked to rate their own leadership abilities based on the questions in PART II and Part III.

Imagine that you are a leader who works for a multinational corporation. This company has operations located throughout the United States and Asia to include China and India. Please review the questionnaire below and rate your leadership abilities.

*\*\*The attached questionnaire will be administered via the permission of SAGE Publishers (Northouse, 2004).*

SAGE Publishers granted permission to use this questionnaire.

**Key: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree**

1. <b>Articulate:</b> Communicates effectively with others	1	2	3	4	5
2. <b>Perceptive:</b> Is discerning and insightful	1	2	3	4	5
3. <b>Self-confident:</b> Believes in their ability	1	2	3	4	5
4. <b>Self-assured:</b> Is secure with self, free of doubts	1	2	3	4	5
5. <b>Persistent:</b> Stays fixed on the goals, despite interference	1	2	3	4	5
6. <b>Determined:</b> Takes a firm stand, acts with certainty	1	2	3	4	5
7. <b>Trustworthy:</b> Is authentic and inspires confidence	1	2	3	4	5
8. <b>Dependable:</b> Is consistent and reliable	1	2	3	4	5
9. <b>Friendly:</b> Shows kindness and warmth	1	2	3	4	5
10. <b>Outgoing:</b> Talks freely, gets along well with others	1	2	3	4	5
11. <b>Conscientious:</b> Is thorough, organized, and controlled	1	2	3	4	5
12. <b>Diligent:</b> Is persistent, hard-working	1	2	3	4	5
13. <b>Sensitive:</b> Shows tolerance, is tactful, and sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5
14. <b>Empathic:</b> Understands others, identifies with others	1	2	3	4	5

