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Leadership Traits Among Site Leaders in the Construction Industry

A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree
Doctor of Business Administration

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Dr. Robert K. Jabs School of Business DBA

August 2024

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has been approved by the Dr. Robert K Jabs School of Business in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Researchers suggest that the construction industry is facing a shortage of skilled labor due to challenges associated with attracting and retaining quality people (Bae et al., 2022; Morello et al., 2018; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Welfare et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). Construction is a labor-heavy industry, and skilled labor is the critical resource that directly affects the performance of a construction project (Bae et al., 2022; Morello et al., 2018; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Welfare et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). A shortage of skilled labor may be causing surges in project costs and delays, a decline in project quality, and preventing the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure (Yuseff et al., 2021). Showalter and Backus (2010) assert that poor leadership and environment-related stress factors inhibit people from choosing construction or staying in the industry. Millennials and the Z generation may represent the largest group currently entering the job force and the industry's best means for resolving its labor shortage. The leadership in construction and leadership styles perceived as effective for recruiting and retaining Millennials and the Z generation is in opposition (Bosco & Harvey, 2013; Dwidienawati et al., 2021; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gaidhani et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020; Morello et al., 2018; Sherif, 2009; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Welfare et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). Previous literature attempted to define leadership at the management level and address shortcomings but has not sought to define leadership at the site level or address any shortcomings. This study proposes to fill a gap in research by discovering Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership traits among Project Superintendents and Foremen, and which traits they feel are most desirable for these leaders to possess.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Millennial and Z Generations represent the two prominent generational cohorts currently entering the workforce. Companies seeking a competitive advantage for recruiting, retaining, and leading these generations should consider and possibly adopt the leadership approach perceived as being effective for leading these cohorts (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021). A correlation drawn between some of the research regarding the Millennial and Generation Z cohort's workplace and leadership expectations, and those practiced by construction industry professionals implies that there may be a divergence (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). The literature reviewed suggests that Millennials and Generation Z prefer leaders who give personal attention to employees and have an aversion to leaders who leverage authority, and leadership in construction relies heavily on authority and focuses more on completing tasks than giving personal attention to employees (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). If this is true it may harm the industry's ability to recruit, retain, and lead members of these cohorts.

The literature reviewed by this study provided some insight into the leadership approach in construction and the leadership style perceived to be effective for recruiting or retaining Millennials and the Z generation (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). They did not directly study leadership traits in construction as perceived by these generations. This may be a gap within the respective fields of research that might also represent a potential for helping the industry to attract, retain, and lead the members of these cohorts. An improved understanding of

incoming generations may enhance the industry's ability to support its current employees and recruit additional employees (Simmons et al., 2018). This study proposes to fill a portion of that gap by conducting semi-structured interviews with the Millennial and Z generations to determine the perceived leadership traits of construction leaders, and then compare the results directly with what the previous literature suggests is effective in leading these generations.

Background of the Problem

The modern business and social environment present new challenges for organizations and their leaders; leaders should adopt contemporary leadership traits to increase their chances of success (Schneider, 2002; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Theorists Pink (2009), and Sinek (2010) correlate a leader's ability to produce outcomes to their ability to motivate people. They argue that the most effective means to motivate people is by providing people with the opportunity to choose, an intellectual challenge, and a sense of purpose (Pink, 2009; Sinek, 2010). Cote (2017) suggests that an effective modern leader motivates by utilizing a behavioral approach to understand the needs of followers and utilizes that information to provide direction and support and communicate objectives, job responsibilities, expectations, progress, and performance. There does not appear to be an agreement among researchers on the most influential Leadership approach (Caldwell & Dixon, 2009; Caldwell et al., 2002; Cote, 2017; Sunindijo et al., 2007). However, they appear to agree that leadership is a reciprocal process where the leader empowers others to become their best through consistent and clear communication, development opportunities, and expressing concern for their well-being (Caldwell & Dixon, 2009; Caldwell et al., 2002; Cote, 2017).

A construction project is composed of several organizations, individuals, and teams from different parent organizations and/or departments brought together, and after the project, project

teams are disintegrated and members return to their parent organization and/or departments (Ali et al., 2020). Despite the importance of leadership and unique conditions in the industry, it appears that comprehensive and industry-specific research on leadership in the construction industry is limited (Toor and Ofori 2008). With increasing demands for new infrastructure and a decreased availability of skilled construction workers, the need to recruit and retain workers is becoming critical (Welfare et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Labor occupational employment projections, an estimated 646,100 additional workers will be hired by 2032 to fulfill the economic needs for construction work (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). A combination of aging workers expected to leave the workforce and a decrease in young people pursuing construction will likely prevent the companies within the industry from filling those needed jobs to keep up with demand (Morello et al., 2018). Despite significant changes in business and management practices, the construction industry remains largely traditional (Toor & Ofori, 2008). To prevent the breakdown of stability and achieve meaningful goals, leaders seek to control tasks and activities by focusing on vertical forms of leadership (Graham et al., 2020). This approach may be short-sighted with leaders primarily focusing on day-to-day work, activities management, and achieving short-term goals (Graham et al., 2020). The evolution of project social dynamics involving multiple teams adapting to diverse demands and on-site conditions requires a new approach (Graham et al., 2020).

Statement of the Research Problem

The problem addressed by this study is a potential divergence between the leadership approaches suggested to be effective for recruiting, retaining, and leading members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts and the leadership approaches utilized in the construction industry (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. &

Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). These cohorts represent the industry's best source for filling its hiring needs as suggested by the US Department of Labor occupational employment projections (2023). If the industry cannot fill the projected hiring needs it may prevent the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure. A gap was discovered in the literature because it does not directly study Millennial and Generation Z cohorts' perceptions of the leadership approach within the construction industry. This represents an area of study that could significantly advance the knowledge base of the leadership in the construction industry, and whether it is prepared to fill its job need and effectively recruit, retain, and lead members of the incoming cohorts.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study is to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership traits among Project Superintendents and Managers in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders and to discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among site leaders.

Research Questions

1. What are Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions, based on personal experiences and interactions, of common leadership traits among leaders (Project Superintendents and Project Managers) in the construction industry?
2. What traits are perceived by Generation X (Millennial) and Generation Z construction professionals to be effective for leaders?

The research questions provide direction for this study to explore common leadership approaches among Project Superintendents and Managers in construction and leadership

theory is used to provide structure to the study and define leadership and leadership characteristics. The answers to the research questions are then compared to the theories presented in the literature review to guide the discussion, implications, and conclusions provided by this study.

Scope and Significance of the Problem

Some of the research reviewed suggests that the conventional practice within the construction industry focuses on driving productivity through power and intensity and neglects an overall strategy for leadership (Easton & Steyn, 2022; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017; Skipper & Bell, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). This appears to be a divergence between the leadership approaches suggested to be effective for recruiting, retaining, and leading members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts and the leadership styles and traits utilized in the construction industry (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). These cohorts represent the industry's best source for filling its hiring needs as suggested by the US Department of Labor occupational employment projections (2023), and if the industry cannot fill the projected hiring needs it may prevent the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure. An example of this issue is the industry's perceived inability to attract people from underrepresented groups such as women workers (Morello et al., 2018). Morello et al. (2018) discover that women comprise nearly half of the entire workforce in the United States but account for less than three percent of the construction labor force. Encouraging more women to pursue careers in construction-related fields may represent a significant source for the industry to fill its hiring needs. However, research by Morello et al. (2018) suggests that construction is an unattractive career path for women due to a perception that leadership fosters an aggressive

and competitive work environment. To accomplish the growth needed within the industry, leaders may consider changing their approach by adopting contemporary leadership styles and traits (Morello et al., 2018).

Definitions

- Leadership is a structure of action that engages persons and is a process with the collective purpose of bringing out the best in themselves and others (Burns, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2006).
- Leadership theories seek to address the questions of why people subordinate themselves, what are the sources of a leader's power, how and why leaders arise, why leaders lead, and what is the function of a leader (Bennis, 1959).
- Great Man Theory claims that leaders are born and that only those men who are gifted with heroic potential can become leaders (Carlyle, 1846; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016).
- Trait Theory asserts that leaders are endowed with certain physical traits and personality characteristics that distinguish them from other people (Bass & Bass, 2008; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016).
- Charismatic Theory asserts that leaders are highly expressive, articulate, and emotionally appealing (Bass & Bass, 2008).
- Contingency Theory asserts that a leader is a product of the situation and circumstances and not a product of ability or personality (Stogdill, 1975).
- Transformational Theory asserts that leaders motivate followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the group (Bass & Bass, 2008).
- Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021).

- Path-goal Theory explains how leaders motivate followers to be productive and accomplish designated goals and suggests that each type of leader behavior has a different kind of impact on followers' motivation (Northouse, 2021).
- Leaders induce followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations of both leaders and followers (Burns, 2012).
- Character can be defined as a moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).
- Moral knowing defines a moral awareness and moral reasoning that provides internal guidance when deciding the right course of action (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).
- Moral feeling describes a concern for doing the right thing which consists of conscience, self-esteem, empathy, and humility (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).
- Moral action means acting with competence and will (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).
- Generations are units that respond collectively to a set of social conditions that develop their consciousness and sense of belonging and identity (Mannheim, 1952).
- Coding is an analytical strategy that focuses on relationships of similarity and is the typical categorizing strategy in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2012).
- Snowball sampling begins with a convenience sample to provide the initial subjects, and those initial subjects provide recommendations for additional subjects (Coleman, 1958; Goodman, 1961; Heckathorn, 2011).
- Sampling refers to the choices made regarding the selection of people, settings, and processes (Maxwell, 2012).

Organization of the Study

Corresponding sections of the study include a literature review and the research methodology. The literature review section reviews existing literature and the common themes found to provide a foundational definition of leadership and a leader; explores leadership theories including Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Charismatic Theory, Contingency Theory, and Transformational Theory; explores Generational Cohort theory, and the Millennial and Z generation because they are the predominant generations entering the workforce; and leadership approaches in construction. The methodology section includes; the purpose statement and research questions used to provide direction for this study, a description of the methods utilized to address the research questions and accomplish the purpose of the study which includes, a description of the measures taken to protect human subjects, explanation of the research type chosen, clarification on the size and selection criteria for the sample population, a description of the instruments used to collect data, explanation of how the data is analyzed, and limitations associated with the study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section reviews some of the prominent literature on leadership, generational cohorts with a focus on the Millennial and Z generation, and leadership approaches in the construction industry. The literature is analyzed to discover common themes that are used to provide a foundational definition of leadership and a leader; explore leadership theories including Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Charismatic Theory, Contingency Theory, and Transformational Theory; explore Generational Cohort theory, and the Millennial and Z generation because they are the predominant generations entering the workforce; and leadership approaches in construction. The information ascertained between the aforementioned subject areas is used to draw inferences between the current leadership style in construction and its ability to recruit, lead, and retain Millennials and Generation Z. The literature is also analyzed to discover any gaps that are utilized to provide purpose for this study.

Leadership Theory

Leadership theories seek to address the questions of why people subordinate themselves, what are the sources of a leader's power, how and why leaders arise, why leaders lead, and what is the function of a leader (Bennis, 1959). Leaders are part of the dynamic and specific factors concerning the subordinates and the context of the environment and situations are important to consider when seeking the answers to the questions leadership theories attempt to address (Avolio, 2007; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Ryan & Tipu, 2013). The most comprehensive leadership theories consider the dynamic interplay between the leaders and followers and take into account the context in which the interactions take place (Avolio, 2007; Nawaz, Z., & Khan, I., 2016). There are over forty-nine leadership theories published in the works of influential management and organizational journals, but leadership theories can be narrowed down by the

focus of the associated period (Bass and Bass, 2008; Dinh et al., 2104; Horner, 1997; Meuser et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2019). Until the 1940s most theories of leadership focused on the personal traits of leaders, led by the Great Man Theory and Trait Theory; from the 1940s to the 1960s leadership theories focused on the behavioral patterns of leaders, led by charismatic theory; from the 1960s to the 1980s leadership theories asserted that leadership was contingent on a mix of leader and follower traits and the situations, led by contingency theory; and from the 1980s on leadership theories focused on inspiration, led by transformational theory (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Great Man Theory

Thomas Carlyle is credited as being the founder of the Great Man Theory (Bass & Bass, 2008; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016). He states that “in universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world is at the bottom of the great men who have worked here (Carlyle, 1846).” Asserting that these great leaders of men are the creators of what the general masses strive to attain and do, and are responsible for all the great accomplishments throughout history (Carlyle, 1846). In his theory, he claims that leaders are born and that only those men who are gifted with heroic potential can become leaders (Carlyle, 1846; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016). He asserts that great men are born and not made and that these men have the power to influence events (Carlyle, 1846; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016). This theory was popular between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries because there seemed to be a common consensus that leaders were different than followers, and that fate was a major determinant of the course of history, (Cawthon, 1996). Cawthon (1996) asserts that the rise of behavioral sciences caused the theory to fall out of favor, and a new focus on behavior contingencies, behaviors, and characteristics emerged in its place. Bennis and Nanus (1986) assert that leaders are made and not born. This is an assertion that all men enter the world as equals, and given the right

opportunities any person is capable of anything (Cawthon, 1996). The Great Man Theory is valuable in providing some understanding of leadership because it assists in explaining the innate differences between leaders and those who follow them, but it may not provide a complete explanation because it is clear that situational forces greatly affect the successes and failures of leaders (Cawthon, 1996).

Trait Theory

The Trait Theory asserts that leaders are endowed with certain physical traits and personality characteristics that distinguish them from other people (Bass & Bass, 2008; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016). This theory started as a branch of the Great Man Theory in which Galton (1869) suggests that leadership is unique to extraordinary individuals whose decisions are capable of radically altering history, and these individuals contain unique attributes that are inherited. He supports this theory by citing examples of great men that relate to other great men, and that a single act does not define a great man but a series of consistent actions driven by inherent attributes (Galton, 1869). These traits can be defined as coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics that foster consistent leadership effectiveness in a variety of group and organizational situations (Zaccaro, 2007). This definition has three components; leaders are integrated collections of attributes that influence performance, they contain a variety of personal qualities that promote stability in effectiveness, and these attributes and qualities are enduring to provide stability in performance (Zaccaro, 2007). Zaccaro (2007) suggests that this theory guided leadership research until a review of the prominent literature by Mann (1959) and Stogdill (1948). Their studies suggest that the theory is insufficient to explain leadership and leadership effectiveness (Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948). Stogdill (1948) suggested that leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation and that persons who are leaders in one situation

may not necessarily be leaders in other situations. Mann (1959) suggested that traits appeared to be a factor but the situation was an equally important factor.

Charismatic Theory

Charismatic leaders are highly expressive, articulate, and emotionally appealing (Bass & Bass, 2008). The theory branched from the works of Max Weber (1924/1947) in which he introduced a religious concept of charisma into the social sciences (Bass & Bass, 2008). Weber (1924/1947) asserted that followers want to identify with charismatic leaders, and have complete faith and confidence in them. House (1976) expanded on this idea suggesting that leaders have behavioral characteristics that encourage people to follow them. Their behavior transforms the needs, values, preferences, desires, and aspirations of followers from self-interests to collective interests (House & Howell, 1992). They cause the followers to become highly committed to the leaders' mission, to make personal sacrifices in the interest of the mission, and to perform above and beyond the call of duty (House & Howell, 1992). The behaviors that allow leaders to produce this effect include the articulation of an ideological vision, referring to long-term rather than immediate goals, behavioral role modeling of values, expressing high-performance values, communicating a high degree of confidence in followers, and demonstrating behaviors that arouse achievement (House, 1977; Shamir et al., 1992). The problem with this theory is it does not distinguish between good or moral and evil or immoral leadership (House & Howell, 1992).

Contingency Theory

Stogdill (1975) asserts that a leader is a product of the situation and circumstances and not a product of ability or personality. Fiedler's contingency theory dominated much of the research on leadership during the 1970s and 1980s (Bass & Bass, 2008). Fiedler (1967) asserted that group effectiveness depends on the interaction between leadership styles and the degree to

which situations enable leaders to exert influence. Contingency theory predicts that a leader's effectiveness is based on a leader's attributes, and the leader's situational control (Ayman et al., 1995). The effectiveness of leaders is contingent upon the demands imposed by the situation (Bass & Bass, 2008). There are three components of the situation that are identified as contributors to the success of a leader; leader-member relationship referring to the amount of cohesiveness in the work team, task structure or clarity and certainty in task goals and procedures, and position power referring to the administrative authority bestowed on the leader by the organization (Ayman, 1995). To expand on this theory Fiedler, Chemers, and Mahar (1976) developed a method to help a leader to match his or her style to the appropriate situation. The leader is provided strategies to change the situation or to adjust their style to increase success (Fiedler, Chemers, & Mahar, 1976). The weakness of this theory is that it can be difficult to implement based on its requirement for inductive reasoning to evaluate the situation and employ the appropriate style (Ayman, 1995).

Transformational Theory

Transformational leadership represents a new paradigm with a shift in views, findings, and areas of study (Hunt, 1999). Hunt (1999) asserts that the emergence of transformational leadership theory represents the shift from traditional leadership to contemporary leadership. Transformational was first introduced in 1973 by Downton, and first formalized as a theory by Burns in 1978 (Bass & Bass, 2008). Downton (1973) suggested that during times of stress leaders revise the mission and suggest solutions to deal with the sources of stress, and Burns (1978) expanded this idea by suggesting that leadership comes when one or more people engage with others in a way that leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels. Transformational leaders motivate followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the

group (Bass & Bass, 2008). Leaders serve as an independent force in changing the makeup of the followers' motive base (Burns, 1978). Bennis (1984) found that transformational leaders endowed attention and meaning, articulated visions of what is possible, and empowered the collective effect. He suggested that leadership is felt throughout an organization, and gives an energy to the work that empowers the workforce (Bennis, 1984). From its inception in the 1970s through the 2020s transformational leadership continues to be one of the most actively researched leadership paradigms (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). Critics of this theory assert that it lacks; a clear conceptual definition, a clear understanding of the casual relationship between leaders and followers, the ability to be accurately measured, and a dimensional structure (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

Defining Leadership

Leadership is one of the world's oldest preoccupations, and understanding leadership has been a prominent subject in the quest for knowledge (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Leadership is a featured topic in hundreds of books, and thousands of articles (Bass & Avolio, 1997). This search has produced many different definitions of leadership, and the word leadership is used in many scholarly and popular publications to mean very different things (Rost, 1991). Stogdill (1974) implies that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who are attempting to define it. Leadership is a frequent subject of empirical research but has not provided any consensus making it one of the most studied and least understood social science topics (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Bass & Bass, 2008; Bennis, 2009; Burns, 2012). Northouse (2021) asserts that after decades of leadership study among numerous scholars, which has produced more dissonance than agreement, leadership scholars agree on one thing: they cannot come up with a common definition. This may be due to factors such as growing global influences,

generational differences, and leadership having different meanings for different people (Northouse, 2021). Northouse (2021) provides a synopsis of the shifts in leadership research since 1900.

From 1900 to 1929, the study of leadership focused on control and power, and leadership was defined as the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and to induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation (Moore, 1927; Northouse, 2021). In the 1930s, traits became the focus of leadership study, and leadership was defined as an interaction of an individual's specific traits with those of a group to influence their attitudes and activities (Northouse, 2021). In the 1940s, the study of leadership focused on the group approach, and leadership was defined as the behavior of an individual while involved in directing others (Northouse, 2021). In the 1950s, the study of leadership focused on group approach, relationships, and effectiveness, and leadership was defined by what leaders do in groups to develop shared goals, and their ability to influence overall group effectiveness (Northouse, 2021). In the 1960s, the study of leadership focused on behavior, and leadership was defined as acts by persons who influence other persons in a shared direction (Northouse, 2021; Seeman, 1960). In the 1970s, the study of leadership focused on organizational behavior, and leadership was defined as initiating and maintaining groups or organizations to accomplish group or organizational goals (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021; Rost, 1991). In the 1980s, the study of leadership focused on influence, traits, and transformation, and leadership was defined as a noncoercive influence (Northouse, 2021). In the 1990s, the study focused on servant leadership, followership, and adaptive leadership, and leadership was defined as influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2021). In the 21st century, the study of leadership focused on authentic leadership, ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, discursive leadership, humble leadership, and inclusive

leadership, and leadership was defined as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs of and aspirations of followers (Burns, 2012; Northouse, 2021).

Northouse (2021) asserts that despite the multitude of ways in which leadership has been conceptualized, the following components are central to the leadership phenomenon; leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs in groups, and leadership involves common goals. Leadership is a process where an individual influences a group to achieve a goal, and can be classified as either a transactional or transformational process (Burns, 2012; Northouse, 2021). Suggesting that leadership involves influence emphasizes how leaders affect followers through behaviors (Northouse, 2021; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). Leadership occurs in groups and provides the context in which leadership takes place (Northouse, 2021). Common goals provide leaders and followers with direction and a common purpose (Northouse, 2021; Rost, 1991).

Process - Individual Influence

Burns (1978) distinguishes between what he asserts are two primary, mutually exclusive, types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021). Managers practice this if they offer promotions to their employees for surpassing goals (Northouse, 2021).

Transformational leadership describes the process of how leaders inspire followers to accomplish great things (Northouse, 2021). Transformational highlights behaviors leaders use to encourage creativity, recognize accomplishments, build trust, and inspire a collective vision (Notgrass, 2014). Bass (1985) built on the concept of transactional and transformational leadership by arguing that they are complementary concepts. He asserts that transactional, through honoring commitment, creates trust which forms the base of transformational leadership, and

transformational leadership, through its focus on influence and motivation augments transactional leadership by contributing to the extra effort of followers (Bass, 1998).

Early research recognized that leaders and followers enter into relationships to establish what is being exchanged, negotiate the costs and benefits of this exchange, and determine whether this exchange is satisfactory to their self-interests (Hollander, 1958). Burns (1978) described transactional leadership as the relationship between leaders and followers that is facilitated through a series of exchanges of gratification designed to maximize organizational and individual gains. He asserts that leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative to make contact with others to make an exchange (Burns, 1978). Exhibiting transactional leadership meant that followers agreed with, accepted, or complied with the leader in exchange for praise, rewards, and resources or the avoidance of disciplinary action (Bass et al., 2003). The clarification of goals and objectives and providing of recognition once goals are achieved should result in individuals and groups achieving expected levels of performance (Bass, 1985).

Each party recognizes the resources and attitudes of the other, and their purposes are related, but the relationship does not go any further than the exchange (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership means that managers and employees respond to their own needs, motives, and values without acknowledging the primary relationship (Burns, 1978). It must lead to short-lived relationships because the identical exchange cannot be repeated (Burns, 1978). Transactional leaders govern their followers through contractual obligations that focus on reward and punishment to meet performance standards (Young et al., 2021). Because the core principles of transactional leadership emphasize reward and control which may demotivate individuals by reducing their perceived autonomy and competence transactional leadership may also reduce follower performance (Young et al., 2021). Contingent rewards may undermine motivation

through a reduction in perceived autonomy by leading employees to focus on the aspects of their jobs to which rewards are linked, shifting attention away from non-incentivized duties and responsibilities (Deci et al., 2017).

Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2021). The premise of this leadership is that, whatever the separate interests people might have, they are united in the pursuit of higher goals (Burns, 1978). House (1976) introduced the concept of transformational leadership with the theory of charismatic leadership which describes a special gift that certain individuals possess that gives them the capacity to do extraordinary things. House (1976) suggested that charismatic leaders act in unique ways that have specific charismatic effects on their followers. Charismatic leaders are strong role models, appear competent, have moral overtones, communicate high expectations, and arouse task-relevant motives in followers (House, 1976). Burns (1978) formally introduced transformational leadership which he described as the process by which transformational leaders raise their followers recognizing and exploiting an existing need or demand (Burns, 1978). This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential (Northouse, 2021).

Bass (1985) expanded on the work of Burns (1978) and House (1976) by giving more attention to the followers. He argued that transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than expected by raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and moving followers to address higher-level needs (Bass, 1985). Bass (1985) asserted that transactional and transformational leadership were not mutually exclusive

but were complementary concepts. He argued that transactional contingent reward leadership builds the foundation for relationships between leaders and followers in terms of specifying expectations, clarifying responsibilities, negotiating contracts, and providing recognition and rewards for achieving expected performance (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership enhances the development of followers, challenging them to think in ways in which they are not accustomed to thinking, inspiring them to accomplish beyond what they felt was possible, and motivating them to do so by keeping in mind the values and high moral standards that guide their performance (Avolio, 1999).

Influence - Behaviors

The behavioral approach emphasizes the behavior of the leader with a focus on what they do and how they act (Northouse, 2021). Hemphill and Coons (1957) and Stogdill (1963) initiated research into behavioral leadership in response to Stogdill's (1948) and Mann's (1959) criticism of trait theory, suggesting that the theory is insufficient to explain leadership and leadership effectiveness because leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations. Hemphill and Coons (1957) and Stogdill (1963) asserted that leadership is the behavior of an individual when they are directing a group toward a goal. Their studies suggested effective leadership behaviors were in the context of the organization, situation, and followers (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, 1963). Blake and Mouton (1964) added to the literature by suggesting that leadership behaviors can be broken into two categories; task and relational. This theory suggests that leaders engage in task and relationship behaviors to influence others (Northouse, 2021). Task behaviors facilitate goal accomplishment and relationship behaviors help followers feel comfortable (Northouse, 2021). Task-oriented leaders exhibit behaviors that facilitate goal

accomplishment by organizing the work, defining roles, and determining policies and procedures to facilitate production (Northouse, 2021). Relationship-oriented people are not as goal-oriented but are more focused on connecting with others and developing trust, respect, and camaraderie by valuing followers' uniqueness and attending to their personal needs (Northouse, 2021). The behavioral approach reminds leaders that their actions towards others occur on a task and relationship level (Northouse, 2021). In some situations, leaders need to be more task-oriented, whereas in others they need to be more relationship-oriented, and in some cases, a leader must combine both approaches (Casimir & Ng, 2010).

Despite making a significant contribution to the understanding of the leadership process by causing a major shift from trait to behavior, the approach has some weaknesses and criticisms (Northouse, 2021). Yukl (2003) asserts that the research on the behavioral approach has not adequately shown how leaders' behaviors are associated with performance outcomes. Results from this research effort have been mostly contradictory and inconclusive and failed to establish a consistent link between task and relationship behaviors and outcomes (Yukl, 2003). Behrendt et al. (2017) suggest that leader behavior studies have relied on perceptions of followers which may differ from actual leader behavior. Follower perceptions of their leaders may be overestimated because they elevate their leader when the leader exhibits considerate behavior which may result in overestimation of a leader's effects (Behrendt et al., 2017). Northouse (2021) suggests that leader effectiveness may be influenced by the characteristics of the leaders, the followers, and the situation, and the behavioral approach neglects these elements.

Groups

The group approach suggests leadership is an individual's behavior while directing group activities (Hemphill, 1949). Bogardus (1934), a social psychologist, introduced the concept by

suggesting that leadership is a process in which activities of the many are organized in a specific direction by one. Hemphill (1949) expanded on group theory and suggested that the success of a leader is a combination of the interaction of the leader who leverages a set of personal attributes and the group whose efficient functioning results in successful leadership. Leadership must always consider the specific requirements imposed by the nature of the group to be led (Hemphill, 1949). The group approach peaked in the 1950s when leadership studies focused on what leaders do in groups (Northouse, 2021). Gibb (1954) asserted that leadership is simply what leaders do in groups and that the leader's authority is given to them by the group. Cartwright and Zander (1953) viewed leadership as the actions of individuals that help the group to achieve objectives. They suggested that leadership actions consisted of efforts to set group goals, move the group towards the goals, improve interactions among group members, build cohesiveness in the group, and make resources available to the group (Cartwright & Zander, 1953).

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, the group approach evolved into the team leadership approach. The research on team leadership has taken two streams; a single leader that is designated to lead the team, and leadership also comes from the members themselves (Nicolaidis et al., 2014). A single leader who is designated to lead the team refers to a vertical approach focused on behaviors and processes individuals use to promote team effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2008). This approach suggests that the function of leadership is to help the team accomplish its goals by monitoring and diagnosing the team and taking the necessary action (Northouse, 2021). Effective team performance begins with how the leader sees the situation the team is experiencing (Northouse, 2021). The leader develops a mental conception of what the team problem is and what solutions are possible in this context, given the environmental and organizational constraints and resources (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Suggesting

that leadership comes from the members themselves is known as shared leadership (Nicolaidis et al., 2014). This type of leadership suggests a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both (Pearce & Conger, 2003). With this approach, there is a reduced distinction between leader and follower, because team members may fill either of these roles at any given time (Nicolaidis et al., 2014).

Goals

The goal approach suggests that leadership is acts of persons to influence others towards shared goals (Rost, 1993). Goals are at the center of many of the approaches discussed throughout this section. Goals provide leaders and followers with direction and a common purpose (Northouse, 2021; Rost, 1991). The influence approach suggests that leadership is a process where an individual influences a group to achieve a goal (Northouse, 2021).

Transactional leadership emphasizes goals by focusing on the exchange between leaders and followers of monetary value or promotions for the achievement of goals (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021). Transformational leadership emphasizes goals by uniting people in the pursuit of higher goals (Burns, 1978). The behavioral approach emphasizes goals by suggesting that leadership is the behavior of an individual when they are directing a group toward a goal (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, 1963). Task behaviors facilitate goal accomplishment and relationship behaviors help followers feel comfortable (Northouse, 2021). The group approach emphasizes goals by suggesting that leadership actions consist of efforts to set group goals, move the group towards the goals, improve interactions among group members, build the cohesiveness of the group, and make resources available to the group (Cartwright & Zander, 1953).

The path-goal theory was developed in the 1970s to explain how leaders motivate followers to be productive and accomplish designated goals (Northouse, 2021). The path-goal theory first appeared in leadership literature in the 1970s and emphasized the relationship between the leader's style and the characteristics of the followers and the organizational setting (Northouse, 2021). This theory suggests that each type of leader behavior has a different kind of impact on followers' motivation (Northouse, 2021). House and Mitchell (1975) suggested that the path-goal theory identifies four primary motivational leadership behaviors; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. Directive leadership characterizes a leader who gives followers instructions about their task, including what is expected of them, how it is to be done, and the timeline for when it should be completed (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2021). Supportive leadership consists of being friendly and approachable as a leader and includes attending to the well-being and human needs of followers (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2021). Participative leadership consists of inviting followers to share in the decision-making consulting with them, obtaining their ideas and opinions, and integrating their suggestions into decisions (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2021). Achievement-oriented leadership is characterized by a leader who challenges followers to perform work at the highest level possible by establishing high standards and seeking continuous improvement (House & Mitchell, 1975; Northouse, 2021). House and Mitchell (1975) suggested that leaders might exhibit any or all of these styles with various followers and in different situations. For leaders to be effective they must engage in behaviors that complement subordinates' environments and abilities (House, 1996).

Defining a Leader

Leaders are vitally important to the success or failure of organizations (Bennis, 1989). The leader has a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals and accomplishes organizational goals by building commitment and unity (Northouse, 2021). They induce followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations of both leaders and followers (Burns, 2012). Throughout time, people have been willing to reach for seemingly unachievable goals and even make the ultimate sacrifice for their leaders (Burke et al., 2007). Bennis (1984) asserted that in his studies of leaders, he found more diversity than commonality, but did recognize that leaders seemed to share core competencies and practices. Popper and Lipshitz (1993) suggest that even though each leader is unique it is usually not difficult to identify the leader of a group of people performing a task. This idea was expanded on by Kouzes and Posner (2006) who asserted that even though each leader is a unique individual, there are patterns to the practice of leadership that are shared (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leaders engage in these five practices; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Model the Way

If leaders want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must model the behavior they expect from others (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leaders possess a recognizable and strong sense of character that acts as a moral imperative to their actions and drives them to meet outcomes personally and organizationally (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Hesselbein, 2004). Character is at the heart of a leader which provides a moral compass, and both personal development and the common good are best served by a moral compass (Calabrese & Roberts, 2002; Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Character can be defined as a moral knowing, moral feeling, and

moral action (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Moral knowing defines a moral awareness and moral reasoning that provides internal guidance when deciding the right course of action (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Moral feeling describes a concern for doing the right thing which consists of conscience, self-esteem, empathy, and humility (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Moral action means acting with competence and will. Leaders who possess character build organizations that are both competitive and supportive environments in which to work (Bass & Steidlemeier, 1999; Sarros & Cooper, 2006).

Vision

Vision is the guiding light and driving force of an organization, and if there is one thing that can increase a leader's chance for success it is developing and sustaining a compelling vision (Nanus, 1995). An achievable and widely shared vision may be the most powerful engine driving an organization towards excellence and success, and vision formation and articulation a central components of leader performance (Nanus, 1995; Shipman et al., 2010). Formation of a vision arises from reflection on key causes and goals, placing them on personal values and perceived social needs, and abstracting the key causes contributing to the attainment of these goals (Strange & Mumford, 2002). The vision serves as a guide for where the organization is and where it wants to go (Nanus, 1995). Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). A leader's articulation of a vision appears to influence followers' actions through at least five mechanisms (Strange & Mumford, 2002). First, the vision specifies the direction, purpose, and uniqueness of a venture (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Second, vision provides a powerful mechanism for motivating followers (Berson et al., 2001). Third, vision may provide a sense of identity and meaning (Shamir et al., 1993). Fourth, the vision allows people to coordinate and integrate their activities (Mumford et

al., 2001). Fifth, vision may serve as a basis for the development of organizational norms and structures (Jacobsen & House, 2001).

Challenge the Process

Leaders are willing to step out into the unknown and continuously search for opportunities by looking for innovative ways to improve (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leaders should pay close attention to norms and processes within an organization and challenge those that need to change, and to challenge existing norms and processes means being willing to change the status quo and step into the unknown (Northouse, 2021). Instead of maintaining norms, leaders have to challenge the way the organization does business and help distinguish immutable values from historical practices that must go (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Changes in societies, markets, customers, competition, and technology challenge organizations to develop new strategies and operations to adapt to these changes (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Bennis and Thomas (2002) assert that adaptive capacity may be the most important leadership skill, and it provides them with an ability to transcend adversity and to emerge stronger than before (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). To make change happen, executives have to break a long-standing behavior pattern of their own by observing patterns in the operations without being immersed in them, allowing their observations to guide their actions, communicating what's good about the organization's history and an idea of what the market forces are currently, and communicating the organizations responsibility to make changes that propel them into the future while exhibiting confidence that they can tackle the tasks ahead (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

Enable Others to Act

Leaders enable others to act by building trust and fostering a culture of collaboration (Bennis, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Trust is essential to all organizations (Bennis, 1984). It

forms the effectiveness of cooperation and may provide a leader with the basis for the effective functioning of the organization (Bulatova, 2015). Leaders foster collaboration by building a climate of trust and facilitating relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). It is the foundation of a relationship and fundamental in getting things done (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). It has to do with being reliable in uncertain situations and leads directly to stronger work engagement (Northouse, 2021). A leader must build and sustain a culture in which people know and believe everyone will do their part and do it well (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Trust is a product of leadership and must be earned (Bennis, 1989). To earn the trust of followers a leader demonstrates consistency of purpose, reliability, and integrity (Bennis, 1989). Consistency of purpose requires a leader to stay on course and remain dedicated to the vision and confirm their values, theories, and beliefs in everything they say and do; reliability requires a leader to support their co-workers in moments that matter; and integrity requires a leader to honor their commitments and promises (Bennis, 1989).

Encourage the Heart

Leaders encourage the heart of a workforce by paying attention to the follower's needs and the importance of the leader-follower relationship, giving pace and energy to the work, and empowering the workforce (Bennis, 1984; Northouse, 2021). Accomplishing great things is hard work, and people become exhausted, frustrated, disenchanted, and often tempted to give up, but an empowering leader can uplift people's spirits and draw them forward (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). People are empowered when they feel significant and make a difference in the success of the organization (Bennis, 1984). An empowered and motivated workforce means better corporate performance (Bennis, 1984; Nohria et al., 2008). Pink (2010) states that motivation depends on autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Autonomy is the opportunity to act with choices and has a

powerful effect on individual performance and attitude (Pink, 2010). Mastery describes the human desire for intellectual challenge and may be the best predictor of productivity (Pink, 2010). Purpose seeks to define why someone is working on a task, why a task matters, and why their job matters (Pink, 2010). Humans want to understand why they are doing something and participating in a cause greater than themselves (Pink, 2010). According to Sinek (2010), explaining why is one of the best means for a leader to motivate someone. Leaders inspire others with a sense of purpose and belonging (Sinek, 2010). People experience a connection between themselves and something more significant that their work contributes to (Kipfelsberger et al., 2022). Leaders who explain why will help followers with the process of meaningfulness in their work which translates to increased levels of well-being, retention, and goal accomplishment (Kipfelsberger et al., 2022).

Leadership in Construction

The project-based nature of the construction industry makes it a special and unique industry (Ali et al., 2020). A construction project is composed of several organizations, individuals, and teams from different parent organizations and/or departments brought together, and after the project, project teams are disintegrated and members return to their parent organization and/or departments (Ali et al., 2020). Despite the importance of leadership and unique conditions in the industry, it appears that comprehensive and industry-specific research on leadership in the construction industry is limited. Chan & Chan (2005) assert that one of the most important research areas receiving relatively little attention in the construction industry is leadership (Chan & Chan, 2005). In comparison to other fields of research, studies that have been undertaken on the subject of leadership about professional practice are very limited in the construction industry (Chan & Chan, 2005). Research has largely concentrated on the technical

aspects of construction projects, and leadership in this very important industry has remained neglected (Toor and Ofori 2008). The proceeding section reviews articles found via a search for construction leadership articles on Google Scholar and California Baptist University OneSearch and narrowed down by selecting only articles from journals found on the Australian Business Deans Council Journal quality list, completed in the United States, completed between 2010 and 2024, and contained a comprehensive literature review or survey. Articles that were not considered to contain a comprehensive literature review or survey but met all other criteria may be found in the summary section but were not placed in the reviewed section.

Ahn et al. (2012)

This study examines the U.S. construction industries' perceptions of key competencies for construction management graduates as perceived by recruiters of construction companies in the eastern United States and groups them into major categories for use in future education of construction University programs (Ahn et al., 2012). Ahn et al. (2012) assert that this study is important because the construction industry is complex and those entering the construction professions require competencies such as leadership, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving skills; and educators in construction programs must provide targeted construction education that encompasses the competencies needed by the industry (Ahn et al., 2012). To accomplish their purpose the authors survey recruiters for over 100 construction companies located in the eastern United States. The survey asked recruiters to rate 14 key competencies for construction graduates that were identified as important in the literature: ethical issues, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, adaptability, collaborative skills, safety issues, interdisciplinary application, practical awareness, technical skills, computer skills, estimating/scheduling skills, communication, and environmental awareness (Ahn et al., 2012).

Clustering the 14 key competencies using factor analysis identified four classes of competencies for construction graduates: general competency, affective competency, cognitive competency, and technical competency (Ahn et al., 2012).

The results of their study suggest that ethical issues, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills were considered by recruiters to be key significant competencies for construction graduates, whereas communication and environmental awareness were ranked lowest (Ahn et al., 2012). General competency which includes communication skills and environmental skills ranked the lowest by respondents; affective competency which includes leadership, collaborative skills, and interpersonal skills, was considered to be the most important; cognitive competency which includes ethical issues, problem-solving skills, adaptability, safety issues, and interdisciplinary applications, ranked second; and technical competency which includes technical skills, practical awareness, computer skills, and estimating/scheduling skills were ranked third (Ahn et al., 2012). Based on the results of this survey, therefore, the construction industry is looking for construction graduates who are responsible, creative, and critical in both their affective competency and cognitive competency (Ahn et al., 2012). Because of the importance of leadership, construction education needs to build construction students' leadership skills; and people skills are an important part of leadership in the construction industry as a result of the nature of construction (Ahn et al., 2012).

Jung et al. (2014)

This study surveys 82 project executives and managers to identify their preferred leadership styles for construction management positions (Jung et al., 2014). The main objective of the study is to contribute to the advancement of the study of position-specific managerial leadership development by identifying the preferred leadership behaviors of those individuals

holding managerial and supervisory positions in construction management (Jung et al., 2014). The construction industry is multidisciplinary by nature, and varying managerial positions may require different combinations of leadership styles to achieve high levels of performance and successful careers (Jung et al., 2014). The authors surveyed 94 Project Executives, Project Managers, and Superintendents surveyed from 90 construction companies in the southeastern United States (Jung et al., 2014). The survey was designed in two parts; informative questions used to determine the general career path and relationship between leadership style and professional achievement of the participant pool and best leadership style questions used to determine preferred leadership styles in managerial positions (Jung et al., 2014). The results indicate that construction industry project managers are in positions that require a focus on control, and thus their preferred leadership styles consequently tend towards an autocratic, boss-centered leadership style; project executives generally have trusted relationships with others, and it evidences this in presenting a combination of boss-centered and subordinated-centered leadership trending toward to a more intensive participatory leadership style; the superintendent is responsible for day to day planning and activities and prefers a leadership style inclined to the autocratic type (Jung et al., 2014).

Simmons et al. (2017)

Simmons et al. (2017) conducted a review of literature on construction leadership published between 2001 and 2014 to discover how leadership development has been framed in the literature. Their search criteria included explicit reference to civil engineering or construction students or professionals and contained a discernable conceptual leadership period. This resulted in 36 sources being relevant and applicable to the analysis (Simmons et al., 2017). The articles were then coded using themes derived from trait, behavioral, and contingent leadership theories.

Results indicated that 25 of the articles focused on trait and/or behavior periods (Simmons et al., 2017). Leader-centric approaches focused on the traits, behaviors, and skills of a leader were found in a majority of the articles, whereas contemporary leadership paradigms focused on relational approaches were only occasionally present in the literature (Simmons et al., 2017). This suggests that civil engineering and the construction industry are primarily focused on leader-centered skill development (Simmons et al., 2017). The authors suggest that the industry would benefit from a more contemporary approach to relational leadership that fosters a holistic view of leadership by developing a stronger culture of better teammates and role players who are more resilient to adversity and contextual shifts (Simmons et al., 2017). They assert that the first step in obtaining this objective is to develop a value-based definition of leadership within the industry (Simmons et al., 2017).

Graham et al. (2020)

The authors of this study conduct a systematic review of 290 peer-reviewed articles on leadership in construction and consider the extent to which traditional vertical approaches to leadership are supplemented with horizontal (Graham et al., 2020). Graham et al. (2020) suggest that this study is a response to the call for better leadership that can be heard throughout the engineering and construction communities as suggested by Simmons et al. (2017). Although it is evident that construction leadership practice is changing, research has lacked a robust research agenda to ensure changes are commensurate with emerging challenges, creating a disconnect between theory and practice (Simmons et al. 2017; Graham et al., 2020). The vertical leadership archetype has dominated construction leadership research with only a small number of studies considering the horizontal leadership archetype. As the industry responds to challenges, researchers and practitioners alike must be supported with more than a single leadership

framework to inform the delivery of projects (Graham et al., 2020). To address this the study systematically analyzed 290 relevant articles to produce a research agenda aligned to these challenges (Graham et al., 2020).

The results of this study suggest that the integration of horizontal leadership into the construction industry and the tensions associated with integrating this with its traditional vertical approach are understudied in construction leadership (Graham et al., 2020). This limits the usefulness of extant research for organizations seeking to integrate horizontal leadership practices (Graham et al., 2020). The study suggests six areas in which a more rigorous theoretical conception of the integration of horizontal leadership practices is crucial: building culture and consensus around worker safety identities (Andersen et al. 2018; Wen Lim et al. 2018), integration of technical innovations and sustainability frameworks with extant delivery processes (Ozorhon & Karahan 2017; Papajohn et al. 2017), tailoring leadership competence to anticipated project demands (El-Gohary & Aziz 2014), transmission of knowledge throughout teams (Love et al. 2016; Ni et al. 2018; Oladinrin & Ho 2016), establishing trust and vision in external engagement (Afsar & Shahjehan 2018; Paik et al. 2017), and managing transient shifts in on-site power dynamics (Liu & Fang 2006). The authors conclude by suggesting that their findings should be seen as a stepping stone toward bringing construction leadership research in line with broader leadership theory (Graham et al., 2020).

Simmons et al. (2020)

Simmons et al. (2020) utilize the Delphi method to discover what leadership competencies are desired for civil engineering and construction management graduates. Construction and civil engineering undergraduate education have traditionally emphasized technical knowledge, skills, and attributes (Ahn et al., 2012; Toor & Ofori 2008). Employers in

the US construction industry now need those who possess a combination of technical and professional knowledge, skills, and attributes that will contribute to company success in a rapidly changing industry (Simmons et al., 2020). They assert that this study is the first step to answering the call by construction and civil engineering professionals for increases in professional development, namely, leadership development, within the industry. Given the evolving nature of the civil engineering and construction industry and the unique multifaceted and value-driven environment, it has been difficult for the industry to articulate the meaning of leadership in the workplace and for academia to operationalize within the classroom (Simmons et al., 2020). The goal of this study is to establish common definitions that allow academia and industry to work together to better operationalize professional competencies and prepare students, professionally and technically (Simmons et al., 2020).

To accomplish this goal Simmons et al. (2020) compiled a panel of 61 Civil Engineering and Construction Management college advisors with at least ten years of professional experience in their respective industries. the Delphi method is a process by which a panel of experts anonymously contribute and eventually form a consensus around a specified topic or prompt. The panel then participated in the Delphi process which began as an open-ended questionnaire that captured panelists' initial thoughts regarding, and then followed by more structured questionnaires in which panelists rank or rate emergent themes (Simmons et al., 2020). The results of the study identified 19 leadership competencies including communication skills, ethics/responsibility, professionalism, critical thinking/problem-solving, big picture thinking, ambition/drive, self-awareness, humility, teamwork/collaboration/networking, people focus, time management, management, adaptability, quality control, computer skills, safety and risk management, assertiveness, legal knowledge, and economic principles/trends (Simmons et al,

2020). Leadership, as captured within this study, can be conceptualized as a set of professional and technical competencies, and the authors hope that this study contributes to a shift in how leadership is conceptualized, operationalized, and taught in both academic and industry contexts (Simmons et al, 2020).

Implications – Construction Leadership

With increasing demands for new infrastructure and a decreased availability of skilled construction workers, the need to recruit and retain workers is becoming critical (Welfare et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Labor occupational employment projections, an estimated 646,100 additional workers will be hired by 2032 to fulfill the economic needs for construction work (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). A combination of aging workers expected to leave the workforce and a decrease in young people pursuing construction will likely prevent the companies within the industry from filling those needed jobs to keep up with demand (Morello et al., 2018). Recruiting women to construction appears to be a practical means of addressing the labor shortage (Morello et al., 2018). The number of women in the general workforce is steadily increasing, but they remain a vastly underrepresented group in construction (Morello et al., 2018). Morello et al. (2018) discover that women comprise nearly half of the entire workforce in the United States but account for less than three percent of the construction labor force. Encouraging more women to pursue careers in construction-related fields could minimize the effect of this shortage (Morello et al., 2018). However, research shows that construction is an unattractive career path for women because of a lack of leadership believed to foster an aggressive and competitive work environment (Morello et al., 2018). Despite significant changes in business and management practices, the construction industry remains largely traditional (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

The perception of leadership in construction is that it relies heavily on power, authority, and task orientation (Toor & Ofori, 2008). To prevent the breakdown of stability and achieve meaningful goals, leaders seek to control tasks and activities by focusing on vertical forms of leadership (Graham et al., 2020). A clear line of leadership is utilized to rapidly facilitate information from relevant decision-makers up and down the line (Graham et al., 2020). The results of a study performed by Jung et al. (2014) suggest that construction industry project managers are in positions that require a focus on control, and thus their preferred leadership styles consequently tend towards an autocratic, boss-centered leadership style; and the superintendent is responsible for day-to-day planning and activities and prefers a leadership style inclined to the autocratic type (Jung et al., 2014). Project leaders such as Project managers and Superintendents are held responsible for project success and are expected to fulfill a range of functions such as schedule and budget control, stakeholder engagement, on-site safety, and controlling on-site activity (Graham et al., 2020). Hierarchical control of decision-making is seen as essential to delivering projects on schedule and budget (Graham et al., 2020). By, establishing a clear chain of command, project leaders maintain control and influence over all aspects of the project (Graham et al., 2020). This approach may be short-sighted with leaders primarily focusing on day-to-day work, activities management, and achieving short-term goals (Graham et al., 2020). They are focusing on managing their teams and day-to-day work rather than leading people to achieve long-term objectives. (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

The evolution of project social dynamics involving multiple teams adapting to diverse demands and on-site conditions requires a new approach (Graham et al., 2020). The sharing of responsibility among teams and a horizontal approach to communication may be an important factor if construction firms are to manage the complexity of environmental and social issues and

address the expectations of a wide range of actors (Graham et al., 2020). Consequently, the industry is making a significant effort to change its image and culture and these efforts are being supported by professional associations, labor unions, and universities (Menches & Abraham, 2007). Construction firms are now seeking professionals with better management and leadership skills rather than technical skills, but educational institutions and construction firms continue to produce managers who lack leadership skills (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

Studies by Ahn et al. (2012), Simmons et al. (2017), and Graham et al. (2020) suggest that the industry is seeking professionals with relational approaches, but the educational systems and the industry itself continue to produce leaders with an autocratic approach. The results of the study by Ahn et al. (2012) suggest construction recruiters desire college graduates who possess ethical issues, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills. General competency which includes communication skills and environmental skills ranked the lowest by respondents; affective competency which includes leadership, collaborative skills, and interpersonal skills, was considered to be the most important; cognitive competency which includes ethical issues, problem-solving skills, adaptability, safety issues, and interdisciplinary applications, ranked second; and technical competency which includes technical skills, practical awareness, computer skills, and estimating/scheduling skills were ranked third (Ahn et al., 2012). The study by Simmons et al. (2017) suggests that the literature studying construction leadership continues to focus on Leader-Centric skills and rarely explores relational approaches. Results of the study suggest that a majority of articles focus on the traits and/or behavior of leaders, whereas contemporary leadership paradigms focused on relational approaches were only occasionally present in the literature (Simmons et al., 2017). The authors suggest that the civil engineering and construction industry are primarily focused on leader-centered skill development (Simmons

et al., 2017). The results of this study suggest that the integration of horizontal leadership into the construction industry and the tensions associated with integrating this with its traditional vertical approach are understudied in construction leadership, which limits the research available for the industry to utilize in search of strategies that allow them to integrate horizontal leadership practices (Graham et al., 2020).

Generations Entering the Workforce

Karl Mannheim introduced the concept of generations in 1927 in a German essay which was later translated into English in 1952. He defined generations as units that respond collectively to a set of social conditions that develop their consciousness and sense of belonging and identity (Mannheim, 1952). This becomes sociologically significant when groups experience similar historical and social circumstances at the developmental age so that it influences the formation of their consciousness and inner dialect to form their view of the world (Mannheim, 1952). All later experiences receive their meaning from this original view of the world (Mannheim, 1952). In the 1990s Strauss and Howe expanded on and popularized the generational theory, and defined a generation as a cohort whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personality (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They suggest that the length is based on a phase of life or social roles. According to Strauss & Howe (1991), each phase is 21 years in length and consists of youth (age 0-21), rising adulthood (age 22-43), midlife (age 44-65), and elderhood (age 66-87) (Strauss & Howe, 1991). A decisive event occurs suddenly and affects each age group differently which forms a distinct cohort group (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They also suggest that each group develops a peer personality, also likely influenced by the common age group in which the decisive event is experienced (Strauss

& Howe, 1991). They peer personality as a collective attitude about family life, sex roles, institutions, politics, religion, and lifestyle (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Based on their definition of generational cohorts Strauss and Howe (1991) outline the generations as Silent Generation (born 1925-1942), Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960), Generation X (born 1961-1981), and Generation Y (born 1982 – 1996). They later added Generation Z consisting of people born from 1997 through the mid-2020s (Howe, Strauss, & Nadler, 2008). The silent generation consists of individuals who were born too late for World War 2 and too early to be drafted into the Vietnam War (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They are conspicuous, sentimental pluralists, inclined to see two sides of an issue, and not especially surefooted (Strauss & Howe, 1991). The Baby Boomers were defined by events such as Woodstock and the Vietnam War (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They firmly believe in values, are intensely self-immersed, and neither envy nor emulate people older or younger than themselves (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Generation X was defined by events that included the AIDS epidemic, the invasion of Panama, and the defense of Persian Gulf oil (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They tend to associate smoothly and obediently with elders and live at home after college (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Generation Y is defined by events such as Columbine, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the Rodney King riots (Howe & Strauss, 2009). They are smart, well-behaved, and civic-spirited (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Generation Z is defined by 9/11, the Great Recession, and the war on terror (Howe, Strauss, & Nadler, 2008). They are the Internet generation and rely on smartphones and laptops (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). The proceeding sections focus on the two predominant generations entering the workforce and their expectations of the workplace and leadership.

Generation Y – Millennials

Millennials are unlike any other youth generation in recent history (Howe & Strauss, 2009). This cohort behaves in ways that are readily identifiable, often predictable, and frequently unique to the generation (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Their relationship with technology has changed the way they know the world, and their positive experience inside organizations and institutions during their school years has changed the way they interact (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). The millennial generation is fundamentally affected by the explosion of new technology options (Deal et al., 2010). The TCP/IP suite that enables the internet to function was established in 1982 which is considered the birth year of the millennial generation; AOL emerged when they were young and the first Millennials were in high school in 1997 when the number of sites reached a million; and the world's first commercial cellular phone, was introduced when members of the high school Class of 2000 were celebrating their first birthdays and the iPhone emerged as they celebrated their 25th (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Their positive experience in home life, institutions, and organizations has influenced them to be optimists, team players, and rule followers (Howe & Strauss, 2009). They believe in the future and see themselves at the cutting edge of technological and social advancements (Howe & Strauss, 2009). They are cooperative team players, they believe in a collective power, and gravitate towards group activity (Howe & Strauss, 2009). They accept authority and follow rules with a majority of millennials suggesting that a lack of discipline is a social problem and that they favor tougher rules against misbehavior (Howe & Strauss, 2009).

The approach to work and the workplace by millennials is indeed different (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). They seem hesitant to commit fully to an organization, prefer teamwork and open communication, like to be rewarded regularly, and have become reliant on technology

(Stewart et al., 2017). They exhibit some degree of hesitation to commit fully to their companies, even when the work setting is generally supportive and attentive to most basic employee needs (Stewart et al., 2017). If they are performing well and their needs are being met, they will remain with the employer, but they do not feel that commitment is necessary for job satisfaction (Stewart et al., 2017). Millennials seek a team-based workplace culture with close contact and communication with superiors as well as frequent feedback (Gursoy et al., 2008). They prefer close relationships with open communication in a team environment (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Millennials are the product of an era of rewarding all children who show up to play a sport, giving trophies and ribbons to each participant whether or not they exhibited high levels of performance (Stewart et al., 2017). They prefer to be rewarded or recognized for their work at least monthly, if not more frequently (Stewart et al., 2017). Perhaps the most apparent difference between Millennials and other generations in the workplace is their distinctive relationship with technology (Stewart et al., 2017). Their experience with technology influences their relationship with organizations, and they expect to be provided an opportunity to utilize the contributions they can bring to the workplace by utilizing technology (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

Millennials perceive that the supervisory relationship is the second most important work value (Chen & Choi, 2008). According to Omilion-Hodges and Sugg (2019), millennials prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, listen carefully, and give personalized attention and frequent communication. They expect employers to allow them to blend work with the rest of their lives, desire employment that provides an opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills, and connect to a larger purpose (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). They want a road map to success and expect their companies to provide it (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). They want a constant stream of feedback, are in a hurry for success, and expect employers to provide them

with training and opportunities to advance quickly (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Transformational leadership was perceived by Millennials to be the most effective, and the directive was the least effective (Easton & Steyn, 2022). They prefer leaders who display care for others, give personal attention to employees, are more people-oriented than task-oriented, are charismatic provide workers with a sense of purpose through encouragement, and provide immediate feedback and recognition (Easton & Steyn, 2022). They displayed an aversion to directive leadership by indicating that they are opposed to commands and authoritarian behavior, and they value opportunity and encouragement to make their own decisions (Easton & Steyn, 2022).

Generation Z

Generation Z is a new cohort in the workforce, and the literature on this generation is in an emerging phase (Chillakuri, 2020). Some of the initial studies indicate that Generation Z shares many traits with the Millennial Generation, but they also bring new patterns of behavior (Scroth, 2019). The literature reviewed suggests that this generation wants their ideas to be valued, is reliant on technology, wants open communication and timely feedback, flexible working arrangements, and a relational approach to leadership (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Chillakuri, 2018; Chillakuri, 2020; Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019). Disrespect to them is not listening to or being dismissive of their ideas (Scroth, 2019). They want a company where they can make a significant contribution and will consider decisions unfair if they do not understand the process used to make those decisions (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019). Generation Z stands out from other generations in that they have never seen a world without the Internet (Chillakuri, 2020). They commonly communicate via text, emoji, and video, and may lack skills that earlier generations take for granted like handling calls and writing emails (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Generation Z wants to have a clear understanding of the

organization's values, vision, and strategic goals, and like to understand the other social initiatives and opportunities in which they can participate (Chillakuri, 2020). The company's values and social initiatives may influence their decision to follow or work for that organization (Chillakuri, 2020; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). This generation believes that timely feedback about their performance is essential so they can focus on improvement instead of waiting for the year-end review (Chillakuri, 2018). They value in-person, timely feedback, and want to know the opportunities for career advancement (Chillakuri, 2018). This generation believes that organizations must provide flexibility (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). Flexible schedules and paid time are of utmost importance (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Their ideal boss is fair, confident, friendly, and open-minded (Grow & Yang, 2018). They want a positive, communicative leader who provides mentorship and other developmental opportunities (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021).

Implications

Successful leaders should adopt leadership styles that suit the cultural expectations of their followers (Easton & Steyn, 2022). Understanding their behavior and distinct needs in the workplace will lead to better integration of the new employees and mutual success (Scroth, 2019). The literature reviewed suggests that both generations have relied on technology for communication, desire constant feedback and periodical reviews, and desire flexibility. They rely on text messaging primarily for their interaction and have missed out on learning some vital rules of conversation (Chillakuri, 2020; Stewart et al., 2017). They lack interpersonal skills and may need help and guidance to improve their social interactions (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). They expect leaders to provide constant interaction, and consider meaningful relationships as an important element of leadership (Easton & Steyn, 2022). This may point towards

transformational leadership which provides the desired encouragement, challenging goals, and creative thinking (Easton & Steyn, 2022). Leaders of these generations may want to modify their workplace culture and performance appraisal process to create an environment where these generations can thrive (Stewart et al., 2017). Through the performance appraisal process, managers have an opportunity to show employees how their contributions fit within the larger context of the organization (Stewart et al., 2017). By linking individual contributions directly to specific organizational objectives, employees can reinforce their direct personal contributions to the team (Stewart et al., 2017). These generations view work as a thing and not a place, and organizations should concentrate on outcomes and consider that time spent on a project or task may not link the activity or the employee's contribution to the overall organizational goals (Stewart et al., 2017).

Summary

The literature reviewed in this section serves to suggest a definition for leadership and leaders, explore leadership in construction, and explore the expectations of the generations entering the workforce. This was accomplished by: exploring leadership theory and a few of the prominent leadership theories including the Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Charismatic Theory, and Contingency Theory; defining leadership, the process of leadership, the behavioral influence of leadership, the group dynamic of leadership, and the use of goals in leadership; defining a leader and the practices utilized by leaders including a guiding vision, challenging the norm and the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart; exploring leadership in construction; and exploring the generations entering the workforce including Generation Y & Z. The remainder of the literature section recaps and highlights the main ideas of the literature

review and suggests implications for leadership in construction by comparing and contrasting these generations expectations with the leadership approach in construction.

The literature review of this paper narrowed its focus to leadership theories that are suggested to be the prominent research focus of an associated period. Until the 1940s leadership theories focused on personal traits, led by the Great Man Theory and Trait Theory (Bass & Bass, 2008). Thomas Carlyle is credited as the founder of the Great Man Theory and claimed that leaders are born and gifted with heroic potential (Bass & Bass, 2008; Carlyle, 1846). The Trait Theory was started by Galton in 1896 and suggests that leadership is unique to extraordinary individuals and contains inherited attributes that distinguish them from other people (Bass & Bass, 2008; Nawaz, Z. and Khan, I., 2016). From the 1940s to the 1960s leadership theories focused on behavioral patterns of leaders, led by charismatic theory (Bass & Bass, 2008). The Charismatic theory branched from the works of Max Weber (1924/1947) in which he asserted that followers want to identify with charismatic leaders, and later House (1976) expanded on the theory to suggest that leaders have behavioral characteristics that encourage people to follow them. From the 1960s to the 1980s leadership theories asserted that leadership was contingent on a mix of leader traits, follower traits, and situations, led by contingency theory (Bass & Bass, 2008). Fiedler's contingency theory dominated much of the research on leadership during this period, and he asserted that group effectiveness depends on the interaction between leadership styles and the degree to which situations enable leaders to exert influence (Bass & Bass, 2008). From the 1980s leadership theories focused on inspiration, led by transformational theory (Bass & Bass, 2008). Transformational theory was introduced in 1973 by Downton and formalized as a theory by Burns in 1978 (Bass & Bass, 2008). Downton (1973) suggested that during times of stress leaders revise the mission and suggest solutions to deal with the sources of stress, and

Burns (1978) suggested that leadership comes when one or more people engage with others in a way that leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels (Bass & Bass, 2008).

To define leadership this paper narrowed its focus to a synopsis of shifts in leadership research as provided by Northouse (2021) (Northouse, 2021). From 1900 to 1929, the study of leadership focused on control and power, and leadership was defined as the ability to impress the leader's will on those being led (Moore, 1927; Northouse, 2021). In the 1930s, traits became the focus, and leadership was defined as an interaction of an individual's specific traits with those of a group to influence them (Northouse, 2021). In the 1940s, studies focused on the group approach, and leadership was defined as the behavior of an individual while involved in directing others (Northouse, 2021). In the 1950s, the study expanded on the group approach, and leadership was defined by what leaders do in groups to develop shared goals, and influence group effectiveness (Northouse, 2021). In the 1960s, the study focused on behavior, and leadership was defined as acts by persons who influence other persons (Northouse, 2021; Seeman, 1960). In the 1970s, the study focused on organizational behavior, and leadership was defined as efforts to accomplish organizational goals (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021; Rost, 1991). In the 1980s, the study of leadership focused on influence and transformation, and leadership was defined as a noncoercive influence (Northouse, 2021). In the 1990s, the study focused on servant leadership and adaptive leadership, and leadership was defined as influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2021). In the 21st century, the study of leadership focused on authentic leadership and inclusive leadership, and leadership was defined as a process of engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers (Burns, 2012; Northouse, 2021).

Based on this synopsis Northouse (2021) suggests that leadership contains the following components; leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs in groups, and leadership involves common goals. Process refers to the process of behavioral influence utilized by leaders, and is highlighted by transformational and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers, and Transformational leadership describes the process of how leaders inspire followers to accomplish great things (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021). Influence refers to the influential behaviors of leaders used to influence a group to take action towards achieving a goal, and is a focus on what they do and how they act (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Northouse, 2021; Stogdill, 1963). Groups refers to the behavior of a leader when directing group activities, and suggests that leadership is a process in which activities of the many are organized in a specific direction by one (Bogardus, 1934; Hemphill, 1949). Goals refer to the acts of leaders to influence others towards shared goals, and goals are used to influence a group to achieve a goal (Northouse, 2012; Rost, 1993).

The exploration of leaders suggested a definition of leaders as suggested by Kouzes and Posner (2006) in which they suggest that leaders engage in five practices; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. If leaders want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must model the behavior they expect from others; leaders possess a recognizable and strong sense of character that acts as a moral imperative to their actions and drives them to meet outcomes personally and organizationally (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Hesselbein, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). The vision serves as a guide for where the organization is and where it wants to go, and arises from reflection on key causes and goals, placing them on personal values and perceived social needs, and abstracting the key causes contributing to the attainment of these goals (Nanus, 1995;

Strange & Mumford, 2002). Leaders challenge the process by being critical of the ways an organization does business and continuously searching for opportunities and innovative ways to improve (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). They enable others to act through trust which forms the basis for the effective functioning of the organization by building a culture in which people know that everyone will do their part well (Bennis, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Encouraging the heart refers to the efforts of a leader to give pace and energy to the workforce by paying attention to follower's needs and the importance of the leader-follower relationship (Bennis, 1984; Northouse, 2021).

The literature reviewed suggests that the project-based nature of the construction industry makes it a special and unique industry, the industry has a significant need to recruit and retain workers, the industry's approach remains largely traditional, and this approach may be short-sighted. A construction project is composed of several organizations, individuals, and teams from different parent organizations and/or departments brought together, and after the project, project teams are disintegrated and members return to their parent organization and/or departments (Ali et al., 2020). Despite the importance of leadership and unique conditions in the industry, it appears that comprehensive and industry-specific research on leadership in the construction industry is limited (Toor and Ofori 2008). With increasing demands for new infrastructure and a decreased availability of skilled construction workers, the need to recruit and retain workers is becoming critical (Welfare et al., 2021). A combination of aging workers expected to leave the workforce and a decrease in young people pursuing construction will likely prevent the companies within the industry from filling those needed jobs to keep up with demand (Morello et al., 2018). Despite significant changes in business and management practices, the construction industry remains largely traditional (Toor & Ofori, 2008). To prevent the

breakdown of stability and achieve meaningful goals, leaders seek to control tasks and activities by focusing on vertical forms of leadership (Graham et al., 2020). This approach may be short-sighted with leaders primarily focusing on day-to-day work, activities management, and achieving short-term goals (Graham et al., 2020). The evolution of project social dynamics involving multiple teams adapting to diverse demands and on-site conditions requires a new approach (Graham et al., 2020).

The literature reviewed regarding generations served to define generational cohorts, and Millennial's and Generation Z's common traits and behaviors along with their approaches to work and leader-follower relationships. Karl Mannheim (1952) introduced the concept of generations in 1927 and defined generations as units that respond collectively to a set of social conditions that develop their consciousness and sense of belonging and identity (Mannheim, 1952). He suggests that all later experiences receive their meaning from this original view of the world (Mannheim, 1952). Millennials have a relationship with technology that influences the way they know the world, and their positive experience inside organizations and institutions during their school years has influenced the way they interact (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). They seem hesitant to commit fully to an organization, prefer teamwork and open communication, like to be rewarded regularly, and have become reliant on technology (Stewart et al., 2017). They believe that the supervisory relationship is a vital most important work value (Chen & Choi, 2008). They prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, listen carefully, and give personalized attention and frequent communication, and expect employers to allow them to blend work with the rest of their lives, desire employment that provides an opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills, and connect to a larger purpose (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). The literature on Generation Z is in an emerging phase, but some of the initial studies indicate that

they share many traits with the Millennial Generation, but also bring new patterns of behavior (Chillakuri, 2020; Scroth, 2019). This generation wants their ideas to be valued, are reliant on technology, want open communication and timely feedback, flexible working arrangements, and a relational approach to leadership (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Chillakuri, 2018; Chillakuri, 2020; Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019).

Gap in The Literature

Based on the literature reviewed in this study it appears that there may be a divergence between the predominant leadership style in construction, and what is perceived to be by Millennials and Generation Z. This was accomplished by connecting individual and separate studies that focused on either the perceived leadership styles in construction or what is perceived to be effective in recruiting, retaining, and leading Millennials and Generation Z, but the studies used did not directly study leadership traits in construction as perceived by these generations. This study can contribute to the body of literature by filling a gap within the literature by conducting semi-structured interviews with the Millennial and Z generations to determine the perceived leadership traits of construction leaders, and then compare the results directly with what the previous literature suggests is effective in leading these generations. This study can contribute to the body of literature by filling a gap within the literature by addressing existing leadership traits among Project Superintendents and Project Managers in the construction industry and illustrating what leadership traits are perceived by the Millennial and Z Generation to be influential within their specific environment.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

An inference drawn by connecting individual and separate studies focused on either the perceived leadership styles in construction or what is perceived to be effective in recruiting, retaining, and leading Millennials and Generation Z, may imply that there may be a divergence between the predominant leadership style in construction, and what is perceived to be by Millennials and Generation Z. The studies used to derive this inference did not directly study leadership traits in construction as perceived by these generations. This study contributes to the body of literature and fills a portion of that gap by conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the Millennial and Z Generations who are currently active in the construction industry to determine the perceived leadership traits of construction leaders. Those results are then compared directly to the reviewed literature to suggest if there is a divergence. To accomplish individual in-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with construction personnel in the construction industry; and the interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The analysis process will begin with reading the interview transcripts and observational notes, and then categories using coding. Coding is used in this study to categorize the themes of the participant's perceptions of the most common leadership traits among leaders in the construction industry and what traits they desire these leaders to have. The corresponding sections: present the purpose statement and research questions; describe the measures taken to protect human subjects; explain the type of research chosen; clarify the number of individuals included in the study and why that number was selected, where they are located, and the criteria used for selecting the sample; describe the instruments used to collect data from research participants and the process used to develop them; explain how the data is analyzed for themes; and the limitations associated with the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study is to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership traits for construction leaders (Project Superintendents and Project Managers) in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders; and discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among site leaders.

Research Questions

1. What are Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions, based on personal experiences and interactions, of common leadership traits among leaders (Project Superintendents and Project Managers) in the construction industry?
2. What traits are perceived by Generation X (Millennial) and Generation Z construction professionals to be effective leaders?

Protection of Human Subjects

The subjects of this study are Millennial and Generation Z construction professionals presently in the industry who are actively working in the construction industry. They were asked questions corresponding to their perception of leadership traits that reveal the commonly practiced leadership traits among site leaders. The risk for the participants is potential repercussions from leaders who do not like the responses. Protection of the interviewees' rights starts with submission and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before administration. The IRB serves as a critical component to ensure that the research methods are ethical by assuring that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Doctoral students and

committee members are also required to complete human subjects training to ensure that they possess sufficient knowledge of human subjects' protection and ethical treatment.

consent for participation in the study. Before conducting an interview, the interviewee will be sent an informed consent letter which informs them of the purpose of the study, that the interview is purely voluntary, participation in the study will not be compensated, and not participating will not be penalized in any way. The first question in the interview will ask the potential respondents if they agree to participate or disagree to participate and they will be informed that they may choose to stop the interview at any time. Those who chose not to participate were thanked for their time, and their identities remained anonymous. Those who chose to continue were protected throughout the process, and participation in the study will be anonymous. All interviews were conducted in person, the respondents were not asked for any sensitive or personal information that could be used to identify, and responses were transcribed, stored, and secured on a password-protected laptop that the administrator could only access. Once the data was analyzed, all identifiable descriptions of the subjects were removed.

Research Design

This study utilizes a phenomenological method by conducting interviews to discover Millennial and Generation Z field-level workers' perceptions of common and desirable leadership traits for site leaders in the construction industry based on their experience with these leaders. A phenomenological method allows the study to discover how site leadership traits and behaviors have affected the individuals being studied as perceived by those individuals (Knaack, 1984). In-depth individual interviews provide an opportunity to learn about individual experiences and perspectives on the issue in focus which can be used to create meaning by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Responses are qualitatively analyzed utilizing coding to determine any prominent themes. Qualitative research allows the study to address the research questions by developing an understanding of the experience of the interviewees (Fossey et al., 2002). Coding enables the collected data to be assembled, categorized, and thematically sorted, providing an organized platform for the construction of meaning (Williams & Moser, 2019).

The interview was explicitly designed for this study, including questions to obtain information regarding the perceived common and desirable leadership traits based on experiences with site leaders. Questions ask what traits are perceived as being utilized by construction Project Superintendents and Managers, to describe the experiences and interactions with these leaders, and to describe traits they perceive as desirable among these leaders. An example of one of these questions: Do you feel that the Project Superintendent and Managers consistently communicate short-term and long-term goals? The remainder of the questions can be found in Appendix A. The interviews were conducted in person or via Zoom in Sacramento, California, and collected by an administrator. This allowed the facilitator to listen to stories regarding the subjects' experiences with site leaders provided the study with the ability to examine site leadership through the lens of the subjects, and ensured that the interview responses were collected directly by the administrator and that the identity of the respondents was protected. The administrator analyzed the data for themes to determine if the interactions were perceived as positive or negative.

Population

The subjects are Millennial and Generation Z field-level personnel in the construction industry, and race, religion, sex, age, or other demographic characteristics were not considered. The initial participants will be selected with a snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling

begins with a convenience sample to provide the initial subjects, and those initial subjects provide recommendations for additional subjects (Coleman, 1958; Goodman, 1961; Heckathorn, 2011). Snowball sampling is well suited when the study concerns a relatively secretive manner (Etikan et al., 2015). This method will allow for the interviews to be done completely anonymously. The initial convenience sample will be based on the access of the researcher. The researcher spent twenty-five-plus years in the industry and will reach out to past co-workers and connections. The remainder of the participants will be referred to me by the initial participants.

Sample

Sampling refers to the choices made regarding the selection of people, settings, and processes (Maxwell, 2012). The sampling group was concentrated on Millennial and Generation Z workers in the Sacramento, California region. The initial participant pool will consist of fifteen construction professionals, and subjects will be contacted and added to the population until saturation occurs and it becomes clear that no new information will be obtained by interviewing additional subjects. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) completed a systematic review of twenty-three studies on qualitative sampling size to determine the optimal range of population sizes to reach saturation. Saturation can be defined as the point at which gathering more data reveals no new properties or insights (Hennink et al., 2017; Morse, 2000). Their research suggests that the optimal sample size for qualitative studies to reach saturation is between four and twenty-four (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). An exact number could not be provided because every study is unique and the sample size to achieve saturation is unique to the specific study (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). A sample size of fifteen was chosen because it is in the middle of the optimal range, and additional subjects were added to the population until saturation occurred. The final number of respondents was nineteen at which point saturation was reached. Subjects were

randomly selected from a variety of Sacramento, California, local construction companies to ensure that the sample group is representative of the industry and not a particular company. Stratification was not utilized in this survey. Race, religion, sex, age, or other demographic characteristics are not viable for this research. The goal for the sample size of this study is fifteen subjects. This accurately represents the industry and is not so large that it is extraordinarily costly and time-consuming to collect and analyze data. This sample size also allows for detailed interviews to obtain important information about the managers' experiences.

Design and Instrument Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations of this study include the time in which it is studied, the geographic region, and the population it studies. The time of this study is 2024, but the responses of the interviewees include experiences from the entirety of their career which based on their associated age is approximately between 2024 and 2000 which is based on the population focus. This means that the study is relevant to the people in the generations that are included in this time and the people leading them, and studies of this nature should be completed periodically to stay relevant. The geographic region in which this study was conducted was Sacramento, CA which is in Northern California. This geographic region was selected because the administrator resides in this region, has contacts in this region which facilitated the selection of the initial participants, and it is the region in which the administrator will work to implement the associated recommendations. The relevancy of this study in different cultural contexts is difficult to determine, and additional studies in other regions should be conducted. The population included in this study includes members of the Millennial and Z generations, and the implications of its results may not apply to other generations. The selection of these generations is based on what the literature suggests as the industries' issue of a labor shortage and that these generations

represent the best opportunity for filling this shortage. Similar to the time delimitation this study may not be applicable to guide leadership for other generations, and studies such as this one should be done periodically.

Gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation was not considered when selecting participants or it may affect the responses to the interview questions. These demographics were not considered during the selection so they would not limit the pool of potential participants. Due to the demanding nature of the industry finding willing participants with available time to conduct the interview was a challenge and the administrator chose not to place additional limitations on the participant pool, beyond generation status. These demographics were not considered during the analysis of the results because the study was focused on the perceptions of Millennials and the Z generation and the administrator did not want additional factors to skew or complicate the results. It was also very important to the validity and the relevance of the study to capture the participant's individual lived experiences and further classifying people was seen as counterproductive in meeting this goal. It may be beneficial in future studies to discover if there are differences between males and females in the perception of construction leadership.

This study's results are limited by relying on honest and open responses, the limited sample size, and the region the sample is pulled from. Respondents must answer the questions openly and honestly to obtain accurate and reliable results. They may be reluctant to do so for fear of regular reprisal from the leaders they work with and who influence their job status and promotion possibilities. Efforts described in the previous sections to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents will be critical to securing accurate and reliable results. The study is also limited by the sample size and the Sacramento region. Construction is a global industry with many construction workers, and a sample size of nineteen is a relatively small amount. The Sacramento

region is a small area of the global industry. This sample size is limited to ensure a timely process of conducting interviews and collecting results while obtaining the highest level of detailed responses possible. The Sacramento region was chosen due to the accessibility of the author of this study and relationships within the region.

The author of this study has spent many years in the construction industry, which may present a bias that should be revealed. Based on years of experience and observation of Project Superintendents and Managers when conducting leadership activities, they are believed to possess undesirable traits and drive workers rather than motivate them. An intentional effort will be taken to disregard this potential bias and previous observations to ensure that this study is guided by research and that the results are founded in experimentation. The subjects will not be coerced or led to results that support previous observations but will be encouraged to answer openly and honestly. This study and its author intend to serve the construction industry and the associated community. A study free from bias with accurate and reliable results is critical to achieving that end. The author will make every effort to ensure that this potential bias does not influence the study and results.

Summary

This study utilized a qualitative approach to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions of the most common and desirable leadership traits for leaders in the construction industry. To accomplish this purpose individual in-depth interviews were conducted with construction professionals currently in the industry. Responses are analyzed utilizing coding to determine themes of their perceptions of the most common leadership traits among site leaders in the construction industry and what traits they desire these leaders to have. This study's results are limited by relying on honest and open responses, the limited sample size,

and the region the sample is pulled from. The respondents may fear reprisal from leaders for indicating negative traits or ineffective leadership. Protection of the interviewees' rights starts with consent for participation in the study, and responses are transcribed, stored, and secured on a password-protected laptop to ensure that identities are confidential. The study is limited by the sample size of nineteen respondents and limiting the respondents to the Sacramento region. The Sacramento region was chosen due to the accessibility of the author of this study and relationships within the region. The author of this study discloses a potential bias and describes how it will not be allowed to affect the results. The author's observation of site leaders occurring during twenty years of construction experience has produced a belief that they possess undesirable traits and drive workers rather than motivate them. An intentional effort will be taken to disregard this potential bias and previous observations to ensure that this study is guided by research and that the results are founded in experimentation.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Based on the literature reviewed it appears that there may be a divergence between the predominant leadership style in construction, and what is desired by members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohort (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabriellova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). Conventional practice within the construction industry focuses on driving productivity through power and intensity and neglects an overall strategy for leadership (Easton & Steyn, 2022; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017; Skipper & Bell, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). A construction project is composed of several organizations, individuals, and teams from different parent organizations and/or departments brought together, and after the project, teams are disintegrated returning to their parent organization and/or departments (Ali et al., 2020). To prevent the breakdown of stability and achieve meaningful goals, leaders seek to control tasks and activities by focusing on vertical forms of leadership (Graham et al., 2020). Millennials prefer teamwork and open communication, like to be rewarded regularly, and prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, listen carefully, and give personalized attention and frequent communication (Meister & Willyerd, 2010; Stewart et al., 2017).). Generation Z wants their ideas to be valued, open communication and timely feedback, flexible working arrangements, and a relational approach to leadership (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Chillakuri, 2018; Chillakuri, 2020; Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019).

With increasing demands for new infrastructure and a decreased availability of skilled construction workers, the need to recruit and retain workers is becoming critical (Welfare et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Labor occupational employment projections, an estimated 646,100 additional workers will be hired by 2032 to fulfill the economic needs for

construction work (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). A combination of aging workers expected to leave the workforce and a decrease in young people pursuing construction will likely prevent the companies within the industry from filling those needed jobs to keep up with demand (Morello et al., 2018). The Millennial and Generation Z cohorts represent the industry's best source for filling its hiring needs as suggested by the US Department of Labor occupational employment projections (2023). If the industry cannot fill the projected hiring needs it may prevent the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure. A gap was discovered in the literature because it does not directly study Millennial and Generation Z cohorts' perceptions of the leadership approach within the construction industry. This represents an area of study that could significantly advance the knowledge base of leadership in the industry, and whether it is prepared to fill its job need and effectively recruit, retain, and lead members of the incoming cohorts.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions of the most common leadership approach among leaders in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders and to discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among leaders. This is accomplished by conducting anonymous interviews with Millennial and Generation Z professionals in the construction industry within the Sacramento region. The subjects were selected via the snowball sampling technique beginning with a convenience sample to provide the initial subjects, and those initial subjects provided recommendations for additional subjects. The interview was explicitly designed for this study, including questions to obtain information regarding the approaches perceived as being utilized by construction leaders, to describe the experiences and interactions with these leaders, and to describe approaches they perceive as

desirable. The interviews were conducted in person or via Zoom in Sacramento, California, and collected by an administrator. This allowed the facilitator to listen to stories regarding the subjects' experiences with leaders, provided the study with the ability to examine site leadership through the lens of the subjects, and ensured that the interview responses were collected directly by the administrator. Responses were then analyzed utilizing coding to determine any prominent themes.

Validity

Validity refers to the correctness or credibility of a description, and interpretation of the data (Maxwell, 2012). The description consists of what the subjects experienced and how they experienced it and should be focused solely on their experiences without bringing the interviewer into the picture (Maxwell, 2012). The correctness and credibility of the description can be achieved by obtaining rich data and respondent validation (Maxwell, 2012). Rich data can be obtained through intensive interviews, detailed field notes, utilizing good-quality recording devices, and transcribing digital files (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Maxwell, 2012). Respondent verification is utilized to minimize reactivity. Reactivity refers to the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied, eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is impossible (Maxwell, 2012). Respondent validation refers to soliciting feedback about the data explanation from the people being studied and is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants said (Maxwell, 2012). A key concept for validity is thus the possibility of alternative interpretations because the researcher chooses to only select data that fits his or her existing theory, goals, or preconceptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is impossible to deal with these issues by eliminating the researcher's theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens (Maxwell, 2012). Instead, the researcher discloses their

understanding of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study from the outset of the study so that the reader understands the position from which the researcher undertakes the inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

To provide the highest level of validity possible the author of this study discloses a potential bias due to having spent many years in the construction industry. The author has worked in the construction industry for twenty-five years in various capacities including Laborer, Carpenter, Project Engineer, Project Manager, and Estimator. This has provided the author with extensive experience as both a leader and a subordinate in the industry. Based on years of experience and observation of Project Superintendents and Managers when conducting leadership activities, it is believed that some of them possess undesirable traits and drive workers rather than motivate them. An intentional effort has been taken during the interview and interpretation process to disregard this potential bias and previous observations to ensure that this study is guided by research and that the results are founded in experimentation. The subjects were not coerced or led to results that supported previous observations but were encouraged to answer openly and honestly. This study and its author intend to serve the construction industry and the associated community. A study free from bias with accurate and reliable results is critical to achieving that end. The author has made every effort to ensure that this potential bias does not influence the study and its results.

Data Collection

The purpose of this qualitative study and collection of the data was to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions of the most common leadership traits for construction leaders (Project Superintendents and Project Managers) in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders; and

discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among site leaders. The research questions included: what are Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z construction professionals' perceptions, based on personal experiences and interactions, of common leadership traits among leaders (Project Superintendents and Project Managers) in the construction industry; what traits are perceived by Generation X (Millennial) and Generation Z construction professionals to be effective for leaders? To answer the research questions the researcher conducted in-depth lengthy interviews with detailed, and descriptive note-taking. The interviews were explicitly designed for this study, including questions to obtain information regarding the perceived common and desirable leadership traits based on experiences with site leaders.

The subjects of the interview were Millennial and Generation Z construction professionals in the Sacramento, CA region who are presently in the industry and actively working in the construction industry. The interview process started with a detailed report and submission to the IRB board which was followed by their approval. Next, the potential participants were sent an email with an informed consent letter informing them of the purpose of the study, that the interview is purely voluntary, participation in the study will not be compensated, and not participating will not be penalized in any way. Once they responded confirming their willingness to participate, we scheduled a time and date for the interview. Those who chose not to participate were thanked for their time, and their identities remained anonymous. Those who chose to continue were protected throughout the process, and participation in the study also remained anonymous. Respondents were not asked for any sensitive or personal information that could be used to identify, and responses were transcribed, stored, and secured on a password-protected laptop that the administrator could only access.

The first question in the interview asked the participants if they agreed to participate or disagreed to participate and they will be informed that they may choose to stop the interview at any time. The remainder of the questions asked what traits are perceived as being utilized by construction Project Superintendents and Managers, to describe the experiences and interactions with these leaders, and to describe traits they perceive as desirable among these leaders. An example of one of these questions: Do you feel that the Project Superintendent and Managers consistently communicate short-term and long-term goals? The remainder of the questions can be found in Appendix A. The interviews were conducted in person and via Zoom in Sacramento, California. During the interview, the facilitator asked questions and then listened to stories regarding the subjects' experiences with site leaders while taking detailed notes and recording the interviews. Based on the responses to the initial questions the interviewer asked follow-up questions that were unique to every interview and intended to enhance the understanding of the individuals' experiences. This provided an opportunity for the facilitator with the ability to examine site leadership through the lens of the subjects. lengthy interviews ranging from forty-five minutes to two hours with subjects, in which the participants explained in detail their experiences with construction leadership. The questions asked during the interview were used to describe what participants experienced, and how they experienced it in terms of the conditions, situations, or context.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with an in-depth review and transcribing of the interview notes and recordings. The transcriptions are then analyzed utilizing coding to discover and label the prominent themes. This began by listing recurring themes and statements, each statement was treated with equal worth, in the responses to each question. These themes provided the

foundation for interpretation because they created clusters and removed repetition. This information was used to create a description of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon and how the experience happened. The researcher then created a composite description of the phenomenon which represents the essence of the experience and culminates these experiences in the study. The themes and corresponding labels became the headings in the results sections which are utilized to organize this section. A second list was created of descriptive statements that represented an individual subject's unique experience as it related to the question asked. These statements were then grouped with the theme that they corresponded with, left in narrative form describing the subject's individual experiences in detail, and used to emphasize and enrich the subject matter captured in the corresponding theme.

Results

The interviewees represented a range of positions within the industry, construction experience, and trade specialization. They included Project Engineers with one to five years of professional experience, Estimators with one to ten years of experience, Owners Representatives with ten to twenty years of experience, and Project Managers and Superintendents with five to twenty years of experience; the trade specialization of the interviewees included General Contracting, Plumbing and Mechanical Management, Heavy Civil Management, and Owners Representation. Each of the interviewees described a unique experience of their interactions with leadership as a subordinate, witnessing leadership interactions with others, and their interactions with subordinates as the leader. Although each person expressed a unique experience some common themes were discovered which provide insight into the overall leadership approach in construction, and the potential future direction of the approach. Coding provided the organization structure of this section which grouped questions by topic and the themes discovered in the

responses to these questions. This section includes an introduction of each interviewee and the responses to the interview questions grouped by topic and sub-grouped by response theme.

Interviewee Introduction and Context

The first interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his early forties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento California region. He has fifteen years of experience in construction and has held positions ranging from Laborer to Project Manager. His career started as a carpenter building residential homes, he then transitioned to collegiate education to earn a bachelor's degree with a major in Construction Management, and currently works in the Heavy Civil industry managing projects. His career in Heavy Civil project management began as an Intern while pursuing his degree, and after graduation, he was promoted to Project Engineer. After a couple of years of being a Project Engineer, his upper management was considering him for promotion to Project Manager. At that time, he felt that he was not ready to be an effective manager because he lacked an understanding of the daily activities, demands, and requirements of laborers and field crew members. He decided to work as a field laborer for a year to gain this understanding. After completing this time as a laborer, he felt ready to become a leader and was promoted to Project Manager. Due to this experience, the interviewee provides a unique and comprehensive account of leadership in Heavy Civil construction from the point of view of a project engineer, field laborer, and manager.

The second interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his early forties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has eighteen years of construction experience and is currently a Senior Project Manager overseeing a \$500 million project. He directly oversees a project management team that consists of seventeen Project Engineers, one other Project Manager, and twenty Superintendents. The project workforce that

the team oversees consists of over two hundred crew members from a varying range of trade specialties. He started his career as an intern for a large GC while pursuing his bachelor's degree in construction at CSUS. After graduating he was hired by the same company as a Project Engineer and has worked his way up to Senior Project Manager. His current duties are managing the team to ensure compliance with company policies, standards, and procedures; delegating and enforcing team members' roles and responsibilities; and ultimately being responsible for the project's success including the budget and schedule. He is also responsible for recruiting for his company, and as a Senior Manager is a direct representative of the company he works for.

The third interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his early twenties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has ten years of experience in the construction industry with positions including Laborer, Project Intern, and Project Engineer. He started his career while he was a teenager working as a member of the field crews in his father's company. His professional career started while pursuing his bachelor's degree in construction management at CSUS working as an intern for large GCs during the summers. He worked for one summer for a large GC and expressed that it was not a positive experience so he decided not to continue working with them. Last summer he started working for another large construction corporation in the estimating department of their concrete self-perform division. He expressed that this was a much better experience and upon graduation, he decided to continue working with this company as a Project Engineer. He has currently been working with this company full-time for six months. During the conversation, he expressed that although his professional career was just getting started because his father owned a construction company, he had grown up in the construction environment, and was very familiar with leadership in the industry.

The fourth interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his early twenties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has seven years of experience ranging from laborer to estimator. His career started as a teenager working as a laborer, which lasted for less than two years because he decided to pursue a degree and career in construction management. He stated that being a laborer was hard and demanding physical work, and he knew quickly that he wanted to pursue a career that was easier on his body but he enjoyed construction and wanted to stay in the industry. Construction management offered him the balance that he was looking for. He worked as an intern for various construction firms throughout the five years he spent pursuing his degree. Approximately one year before the time of the interview he graduated with a bachelor's in construction management and is currently a Jr. Estimator for a commercial construction company. His current responsibilities include assisting the estimating team with quantity take-offs, calling subcontractors to solicit bids, and bid leveling for lower-value trades such as landscape and flooring.

The fifth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his mid-thirties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has twelve years of experience in the construction industry, with positions that range from intern to Senior Superintendent. He started as an intern while finishing his college education at CSUS and worked his way up to his current position of Senior Superintendent. He currently works for a large corporation as the Senior Superintendent of a \$500 million project and directly oversees four Superintendents who each have Assistant Superintendents and Field Engineers underneath them. His current responsibilities consist of subcontractor trade coordination, schedule management, quality control and documentation, material management, management of site logistics, and site safety. At the start of the conversation, he felt that it was important to disclose

that he is currently working on a public works project funded by tax dollars, the primary contractor selection process is based on the lowest-priced bidder, there is a large amount of paperwork and bureaucracy to deal with, and the inspectors and public representatives are very difficult to deal with. He expressed that this has created a lot of tension among personnel working on the project which has led to many difficult and hostile moments.

The sixth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his mid-thirties currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has fourteen years of experience in the construction industry and his family also has extensive construction experience. His exposure to the industry started at a very young age, he stated that he grew up in construction, with his father and uncles who were in construction and brought him on job site visits as a child. When he became old enough to work his father employed him as a laborer on his family's projects during summer school breaks. His professional career began as an intern while pursuing his Bachelor's degree in construction management. Upon graduation, he started working for a large General Contractor building a \$100 million hospital project in Sacramento. He stated that this was not a positive experience, and decided to leave the company to work for a mechanical contractor which he does enjoy. He is currently a Project Engineer for a large Mechanical Contractor, oversees one junior-level Project Engineer and is being trained for promotion to Project Manager. His current responsibilities are field operations including productivity tracking and management, material procurement and management, and document control, but the promotion means that he will be transitioned towards being in the office with a focus on sales, budget management, and owner/client satisfaction.

The seventh interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his late thirties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has nineteen years

of experience in the industry with twelve years as a Project Manager at a large General Contractor and seven years as an owner representative with a prominent California healthcare system. His current role is team manager of Central Valley Capital Projects where he is responsible for managing people, client relationships, and local and regional demands. He oversees five PMs and two hundred projects that range in value with a total value of over \$200 million. He is responsible for the team dynamic, defining roles and responsibilities for his team, enforcing policies and procedures, and the overall results of each of the projects he oversees. He sees his role as a communicator and obstacle remover for his team and communicating with clients to ensure satisfaction. He is responsible for communicating with his team to ensure they are clear on their priorities and direction to increase the likelihood of success and accomplishing goals. When his team comes across an obstacle that threatens their ability to complete the task it is his job to find the root of the issues and work with the team to implement a solution that keeps the project on track. He is in charge of updating the client on the timeline and progress and working with the client on any issues that they have to ensure their satisfaction.

The eighth interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his mid-twenties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has five years of experience in the construction industry with positions that include laborer and Project Engineer. His experience started as a teenager in High School while working with his family as a laborer performing general demolition work. He liked this work but his father encouraged him not to stay in the trades performing physical labor because it is hard on the body and can be stressful. Due to encouragement by his father, he left his company in pursuit of a degree in construction management at CSUS, and aspirations of managing work. While at CSUS he worked for a GC during summer breaks as an intern. He recently graduated and is currently with

the same company as a Project Engineer working on a \$70 million project and is in charge of document control, quality control, and assisting the Superintendent with trade coordination. He believes that his time as a laborer is now invaluable to his ability to manage the work and understand what it takes and the physical demands of completing the work.

The ninth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his late forties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has over twenty years of experience in the construction industry with a primary focus on the mechanical HVAC and plumbing trades. His career started as an intern while pursuing his Bachelor's in Construction Management, and continued after graduation working for a Mechanical Contractor in the Sacramento area. He is currently a Senior Project Manager with a large mechanical contracting firm and is overseeing approximately \$50 million of work which consists of one large project, and a handful of small projects, and is pricing or bidding on several other potential projects. He oversees one Project Manager, one Project Engineer, two superintendents, and several field foremen. His current responsibilities include business development, estimating, developing project budgets and schedules, developing manpower loading charts and assignments, and managing the project team for execution of contract requirements and project success.

The tenth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his late thirties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has nine years of experience in the construction industry with all of them being in the mechanical trades. He started his career as a laborer working with his family as a teenager. After high school, he decided to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and after graduating went to work with a large mechanical contractor as a project intern. He is currently working with the same company

as a Project Manager overseeing approx. \$8 million worth of work with projects that range in value from \$200k to \$1 million. He has two Project Engineers who report to him and assist him with his duties regularly. His current responsibilities include business development, estimating, developing project budgets and schedules, developing manpower loading charts and assignments, and managing the project team for execution of contract requirements and project success.

The eleventh interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his mid-twenties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has eight years of experience in the industry, including being in the field as a crew member and in the office as a manager. He spent the first four years of his career in residential construction as a laborer performing demolition and landscape work. After working four years as a laborer he decided to quit due to the physical labor of the work and pursue a career in construction management which started by obtaining a bachelor's degree in construction management. While pursuing his degree he worked as an intern for various contractors. After graduation, he was hired by a large general contractor as a Project Engineer where he has currently been working for the last four years and is currently on a \$100 million project. His current duties include assisting the Project Manager with their duties, and document control including management of submittals and RFIs.

The twelfth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his early thirties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento California region. He has fifteen years of experience in construction and has held positions ranging from Laborer to Consultant. His father owns and operates a real estate development company, and he asserted that this means that he has been in construction his whole life. His career officially started when

he was a teenager and working as a laborer in his father's real estate development company. Originally, he did not desire to enter a career in construction and thought he would follow in his father's footsteps working in real estate development. In his early twenties, he discovered construction management through a family friend and decided to pursue a bachelor's in construction management at CSUS. During the summer break between his junior and senior years at CSUS, he was hired by a large GC corporation as an Intern. He continued to work for ten years holding positions that included Intern, Project Engineer, and Project Manager; and working on projects that ranged in value from \$1 million to \$150 million. He recently left construction to pursue a career in real estate and currently owns two companies which include a neon sign and GC/consulting company. For the sign company, he focuses on improving marketing and operation procedures to increase revenue and profitability; and for the GC/consulting company he assists others with their projects by providing consulting services, and when he acquires projects as the GC he acts as the Project Manager.

The thirteenth interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his mid-twenties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento California region. He did not have any experience in the industry before starting college but knew some people who had liked their careers in construction management and encouraged him to pursue an education and job in the same field. He decided to take their advice and just graduated from Sac State this year, 2024, with a bachelor's degree in construction management. While attending Sac State he worked in the industry working as an intern over the previous two summers. He is currently working as a Project Engineer for a mid-sized GC and is working towards becoming a Superintendent. His current responsibilities include supporting the Project Manager and Superintendent with document control and managing RFIs and Submissions.

The fourteenth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his late thirties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento California region. He has been working in the construction industry for twelve years with his professional career starting as an intern while pursuing a construction management degree at Sac State, and he is currently a Superintendent with a large general contracting corporation. His responsibilities include scheduling work, trade partner coordination/planning, responsible for job site/worker safety, quality of work in place, mentoring Project Engineering Staff & Foreman, facilitating meetings, responsible project spending (material and manpower), making decisions on where/when to push the job critical path. He normally works on healthcare projects overseeing field operations including twenty to thirty subcontractors and over one hundred field personnel, but he is currently in the office helping the estimating team build schedules on project pursuits. He hopes to win one of the projects they are pursuing very soon so he can get back out into the field and manage a project.

The fifteenth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his mid-forties and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He has twenty-four years of experience in the construction industry which started as an intern for a heavy civil contractor while attending CSUS in pursuit of a bachelor's Degree in construction management. He continued to work for a heavy civil contractor for ten years starting as a Project Engineer and working his way up to Project Manager. He then made a change in his career when he started working for a Real Estate and Land Development firm where he is currently the Director of Land Development. His current responsibilities include constructability reviews and advising; acting as a liaison between construction crews, the estimating department, and the accounting departments; reviewing and approval of all schedules and budgets; and managing projects. He

provided an interesting perspective on leadership in the construction industry including why he recently chose to leave the construction management side of the industry.

The sixteenth interviewee is a male member of the Generation Z cohort in his mid-twenties. He is a recent graduate student from the CSUS construction management program and is currently working in the construction industry in the Sacramento region. He did not have any experience in construction before college and found construction management while researching possible majors which was followed by a conversation with the program director at CSUS. His career started as an intern working for various contractors while attending CSUS which lasted five years and is currently an Assistant Project Manager for a property development and construction firm. He stated that his experience working for contractors was not pleasant, but he currently enjoys working with a property developer and plans to become a development manager soon. His current responsibilities include supporting the Project Manager and Superintendent by facilitating and processing submittals and RFIs, and occasionally problem-solving for the team.

The seventeenth interviewee is a female member of the Millennial cohort in her early thirties and is currently working in the construction industry as a Project Manager for a large general contractor corporation in the Sacramento region. She started her career as an intern during the summer, which spanned four different summers while attending college. When she graduated, she started to work for a General Contractor as a Project Engineer and has worked her way up to Project Manager. She is currently a Project Manager on a \$24 million project which is in the early phases of buyout and contract execution with her responsibilities including subcontractor procurement and negotiation of contract terms, and is working through pre-construction activities on three other projects with her responsibilities including constructability reviews and budget establishment. She has two direct reports, including a Project Engineer and

an Intern, who assist her with her duties and managing the projects. She was very open regarding her experiences in construction including why she is currently considering leaving the industry.

The eighteenth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his early thirties and currently works in the construction industry as a Senior Project Manager for a large Real Estate and Property Development firm in the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area). His career started as an Estimating Intern for a Concrete Subcontractor while pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Construction Management at CSUS. After graduation, he worked as a Project Engineer for a General Contractor in the Bay Area where he worked for three years, moving up to Senior Project Engineer, and left when he was approached to work for a Real Estate and Property Development firm as an owner's representative. He started with this firm as an Assistant Project Manager, after a couple of years he was promoted to Project Manager, and was recently promoted to Senior Project Manager. He currently manages \$600 million of work, spread across three projects, as the owner representative overseeing three general contractors, and supervises two Project Managers as direct reports from the same firm. His current responsibilities include managing the project on behalf of the owner from start to finish including strategic planning, selecting the GC, reviewing and approving subcontractor selection, approval of budgets and funding, contract negotiation, review of cost controls and schedules, and navigation of environmental jurisdiction approvals.

The nineteenth interviewee is a male member of the Millennial cohort in his mid-forties and is currently working in the construction industry as an owner consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area). His construction career started while in High School where he performed small jobs such as building decks and fences, which he stopped doing to pursue a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering. After completing his degree, he worked as a Civil Designer for

eleven years and then transitioned to being an owner's representative for a Real Estate and Property Development firm in the Bay Area. He worked for this firm for ten years, starting as a Project Manager and quickly being promoted to Senior Project Manager, he recently left the firm to start an owner-consulting business where he is the sole employee and consults large clients on over \$500 million worth of projects. As an owner consultant, he assists with managing leases; he acts as a liaison to connect designers, contractors, and owners; and assists with coordination of projects on operating facilities to maximize construction progress while minimizing impact on operations.

Leadership Approach in the Industry

Most people had a hard time answering the question of what is the general approach to leadership in the construction industry because they felt that there was not one answer that would apply to the entire industry. The interviewees consistently implied that the leadership approach in the industry varies. The variables that consistently came up were crew type which referenced the type of work that they perform; whether the leader is considered an office leader or a field leader with field leaders referring to Superintendents and Foreman who actively managed project site activity and led the crews that directly performed work activities that directly contributed to the construction of the project, and office leaders referring to Project Managers whose primary responsibility was to manage budgets, procurement, and documents such as submittals and RFIs; project funding type which referred to whether the project was publicly or privately funded and the monetary size of the budget; whether what some leaders were what some interviewees stated were classified as two camps old school or new school; the company culture established by upper management; and what some of the younger interviewees suggested as currently being a transition of the prominent leadership approach in the industry.

Crew Type

One of the interviewees provided a detailed explanation and example of the differences in leadership approach with the different crew types in construction. The bulk of his career has been spent working for a Heavy Civil contractor building roads and he stated that within this industry the leadership style depends on the crew type. He explained that in Heavy Civil contracting there are three primary crews: the underground crew which performs excavation of trenches, installation of utility pipe in the trenches, and backfill and compaction of the trenches; the grade setting crew which includes clearing the site of trees and brush, stripping topsoil of vegetation, performing cut/fill operations to raise the locations of the site that are below the required grade elevations and lower the locations of the site that are above the required grade elevation; and the asphalt crew which places and compacts aggregate base, and places and installs asphalt surfaces. The leadership approach that the interviewee employs as a Project Manager depends on the crew type that he is leading and the field leaders within those crews practice different leadership approaches. He provided an explanation of the leadership used to manage the underground and grade-setting crews, contrasted the two approaches and resulting environment, and indicated they were drastically different.

Transactional & Task-Oriented

The interviewee explained that of the three crew types the underground crew is the most labor-intensive, requires the least amount of skill, receives the least amount of training, is the lowest paid, and is the easiest to replace of the three crews. The combination of these factors results in a transactional relationship and task-oriented leadership approach. The relationship is solely transactional where the labor force trades manual labor for a paycheck. If they perform up to the standards they will retain their job, if they exceed the standards they may receive a pay

increase, and if they fail to meet the standards than they may lose their job. The leadership approach is task oriented with the Project Manager or Superintendent dictating tasks and deadlines to the crews' foreman tasks immediately before starting them with very little explanation of how to perform them or why they are important. They very rarely solicit or allow feedback or input from the crew members. In his opinion, the foreman and the crew members preferred to have very little thought process among crew members, and that task delegation and task completion is a mutual arrangement. He also indicated that this arrangement results in a lot of insecurity, confrontation, blame, and turnover. Because the crew members are seen as easily replaceable, they feel they have little to no job security. When mistakes occur, they fear that if someone finds out they will lose their jobs which results in them rarely taking responsibility for mistakes, and commonly blaming each other. This leads to confrontational and defensive behavior and a lack of cohesion within the team.

Transformational & Goals

The grade-setting crews require the highest level of training of the three crews, and as a result, are the highest paid and most difficult to replace of the three crews. The grade-setting operation must be precise to ensure that ground elevations, building pads, and property boundaries are set and located properly; and completion of this operation requires very expensive equipment that must be operated with a high level of skill to ensure that the work is completed properly and safely. Due to these factors, the leadership approach is very different from the underground crew, and is classified as transformational and goal-oriented. The leaders engage with the crews to establish a connection and unite the group towards a common goal. In this crew type the Project Manager or Superintendent tends to align people towards a common goal by discussing tasks and deadlines with the crews' foreman days or weeks prior to starting them and

explaining how they are to be performed and why they are important. They also tend to solicit and allow a greater level of feedback and input from the crew members. In his opinion, the foreman and the crew members like to be involved in the discussion-making process, utilizing their minds during the work process, and feeling like their ideas are valued. Because leaders tend to solicit feedback and crew members like to provide feedback at a higher level than the underground crews there tends to be a lot less confrontation, blame, and turnover; and because the crew members are not seen as easily replaceable, they have a greater level of job security. Since they do not fear losing their jobs when mistakes occur, they take responsibility for their mistakes they do not blame each other instead they work together to find solutions. This minimizes confrontational and defensive behavior and leads to greater cohesion within the team.

Transformational & Transactional

Another of the interviewees added some explanation to the leadership variable of crew type stating that he believes that the leadership approach in construction is a mix of transactional with a task-oriented approach and transformational with a relationship-oriented approach, but whether the crew leans towards being transactional and task-oriented or transformational and relationship-oriented is dependent on the type of trade work they perform. He works for a Mechanical contractor and was intimately familiar with the leadership approach within that industry but provided a contrast to the leadership approaches of other trades based on what he has witnessed while working with those trades on a shared project. He stated that the leadership approach within each crew is directly correlated with how labor-intensive the work is and the complexity of the system that they install. Crews with a high level of labor intensity who install systems with a low level of complexity tend to hire people with lower levels of skill, require less training, are easily replaceable, and their leaders tend to be transactional and task-oriented.

Crews with a lower level of labor intensity who install systems with a high level of complexity hire people with a high level of skill, require more training, are not easily replaceable, and their leaders tend to be transformational and relationship-oriented. He used mechanical contracting as an example of low labor intensity and high complexity trade. The equipment they install is expensive and proper function of this equipment requires detailed and accurate installation. If not installed properly the equipment will not operate properly and may malfunction to the point that it is ruined. This means that the work associated with Mechanical contracting work requires a high level of skill and adequate time for proper installation. If the foreman pushes the crews to finish the tasks in less time than is needed for proper installation then it may result in costly mistakes. He suggested that for his trade, it is often better to slow down and do it right than push people to work fast and ruin the equipment. He added that the complexity of the system requires a skilled worker who tends to be more reliable, self-motivated, and knowledgeable which requires less pushing than other crews. He contrasted this with high labor and low complexity trades such as reinforcement installers suggesting that they have a lower level of skill and are less reliable and self-motivated which means they require more pushing and their leaders tend to be more task-oriented.

Position – Field vs Office

Some of the interviewees suggested that the leadership approach in construction varied based on whether they were considered field or office leaders. They stated that field leaders tend to delegate and lead through power and control, rarely take time to develop subordinates, and take what they described as an old-school approach. An old-school approach was described by the interviewees as showing strength, being task-oriented, and not taking time to explain things or to solicit feedback or opinions. They added that field leaders delegate by assigning tasks daily

with little or no explanation, demanding respect through yelling loud and strong commands and belittling people, and demanding compliance with threats of job loss if not completed in time; they tend not to develop people, take time to mentor them, or take time to explain to them why they are doing what is asked, but instead expect people to focus on the task delegated to them. The office environment was described as being very different than the field environment. The interviewees stated that the office environment is more professional, the office leaders are more tactful, and there is a higher level of development. Some of the interviewees stated that people working in the office conducted themselves with a higher level of professionalism, and their leadership approach in this environment needed to be very different. These leaders tend to take a more tactful approach by leading through collaboration, assigning tasks, and taking greater time to develop subordinates.

Field Leaders: Transactional & Task-Oriented

One interviewee stated that if he were to generalize the leadership approach in construction, it would be transactional and task-oriented and that people are seen as resources to complete the task; another described the current approach to leadership in construction as very ego-driven and stated that leaders in construction are controlling and have frequent displays of power in an attempt to establish themselves as leaders. Some of the interviewees indicated that a majority of the leaders who utilized this approach tended to be Foreman and Superintendents. Field leaders were said to have an old-school approach because they are task-oriented, do not value relationships nor do they take time to develop them. They indicated that when foremen lead crew members, they tend to be more task-oriented, stern, and strict; when Superintendent lead, they use a balance of task and relationship-oriented approaches, tended to be task-oriented first and relationship-oriented second, but the exact mix depended on whether the crew was on

the schedule's critical path and whether they were meeting the schedules deadlines. If the subcontractor was performing then the Superintendent tended not to focus on that crew, but if they were not performing then the Superintendent would be pushing the crew to improve performance these conversations tended to be very tense with tempers often escalating. Some interviewees believed that the field leaders' approach is crude and vulgar but also felt compelled to defend them stating that they are under a lot of pressure, have an overwhelming number of tasks to complete, and do not have time to explain themselves. One of the interviewees noted that field leaders from the Millennial and Z Generations value relationships more than the previous generations, but they still tend to be task-oriented due to the pressure associated.

Office Leaders: Mix of Task and Relationship

The interviewees suggested that there is another leadership approach that strategically utilizes a mix of task and relationship-oriented with a tendency to be relationship-first and task-oriented second. One interviewee suggested that the leaders with this approach tend to be Project Managers because they are often high-paid professionals in positions that require college degrees and are in greater demand than field professionals, and their leaders take more time to develop them. They described their approach as building a relational environment through collaboration, facilitating group discussions, and soliciting recommendations from team members. They commonly hold weekly meetings where upcoming and current projects are reviewed, and tasks for these projects are assigned through a collaborative discussion of who is best to complete them and which means would be best to complete them. These discussion leverages people's expertise to deliver the best solutions and solicit buy-in which increases the likelihood that everyone will contribute at a high level. They added this approach communicates expectations and does not micro-manage, but allows autonomy for people to figure out the best means to

accomplish tasks while providing room for error to maximize professional growth. Some of the interviewees indicated that the use of this approach to build a relational environment and solicit buy-in leads to greater task completion which is why they indicated they were relational-oriented first and task-oriented second. One of the interviewees stated that although office management does take a more tactful approach, by developing and leveraging relationships they are still very profit and schedule-driven and are primarily task-oriented. He explained that to be successful in this business you must be focused on profit and schedule, and office leaders utilize people and relationships as a means to accomplish the goals of maximizing profits.

Individual Leader Influence and Behavior

Some of the interviewees stated that the leadership approach in construction is project-specific, and varies depending on the leader of that project and the behaviors that this leader utilizes in attempt to influence others. They explained that some leaders are task-oriented who lead with behaviors that display power and strength, and others are relationship-oriented who lead with behaviors of charisma and collaboration. It was suggested that whether the leader was task or relationship-oriented is dependent on the personality traits of the leader which included whether the leader is quiet and collaborative or loud and controlling. It was also suggested that the leadership style each leader employs varies according to the style that they are familiar with and what they feel will get them the desired results based on what has worked for them in the past. One interviewee believes that some leaders in construction go above and beyond to be great leaders, communicate with others, and seek to teach people; other leaders in construction are very hands-off, give the subordinate the task and demand that they figure out how to complete it on their own and get very confrontational when the task is done incorrectly. Another interviewee stated that some leaders utilize a mix of styles which he felt was an effective approach for the

industry. He stated that people in the industry are human beings who should be treated with respect and they appreciate when their opinions are valued, but it is a business, and leaders need to focus on the tasks that need to be accomplished and the people they lead are resources used to accomplish those tasks.

One interviewee described an example of two different leaders with opposite approaches, and what he believed was the effect of their approaches on the success his project. When the project first started the Project Manager was very impersonal and attempted to lead by force. He constantly tried to force people to take the actions that he desired. He suggested that this was not effective and that efforts on the project were low and there was a lot of anger and fighting on the project. The project team and crew members' morale was low, and they were underperforming by missing deadlines and producing low-quality work. As a result, the project became over budget due to what he suggested was bad leadership early. The upper management intervened and changed the project leadership by removing that Project Manager and inserting a new Project Manager. He stated that as a result of this change in leadership the project teams improved. He believes that the new Project Manager is more effective. He listens to people, solicits input, provides feedback, and is good at diffusing tense situations. As a result, he believes that people on the project are much happier and more effective. He concluded by stating that he believes most leaders in the industry have good intentions and treat people with respect and dignity, but some leaders with anger issues attempt to utilize force when leading and these leaders are not effective and are bad for the industry.

Another interviewee accentuated that the behaviors of a leader, which he indicated primarily come from the General Contractor, have a significant effect on the project morale and success because they set the tone and communication style, and the subcontractors typically feed

off their approach. One of his current projects is in a bad state because commitments are not being held and deadlines are not being met, and as a result, he has been placed in a difficult position. The contractor who needs to complete the work before his company can start is not meeting deadlines which means that his start date is being pushed out. He said this would not be a huge issue and he could make adjustments but the GC is not communicating with him. This is an issue because it is difficult to schedule manpower and the issue is compounded when the GC does not communicate. He was very frustrated because he worked to coordinate manpower for the project, then the project schedule slipped and he had to find another job for his people to work, and then when the project was ready to start the General Contractors leader called expecting him to start right away but his manpower was already allocated to a different project. The issue was compounded because to prepare for his work he must fabricate a significant amount of duct which takes about four weeks to accomplish. He reiterated that if the GC had communicated that they were behind schedule he could have held off on fabricating the duct. Because there was no communication, they fabricated the duct but could not deliver it to the site. They were forced to find a place to store it which came with significant costs that they had to pass on to the GC. The GC was not happy but ultimately could not fight and had to pay it. He suggested that situations like this occur on more than fifty percent of his projects.

Project Funding

Some of the interviewees indicated that the funding source of the project, which considers whether the project is funded through public or private sources, has a direct effect on the environment and leadership approach to the project. They stated that publicly funded projects, which are funded through taxpayer dollars and overseen by Government agencies, tend to have an adverse environment starting with the leaders who are confrontational and reject

cooperation. The Government agencies overseeing these projects typically select contractors based on the lowest price which leads to a lower level of professionalism and tighter budgets. They have stringent administrative requirements, and navigating these requirements and communicating with the agencies' representatives can be difficult. They asserted that privately funded projects have a higher level of cooperation because the General Contractor, their company, and the Subcontractors were chosen based on qualifications and price, leading to a higher level of professionalism and healthier budgets. The administrative requirements are less stringent and communicating with the private agencies is much easier.

Public Funding – Task-Oriented

The interviewees asserted that the leaders of Publicly funded projects tend to be task-oriented, and confrontational. They stated that this is due to selecting contractors based on the lowest bid price, and the stringent administrative requirements required by the governing agency. If a project bases its contractor selection primarily on the lowest bid price it tends to produce a lower level of professionalism and often times the contractor selected made an error in their estimate which means that the budget is insufficient to perform the associated work. The Contractors with the lowest bid often also have the lowest amount of staffing costs which means that they either are not staffing the project with enough people or the people that they are staffing are of lower value and salaries which leads to a lower level of professionalism on the project. When the budgets are tight, the contractors feel that their profit is threatened at all times. The interviewees believe that this makes contractors very defensive, and less likely to collaborate with other contractors. It also leads to constant efforts to defend profits, which produces a tense situation with a higher level of task orientation in the leadership approach, and the relationships become strained. They also believe that increased administrative requirements and difficulty in

dealing with Government agencies lead to a higher level of stress and tension, these conditions can lead to lower morale on the projects and a greater focus on task-oriented approaches because when people have higher stress and feel that there is a lot of work to complete without sufficient time to complete it properly, they revert to a task-oriented approach.

Private Funding – Relationship Oriented

The interviewees asserted that privately funded projects tend to be more relationship-oriented than publicly funded projects. They stated that when contractors are chosen based on qualifications, contrasted to making selection based solely on price, the contractors will have a more realistic budget. This leads to the contractors not feeling like their profits are being threatened at all times as in publicly funded projects, and they tend to be more open to communicating and collaborating. The leaders of these projects feel more empowered and able to lead with a relationship-oriented approach and take the time needed to develop relationships. Some of the interviewees indicated that the leaders of privately funded projects possess a more relationship-oriented approach than publicly funded projects, but they can often still be very task-oriented. One of the interviewees suggested that the behaviors and approach of the Superintendent determine the overall approach of a privately funded project. If the Superintendent is relationship-oriented and collaborative than the rest of the leaders will follow suit, and likewise if the Superintendent is task-oriented and confrontational. The interviewee stated that the Superintendent sets the tone for the project and heavily affects the behavior, approach, and cohesion of the project team. If the Superintendent is respectful, works to develop positive relationships with the foreman by soliciting opinions and feedback, and communicates at a high level then the project morale is higher and more collaborative; if the Superintendent is

disrespectful, yells and dictates tasks, and does not communicate often than the project morale was lower and not collaborative.

Some of the interviewees suggested that within privately funded projects the monetary size of the project's budget also determines the approach of the project leaders. They explained that projects with a large monetary budget are more likely to take a relationship-oriented and collaborative approach but projects with a small monetary budget, which was suggested by one interviewee to make up a majority of projects, tend to take a more task-oriented and less collaborative approach. Projects with a large budget tend to have a higher quantity and quality of administrative staff. With a larger quantity of staff, there are more people to accomplish the needed tasks which means they have more time to collaborate and communicate. With what some interviewees described as a higher-quality administrative staff they had the capability of efficiently completing tasks and communicating clearly. This combination of high quantity and quality leads to a high level of relationship-building which corresponds with a relationship-oriented leadership approach. It was suggested that projects with small monetary budgets tend to have a lower quantity and quality of administrative staff. The interviewees explained that with a smaller quantity of staff, there are fewer people to accomplish the needed tasks which means they have less time to collaborate and communicate. With what some interviewees described as a lower-quality administrative staff who struggled to complete tasks and communicate properly. This combination of low quantity and quality leads to a level of relationship-building and corresponds with a task-oriented leadership approach.

One of the interviewees who works for a mechanical subcontractor expanded on this viewpoint by describing the environment of his current project which has a small monetary budget. He stated the leadership is task-orienting and controlling, and there is very little trust

among the contractors and workers on this project. The leaders are constantly holding meetings to delegate tasks, micro-manage people by dictating how and when the tasks will be done, and demand updates on the previously assigned tasks which are followed by yelling when the progress is not to their liking. They build the schedule with no input or feedback from others and then force it upon people and push people to meet the milestones. The people are expected to be quiet, work hard, trust that the plan will work, and not ask any questions. He stated that at the beginning of the project, the GC told him that they would take a collaborative approach, but once the project started, they assigned a Superintendent and Project Manager to the project with an old-school approach who did not foster a collaborative environment. The environment on this project is very adversarial, the morale is low, and productivity is also low. People hate being on the job and it shows in their demeanor and productivity. The leaders feel that they can fix the low productivity with more yelling and threats of financial consequences.

Old School & New School

Some of the interviewees suggested that leadership in construction has two overall approaches that is termed new school and old school. The old-school approach was described as task-oriented, hard-nosed, stubborn, and close-minded. It was suggested that people with this approach have years of experience in which they have had success doing things a certain way, including dictating and yelling, and they are very reluctant to do things differently. The new school approach was described as being relationship-oriented, open to new ideas, and consistently looking for ways to improve efficiency. One interviewee described it as being divided into two camps. She stated that the first camp consists of the older generation with years of construction experience who are rough around the edges, do not like to mentor subordinates, and are very demanding. She believes that a majority of the people in this camp work for

Subcontractor firms and make up the labor force of the industry. She added that they tend to be suspicious of other contractors and people and believe that are trying to raise their profits by exploiting them, and they become defensive because they believe other contractors and people threaten their profits. She stated that the second camp consists of the younger generation who are new to the industry, team-oriented, willing to help others, practice teaching and mentoring, and are open to providing and accepting feedback. She added that this camp approaches a situation where a co-worker or subordinate made a mistake with the thought that the person was trying to do their best and just needed some additional support, training, or resources. She believes that General Contractors and management personnel make up this camp.

Old-School – Task-Oriented

Another interviewee described the current leadership as old school or traditional with a task-oriented approach. They assert that the industry is hierarchal and the leader dictates tasks, provides direction, and people are expected to follow orders without question. He recalled that his first manager's mindset was his subordinates were lucky to have a job and they could easily be replaced. He did not like this approach or feel that he was valued by his leader. He wanted his actions to speak for his ability, and to be provided opportunity and mentoring to help him grow. He believes that his leaders now have more compassion, and there is starting to become a greater balance between pushing work and managing people; stating that traditionally construction has been all push with no consideration for people, but now leaders are starting to consider people's needs and aspirations. Although he did indicate that the leadership approach was starting to transition to being more relationship-oriented he felt that right now it is still more task-oriented, and leaders' trend towards pushing people rather than mentoring and teaching them. He added that he felt most of the people development and relationship-oriented leadership is need-driven.

When the economy and construction market conditions are good then companies need people and they will invest in them so they are happy and will stay with the company, but when the economy and construction market conditions are not good then they will not invest in people because they do not care about making them happy or whether they will stay with the company. They only invest in people when they have to. Another interviewee contradicted his points stating that when it is slow and there is time leaders in construction will mentor and teach, but when it is busy, they do not have the time to mentor and teach. Instead, they bark orders and tell subordinates to hurry up and get tasks done without an explanation of how to complete the tasks or why it is important, other than a deadline approaching. In his opinion, the latter is the norm, because profit margins are thin in construction and companies tend to short-staff projects to protect profits.

Another interviewee described the leadership approach in construction as old-school with a tendency to be task-oriented and believed that it desperately needed to be more relationship-oriented. He did want to point out that the leadership in the office was better than the field but both needed to improve. He suggested that the communication practices needed significant improvement, and the older generation is not prepared for or adjusting to the needs of the younger generation. The younger generations entering the workforce desire a higher level of communication than the previous generations. The incoming generations want to understand what is being asked of them and why before they commit to performing. They also seem to have less experience in the industry than previous generations. In previous generations, a large percentage of people entering the industry came from families with fathers and/or uncles that were in the industry and they grew up with laborer jobs as a kid. The newer generations are coming into the industry without the same extensive background. This results in issues because

the older generation assumes that the newer generation has a higher base of knowledge than they do. As a result, they are not explaining tasks with enough detail, they briefly explain the task and then assume that they understand. They are also not following up to discover if the task is being done properly. He also suggested that there is a lack of training and mentoring that might also be due to the same root issue. The older expects them to figure things out and He feels that the older generation should take more time to teach and mentor the younger generation to increase their confidence levels. He did indicate that as a member of the younger generation, he felt the people in his age group should do a better job asking questions. But he suggested that this was difficult because there are a lot of A-type strong personalities and that is intimidating.

New School – Relationship-Oriented

Some of the interviewees who are in the Generation Z cohort suggest that when they get into leadership positions, they will start to transition the leadership approach towards a new school approach with a stronger emphasis on being relationship-oriented. They feel this is due to the newer generations' commitment to understanding that people being treated with respect and as human beings are more effective than treating them like tools or equipment. They also feel that the inevitable integration of technology in the industry will push the industry towards a new school approach, but the industry appears to be slow to adapt to the latest technology and leadership approaches. One interviewee suggested that this was due to the older generations not recognizing the shift, but when the younger generation outnumbers the older generation the shift to new technology and leadership approaches will occur faster. He believes that the younger generation is more exposed to a diversity of ideas, and the older generation is reluctant to accept these new ideas, but when they become the majority in the generation the older people will have to give in and adapt to the new approaches.

Company Culture - Group

One interviewee stated that the leadership style in construction is often influenced by the culture created by the upper management, and the approach that they take to leading the groups' activities. He asserted that they set the group's goals and move the group towards those goals by promoting and rewarding action that is seen as moving towards those goals. If upper management rewards people based on relationship building and long-term success then employees will take a more relation-oriented approach, but if they reward people based on accomplishing short-term goals then employees will take a task-oriented approach. He believes that a majority of leaders in the industry take an old-school approach because they are rewarded based on completing short goals and tasks which incentivizes them to push their subordinates to complete as many tasks as possible in a given time frame. He also suggested that some current leaders are modeling the behavior that their leaders presented when they were subordinates, and described these leaders as pushing people to complete tasks by verbally them with a lot of yelling and language that is not PR-correct. He believed that there were some pluses and minuses with this old-school approach because having a direct and confrontational approach can be successful and achieve short-term productivity, but in the long term can have negative effects on project morale and team cohesion.

An interviewee recalled a specific instance of what he felt was a good example of upper management creating a culture of support and collaboration. They were working on a project that looked like it was going to be over budget, and their Vice President held an emergency meeting with the Project Manager, Superintendent, and Assistant Project Manager to discuss remedies. During this meeting, the Vice President took a round-table approach and held a brainstorming session on ways they could cut some of the costs to mitigate the damage. The interviewee felt

that this approach was effective because the VP was not reprimanding the team or making any demands. He was simply facilitating a collaborative conversation, and at the end of the meeting, the team had complete buy-in with the initiatives they planned to integrate into the project. The project did go over budget but the interviewee feels that it could have gone further over budget had they not held the meeting. Another interviewee recalled an instance of what he felt was an example of upper management creating a culture of turmoil with a lack of communication. He stated that a company he used to work for the upper management took an overall general approach to leadership of baptism by fire. There was no foresight in hiring, and they hired people when they were desperate for people. This led to throwing people on a project with immediate responsibilities and little to no mentoring or coaching. The leaders delegated the tasks by pointing and making demands and took a sink-or-swim approach by throwing them a bunch of tasks to see if they could handle them. If they could not handle the tasks given, they would quickly be fired, and if they could handle it then the leaders would continue to delegate more tasks until the subordinate could no longer handle the workload.

Transition – From Task-Oriented to Relationship-Oriented

Some of the interviewees suggested that the world along with the construction industry is evolving and that the leadership in construction is evolving as well. They believe that the leadership landscape in construction is currently transitioning from a task-oriented approach to a relationship-oriented approach, and this is positive progress for the industry. One interviewee stated that the industry is a people business, the times are changing with how you interact and manage people, and the industry is adjusting accordingly. The industry has a reputation for being rough and tough, but it is changing. Its leaders are becoming more sophisticated; companies are becoming more risk-averse and identifying that they need more smart people to manage risks and

that construction is less about pushing work and more about managing with soft skills. This interviewee believes that the best future for the industry is for leaders to balance pushing work with managing and developing people because people now want a career that provides more than just an income but a sense of and a feeling that they are performing meaningful work. He asserted that leaders need to find what people are passionate about and align with that and there is a mindset shift happening, and as young people come up to become leaders, they will provide this type of leadership. Another interviewee added to the point by stating that in his opinion we are witnessing a shift in the way leaders excel in construction. Fewer leaders are screaming/yelling and demanding respect because people have had enough of that, and more leaders are willing to work to earn respect and encourage involvement on a more human level.

One of the interviewees who is a member of the Generation Z cohort stated that leadership in construction is in desperate need of improvement and modernization. He expressed that this is due to what he perceives as a disconnect between the older generation of people that make up the body of leaders and the younger generation of people that have recently entered construction. He feels that the younger generation is having difficulties understanding what the older generation is trying to communicate, and they do not respond well to their leadership style. He believes the young people entering the industry will change the current leadership for the better because they will take a more collaborative approach that is more relationship-oriented. This approach will promote the best ideas to be shared and implemented regardless of the position of the person who is suggesting it. He also stated that the newer generations have some characteristics that may prevent them from accomplishing this. These characteristics include a lack of communication skills, an inability to relate personally to others, and they rely too heavily on technology which may be partly responsible for the lack of communication and personal

relational skills. He suggested that this could prevent them from accomplishing the change they desire because it is difficult to incorporate ideas from someone struggling to communicate them.

He concluded the conversation by stating that although he strongly believed in the effectiveness of a new school relationship-based approach he did believe that there is still a place for the old-school task-oriented approach of leadership, and suggested that in construction there should be a mix of old and new-school leadership approaches. The industry is based on schedule and budget, there is a lot of pressure and challenges in the industry, and the industry needs strong leaders who can make tough decisions and keep team members focused on tasks during times of stress; but they need to balance their strength with a collaborative approach, a high level of communication, and mentoring. For this to happen people new to the industry need to respect the industry veterans, and the industry veterans need to adapt their style to what is effective for leading the newcomers and to the new environment that they are creating. He was optimistic about what the younger people new to the industry could accomplish to improve the leadership and environment of construction, and the image of the industry, but was also weary of some of their shortcomings that may prevent them from making the change that they desire.

Motivation

Most of the interviewees did not hesitate when asked to describe what construction leaders do to motivate team members. They quickly responded with what they thought were common tactics and provided examples of their experiences. The common responses were; that they assign meaningful tasks, communicate that they will support them and the team, and follow up periodically to offer support; they leverage job status with threats of firing them and promises to promote them; and that they hold people accountable for failures to perform and reward them when they do perform. The most common response was accountability and appreciation.

Support

Some of the interviewees stated that construction leaders encourage and motivate their team members by assigning them meaningful tasks, and supporting them. They expanded by stating that leaders assign team members tasks that challenge them to grow and contribute to the company in meaningful ways. One interviewee stated that people desire to perform meaningful tasks and want to be challenged to learn, and the first step for the leader is to assign them these types of tasks, and then follow up on the assignment by supporting them. One interviewee suggested that often a simple conversation can solve a lot of issues, and show a team member that a leader supports them. He feels that leaders should pick up the phone to have a conversation explaining how things could be done more efficiently and to communicate that they are available to help and interested in their progression, and leaders should make their team feel comfortable by communicating that their door is open when they have questions or need assistance and that they are interested in seeing them succeed. Another interviewee described a roundtable approach where the leaders have open communication with the team members. During these meetings, the leaders communicate the tasks and rank these tasks by their associated priority. They ask the team if the tasks can be done in the specific timeline, and what support they need to complete them. Another interviewee indicated that leaders show support to team members working to remove obstacles and helping them when they are stuck and unable to make progress on tasks. Sometimes team members get into situations that they do not have experience with and they may get stuck in the situation because they are unsure of what to do and how to resolve it. Experienced managers can use their prior experience and knowledge to help them get unstuck and resolve the situation to keep the project moving forward. They also provide a calming presence that provides confidence to the rest of the team. Their experience, knowledge, and

ability to stay calm in pressured situations help the team feel secure and confident that they can overcome obstacles and work through tough situations.

Open Communication – Enable Others to Act

One of the interviewees described a specific time during a large hotel project when a leader took action to motivate his team and enabled them to act by building trust and fostering collaboration through open communication. The team on this project had lost motivation, was not getting along with each other, and the project was experiencing a decline in productivity because they were not working as a team. When upper management became aware there was a problem they decided to add an experienced Senior Superintendent to the team to see if he could rectify the situation. Once the leader was put in charge of the team he started holding regular team meetings where everyone was encouraged to be open and express any issues or frustrations, they had with other team members. He stated that this leader was very direct and would demand that people communicate all the problems during these meetings, and would not let anyone leave the meeting if he felt that people were not participating. The interviewee believes that these meetings were successful because they provided team members with a place where they could vent, let out steam, and openly speak their minds. They were able to work through issues and then get back to work and be productive quickly instead of holding grudges and being upset for long periods which negatively affects productivity.

Composure – Model the Way

One of the interviewees described a time when a leader motivated the team by supporting them and modeling the behavior that they expected. He recalled a recent situation on his project that involved a difficult situation between his team and the designers that involved the design and procurement of custom cabinets. The cabinets were designed by a foreign company that uses

a metric system, the project team was not familiar with the metric system, and every other system on the project was not designed based on the metric system. This caused issues in getting things to properly fit together and the team got extremely frustrated. The Project Manager was able to diffuse the situation by remaining calm and focused, and communicating to the team that he would support them and that they would resolve this issue. He told the team to focus on the details and shop drawings and to work on converting the measurements to inches and feet so they could compare them to the other measurements. He also set up a meeting between the project team and the design team to discuss the issue and confirm the correct dimensions. The calm demeanor and supportive nature of the leader was a calming presence that transferred to the team and helped to diffuse the situation. The leader did not focus on the issue or magnify the issue, but focused on solutions which kept the team focused and moving forward.

Inspire - Encourage the Heart

One of the interviewees explained how he has been motivating the team on his current project by inspiring them and encouraging their hearts when they were feeling disheartened. He stated that his project has been very challenging to deal with the government agency in charge and some of the subcontractors they have working for them. He noticed that the morale of his team was down due to frustrations with the inspection process. He called them into a meeting and gave them a motivational speech in which he suggested that they had two choices they could either focus on the negative or they could see the light where this project would be over and they could move on to a better project. He told them that he knew that they could get through it together by supporting each other, that he would be there to support them no matter what happens, and that if and when they stick through to persevere through tough times and complete the project, they would be stronger and closer because of it. He also stated that when this project

is completed, they will have a greater sense of pride because they persevered through great adversity. Since then, he has been playing motivational videos and giving them pep talks once or twice per month.

Guide - Vision

Another interviewee described a specific instance where he motivated and guided a member of his team through vision and support. He recalled a time when the team was dealing with a concrete slab that was not in compliance with the designers' specifications because the flatness, levelness, or finish quality of the concrete slab was not within the allowable tolerance on three floors of the building. The interviewee tasked a Project Engineer with coordinating the process. Immediately the PE communicated that he was uncomfortable performing the task because he had never done anything like this task before. In response, the interviewee guided him by explaining his vision of how the situation should be handled. The floors not within the allowable tolerance needed to be; surveyed to provide detailed information to the Structural engineer and flooring contractor on how much floor leveling compound was needed. The flooring contractor could take that information to estimate how much floor leveling compound needed to be added to each floor to bring it to the allowable tolerance, and the structural Engineer then needed to calculate and review the added weight by the flooring compound to determine if the slab would support it. Once approved by the Engineer the flooring contractor needed to price the added material/labor. After explaining his vision the interviewee helped the PE to get started by observing the first coordination meetings, giving him some positive encouragement that he was doing it the right way, and telling him that he would support him throughout the completion of the task. Throughout the next couple of weeks, the interviewee checked in on the PE to see how the task was going and whether he needed any additional

support. The interviewee felt that by supporting the PE he felt more empowered and confident that he was performing the task correctly.

Job Leveraging and Displays of Strength – Influence Behavior

Some interviewees stated that construction leaders motivate people and influence their behavior by leveraging their job status, and displays of strength. The leaders use fear tactics to prevent or rectify poor performance by leveraging the workers' need for employment as it affects their livelihood and their ability to feed their families, and they use motivational tactics to encourage good performance by leveraging the workers' hunger to climb the ranks, acquire more money, and have more authority and prestige. He felt that this is due to a task-oriented approach where people are seen as a means of completing tasks, and the leader seeks to maximize the output of people. With this approach, people who produce the most are rewarded, and people who produce the least are replaced because the leader feels that this is the best way to build and maintain a high-performing team. One interviewee described an overall approach to showing strength. He stated that leaders, primarily field leaders, delegate and take control through displays of strength and demanding respect. He thought that this was because crew members did not want to take responsibility for the outcome and that having a foreman tell them what to do was preferred so they did not have to think a lot about the tasks and whether the overall result would be positive or negative. He also suggested that field leaders are in high-stress and high-pressure situations, and they are acting with a sense of urgency toward activities that need to be done now. These are high-risk activities and someone needs to take charge and provide direction with a sense of urgency.

One of the Interviewees described an instance between his team and the concrete subcontractor's team where the Superintendent attempted to lead through control and shows of

strength. The situation involved a delay in the schedule, and the Superintendent attempted to control the situation along with the concrete Foreman. When the Concrete Foreman indicated that they were behind schedule the Superintendent started yelling at the Foreman and tried to take corrective actions which resulted in the Foreman becoming defensive and upset. The Superintendent was trying to take control of the situation and the concrete Foreman was doing a lot of finger-pointing to indicate that others were to blame for the situation. This approach was not effective, and after the conversation, the concrete Foreman and Superintendent became upset at each other and stopped communicating. The concrete Foreman and team started rushing by cutting corners and performing the work incorrectly and incompletely in an attempt to get back on schedule. The instance resulted in a big monetary charge to the concrete subcontractor, and destruction of the relationship between the two concretes. He believes that this type of scenario occurs when a subcontractor is behind schedule and/or over budget, the GC becomes controlling and the subcontractor becomes scared, defensive, and tends to lash out.

Goals

Some of the interviewees suggested that these scenarios are created by the way that leaders in construction are evaluated and how upper management determines success. One of the interviewees described conditions in Heavy Civil projects where success is determined only by whether the leader completes the project on or below budget. He explained that a budget is created by evaluating the plans, determining the hours needed to complete the work associated, and multiplying those hours by the labor rates; a leader's means for controlling the budget is to drive improvement of worker productivity; and the performance of the crew as a whole and its individuals are evaluated by tracking the volume of work produced in a specific time frame and determining whether it meets or exceeds the budgeted hours. If the hours used are less than

estimated then the project will be profitable, and if not, then the project may have a loss. The interviewee felt that in this process the leader loses sight of the fact that workers are human beings, and sees them as tools to meet the profitability of the project, and the faster they can work the more likely the project will profit.

Accountability and Appreciation - Transactional

When answering the question of what construction leaders do to encourage their team a majority of the interviewees included in their response that they take a transactional approach. Leaders hold team members accountable by imposing consequences for poor performance, mistakes, and failures; and show them appreciation by rewarding them for performing according to or above the established standard, and hold them accountable. The process starts by communicating deliverables, the importance of those deliverables, the deadlines of those deliverables, and the benefits of accomplishing them or the consequences of not. Some of the consequences mentioned included calling them out in front of others to let them know that they failed the team demanding that they explain what needs to change so they can do better in the future, stating that the schedule is slipping, and suggesting that the team member is responsible, and getting yelled at or fired. One interviewee suggested that sometimes the leader does not need to do anything when a team member fails to perform because the team will let someone know that they are disappointed in them when they fail to perform or contribute a fair portion to the team, and this is usually enough to motivate someone. Some of the rewards mentioned included bringing people a six-pack of beer, buying them lunch, publicly rewarding them during meetings by speaking highly of individuals, gift certificates and awards, holding BBQs to celebrate the company's accomplishments, and giving people financial rewards or bonuses.

Performance Improvement

Two themes were presented when asking interviewees to describe a time that team members were underperforming and a leader took actions to correct them. Some of the interviewees indicated that leaders in construction improve performance through the way that they converse and interact with people; others stated that they utilize what was described as a performance improvement plan. Some of the interviewees indicated that direct communication is a common tactic for improving performance. A majority of the interviewees commonly described the use of a performance improvement plan. They stated that in this system leaders use a system of escalations. They start by coaching the employee to address the issue, if it does not get resolved they will step in to directly assist the employee by creating a written performance improvement plan, and if it still does not get resolved then they remove them from the project or fire them from the company. The performance improvement plan includes a meeting between the team member and leader to discuss the areas where the team member is not performing according to the standards, reiterating the expectations for performance, creating a list of items that need to be addressed and what actions they can take to improve the performance, creating a deadline for which the improvements must be made by, following up periodically to discuss progress, and terminating them if performance has not improved or closed the plan if it has.

Converse and Interact

Some of the interviewees indicated that when dealing with a team member or subcontractor they tend to take a hardline approach, and when people are not performing leaders in construction tend to yell at them telling them they are bad, and doing a bad job. One interviewee recalled an instance when a leader told a teammate that they suck, their work sucks, and it needs to improve. He asserted that this approach was not effective, and was very short-

term oriented, but people in construction are action-oriented and want results now, and feel that by being direct and yelling they can get action right away. Some of the interviewees indicated that when the discussions directly with a subcontractor are not working the leader will escalate the issue by discussing it with their upper management. One of the interviewees recalled a time when an HVAC contractor was not meeting the schedule. The Project Manager talked to the Foreman in the field about increasing their pace, and the foreman stated that their boss was refusing to provide the manpower they needed to meet the demands of the schedule. The Project Manager took the owner of the HVAC company to lunch, they had a discussion, and soon after the owner increased the manpower on the project and got back on schedule.

Communicate and Demand

One interviewee described a time when a team member was underperforming and a leader took action by communicating to the subordinate that their performance was not acceptable, and demanding that they improve. He stated that at about the midpoint of the project, the Assistant Superintendent neglected to complete his duties and the Project Superintendent took immediate action. The Assistant Superintendent was tasked with ensuring that some corrections were made to some deficient work. During a punch walk some items were identified as not meeting the project standards. The Assistant Superintendent was tasked with communicating the deficiencies to the applicable Sub-Contractors, asking them to correct them within a specific timeline, and following up to ensure they were corrected. A few days later the Assistant Superintendent contacted the Project Superintendent and indicated that the items were corrected. The Project Superintendent walked the project to verify that the items were corrected and was surprised to see that they had not been corrected. The Project Superintendent immediately contacted the Assistant Superintendent and stated this was not acceptable and that

he would be held accountable for his actions. The Project Superintendent informed the team that the Assistant Superintendent had not performed his duties and now the project may be delayed. The Assistant Superintendent was embarrassed and worked diligently to get the items corrected.

Performance Improvement Plan

One of the interviewees explained how important this process is and described how he manages the process as a leader. He prefaced the discussion by stating that not all team members perform at what he referred to as an A plus level, some people perform at a B or C level and that is okay because the people who perform at an A level can make up for the B and C level performance, but it is not acceptable for people to perform at D and F levels because it brings the whole team down and forces them to perform at a higher level. Everyone must pull their weight and contribute to the team, and it is not fair to the team to allow people to not contribute. When he recognizes that people are performing at what he called D and F levels. He sets a sit-down meeting to discuss why they are not performing and suggests that they have to start performing or get out of the way of people who will and puts them on a performance improvement plan. They make a clear list of items that need to be improved and set clear expectations of the standards that the employee will be held to. He will encourage them by stating that he knows they can do better, and then give them one month to improve or he will have to terminate them. Then he meets with the employee weekly to provide updates. He believes that this has been very productive.

Mentoring

Another interviewee described a time when he was mentored by his leader and placed on a Performance Improvement Plan. He just had his first child, was feeling stress and tension in his family life, and his performance was declining. He stated that everything culminated during a

meeting when he confronted his leader saying that she was very client-driven ensuring that the client's needs were addressed, and she was not paying attention or addressing the team's needs. She told him that they could address his concerns offline, and scheduled a one-on-one meeting with him. During that meeting, she told him that his performance had not met the standards lately and that his efforts needed to improve. They made a list of items that needed to be corrected, clearly established the expectations for those items, and decided on a thirty-day timeline for him to improve or he would be terminated. They then scheduled weekly follow-up meetings to track progress. He believes that this was effective and helped him to become one of the company's highest performing managers.

Another interviewee described a time when a team member was underperforming and a leader took steps to improve performance by mentoring him and placing him on a performance improvement plan. She recalled a time on a project that she was leading as the Project Manager and one of the Project Engineers working with her was not completing their assigned tasks. The PE's overall effort was low, and she held a one-on-one in-person meeting with him to conduct a performance review and improvement plan. They discussed the areas that she needed to improve, he explained why his performance was up to standard, they made a list of actionable items, decided on a deadline for when the performance needed to improve, and set follow-up meetings to discuss progress. The following week she assigned him some new tasks that were meant to be a chance for him to prove himself and that we desired to improve, and she noticed right away he was still not performing. During the follow-up meeting, she told him that the tasks assigned over the last week represented a chance for him to show improvement and he failed to take advantage of it, and that she was serious about his need to improve. From that point forward his performance began to improve.

One of the interviewees described a time within the office environment when a team member was underperforming, and what his leaders did to correct the performance. His leaders had a sit-down meeting with the employee to mentor him and place him on a performance improvement plan. They started by asking questions to determine why he was not performing to the expected level and what support he needed to improve his performance. They then decided on a game plan, worked together with the employee to implement that plan, and checked in periodically to ensure that the plan was being implemented or made any necessary adjustments. He also described what his leaders do to promote satisfactory performance and prevent underperformance. They hold weekly round table meetings in which they work to communicate the weekly needs, tasks, and deadlines. They ask the employees if they feel the workload is achievable and provide insight into ways that they can ensure that they are accomplished; work to establish a priority list for the tasks and delegate them among the group; ask employees what support they need; and gauge buy-in before adjourning the meeting. They then work to keep open communication throughout the week to check on progress and provide additional support as needed.

Accountability and Consequences

One interviewee described a situation where his co-worker was underperforming and what his leader did to correct it. He stated that his leaders took immediate action to hold this employee accountable and to notify him of the consequences associated with lack of performance. This co-worker was coming in late, leaving early, working fewer hours, taking days off, not asking for additional work when the assigned work was complete, had no quality or thought in the work they were completing, and was consistently deflecting responsibility. The leader had a private conversation with them to discuss what the challenges might be and whether

they were work-related or personal, asked what direction he needed, attempted to provide him with support and advice, and then followed up by holding regular one-on-one meetings with them. This did not appear to be successful and ultimately it was determined that this person was not a good fit and was laid off. He asserted that there was nothing wrong with the approach, but the person was just not responsive. He believes that some people are responsive and others are not and that the leader can only do so much because the team member has a responsibility to step up. They are in business to make a profit and must protect the bottom line, and if someone is not performing or does not fit with the culture then they must be let go. There is only so much patience a leader can have with someone who is underperforming before they start to affect the rest of the time and bring the morale down. Working with someone to motivate them must be balanced with what is best for the team. If their lack of performance is causing others on the team to have to work more hours to make up for their lack of performance is not fair to the team.

Another interviewee described an experience where a Foreman that was working with him was underperforming and as the leader, he took action and the approach he took. He stated that he was forced to take immediate action to hold this employee accountable and to notify him of the consequences associated with lack of performance. He started by stating his typical approach is to identify what resources, information, or training the team member is lacking and work to provide them with those items. He then puts in effort to work with the team member to improve their performance; but communicates that if it continues then he must fire them or move them to another position. He suggested that there is only so much a leader can do, and people must be open to being coached. Sometimes a leader spends a lot of time coaching someone and that person gets argumentative or defensive. The person needs to want to be coached and believe that they need to and can improve. He recalled a time a Foreman that he was attempting to lead

got very defensive and tried to fight him. For a couple of weeks, he was asking the Foreman to clean some dirt off of the road, and the foreman refused to complete the task. He also stated that every task that he asked him to do was like this. He stated that after a couple of weeks of this trend, he tried to discuss it with him and come up with a plan to improve his performance but it was not helping. He got upset and told the Foreman that the tasks were not optional and that he was ordering him to complete the task. The Foreman continued to refuse to complete the assigned tasks and was removed from the project. He believed that the Foreman was an older gentleman who may have been experiencing burnout from being in the industry for many years and did not work anymore. He also suggested that no amount of coaching would inspire this person to perform his duties.

The same interviewee recalled another time a Senior Project Engineer was underperforming on a project that he was on. The team member was appointed to be the leader of the other Project Engineers on the project. Throughout the project, his interactions with others on various issues led to some concern that he was not ready to be in a leadership role. He would jump on every issue that would come up, but never complete any of them fully. Over time some arrogance started to develop, and he started to argue with the Project Manager. The PM spent some time coaching him on ways to solve these pressing issues by sharing the load, but there was more arrogance. The PM tried to remove him from the project, but upper management insisted that he stay to work through the issues. Over time it progressively got better, but the interviewee could notice the tension in the office. In this instance, the interviewee believes that leadership should have taken more decisive action to hold the employee accountable for a lack of performance, and maybe terminate the employee. The performance of the employee did improve slightly but it was still under the standards, and the interviewee believes that allowing sub-

standard performance from one employee signals to the rest of the team that it is acceptable which may lower the performance of the group.

Incidents Leaders Lost Their Temper

When the interviewees were asked whether they had witnessed or been part of a construction leader losing their temper most of them indicated that it was a common occurrence, except two interviewees. One interviewee stated that most of his experiences with leaders have been very positive, he has heard stories about negative experiences with leadership but never experienced any personally. He speculated that the reason his experiences have been so good is that he spent most of his career in the office working on pricing and has not spent much time in the field. Another interviewee stated that he had witnessed a leader losing their temper but that it was a rare occurrence. He followed the statement by prefacing that he has been an owner representative all of his career, that people tend to be on their best behavior around a project owner or owner representative, and he primarily works in the office and that behavior occurs primarily in the field. The other interviewees indicated that they had witnessed a construction leader losing their temper many times and that it was a common occurrence. The themes of why it occurred that were discovered in the responses include that the leaders in construction are passionate people and sometimes that passion boils over, that leaders in construction are either ambitious with a desire to perform or under a lot of pressure to perform, and older leaders have a fear of change and feel threatened they will lose their power.

Another one of the interviewees described an instance with a Foreman that was very negative. He was a laborer in a trench cleaning it out with a shovel, and he forgot to put on his hard hat. The foreman threw a rock that hit his head and told him that he should not be an idiot. This made him feel small and unimportant. This foreman was a loud and obnoxious person who

dictated orders, yelled at people, and pushed the crew members very hard. He also indicated that despite having very negative traits this foreman was seen as effective because he produced high production rates. When asked why he thought some leaders conducted themselves in this manner or why he thought sometimes they lose their temper he suggested that passion and a focus on performance were driving factors in this behavior. He suggested that some believe that a hierarchal approach is the best way to secure profits. When a Superintendent, Project Manager, or Foreman is judged by their superiors primarily on profits then that individual may be motivated to control as many of the variables and elements as possible, and may not feel secure enough to trust the team with decision-making that may result in a loss of profits. A leader's effects on profitability are the primary determinant of promotions and job status so the leader does what they think is necessary to control variables that could affect profits. He also suggested that people in construction are very passionate about their work and when something happens that threatens their success, they let that passion boil over and they sometimes lose their temper.

Passions Boil Over – Control of Emotions

Many of the interviewees stated that leaders in construction lose their tempers often because the industry is filled with passionate people and due to a combination of that passion, being in an industry with lots of pressure to perform, and stressors or issues in people's home life it is difficult to control your emotions. One of the interviewees explained that he has had bosses lose their temper when dealing with him, he has lost his temper when dealing with others, and he has witnessed other leaders losing their tempers semi-regularly. He believes that this happens due to passions, home life, and project demands. People in construction are very passionate people, they take pride in their work, and when things do not work out according to plan, they express that passion in anger. Some leaders may have issues at home, and bring these issues to

work with them. If their home life is not going well, and they have issues with their children and/or spouse then they do not have a safe place to rest. When they do not have a safe place to rest, they come to work feeling stressed and they are more volatile and lose their tempers easier. He believes that project owners are getting more demanding. They want lower budgets and shorter schedules with higher quality. This is making the industry more competitive and putting more pressure on construction companies along with the leaders to perform. The combination of these factors and the challenging nature of the industry can lead to frustrations getting the better of people and they conduct themselves in ways they do not want to. The industry is full of good people but it is a challenging industry, and sometimes people let their temper get the better of them.

Another interviewee stated that construction people are passionate and the pressure gets to them, and at some point, almost everyone in the industry will crack under the pressure and lose their temper. He added that construction is a very stressful job that requires the capability to have several irons in the fire at the same time and a cool head, but at times that slips away, and in construction controlling your emotions is challenging; and either due to personality, having a bad day, or just different objectives that do not align people lose control of their emotions and their temper. He provided an example of a leader losing their temper on his current project. The Superintendent had been working hard to coordinate some work on the critical path that was threatening to delay the project if not complete, and he was feeling burned out and on the edge. When he thought the work was ready, he called the city inspector in hopes it would pass and the schedule would be maintained. When the inspector arrived, he failed the work, the Superintendent lost his temper, and the two people got into a screaming match. The interviewee

said that nothing positive was accomplished during this instance and the situation probably got worse because their working relationship was destroyed.

Embarrassing

One of the interviewees, who worked for a mechanical contractor, felt that he provided a perspective of what a situation involving a leader in construction losing their temper looked like from the outside. He stated that he had never witnessed a leader from his company lose their temper or been directly involved in a situation where it happened because it was infrequent for a member of the mechanical trade to lose their temper, but it was very common for other trades and GCs to lose their temper and he had witnessed lots of those instances. He felt that when this does occur it is very awkward and unpleasant, and suggested that it was embarrassing for the people involved and that it was best for him to stay out of the situation when it happened. When it did occur, he stayed out of the situation and waited for the people to calm down and relieve the pressure that they were feeling. Construction is a high-stress industry with passionate people, and very often the pressure builds up and people need to relieve that pressure. He just wishes people would find a better way to release that pressure. Besides being embarrassing he suggested that it was not productive. He saw it more as a bully tactic and did not produce positive results. People do not respond long-term to bullying. He thought maybe they could get some people to respond once or twice to that type of behavior but eventually, they will either ignore the leader or start to push back.

Budget, Schedule, or Performance

Many of the interviewees indicated that in the construction industry; there is a lot of pressure to perform at a high level and when it appears that a project will not finish on time or under, or someone is not performing up to the standards which may threaten the team's ability to

complete a project on time or under budget the tensions get high and people lose their temper. One of the interviewees stated that owners continue to push for shorter schedules and tighter budgets, and due to that fact, budgets and schedules are tight leaving little to no room for error. With tight budgets and schedules completing the project on time and with a profit is very difficult, and when issues come up that threaten a leader's goal of finishing on time and being profitable, they get scared and react under the moment. He also suggested that construction leaders are under a lot of pressure because as leaders they are expected to be problem solvers. It becomes overwhelming when numerous people look at them from what appears to be multiple different directions looking for direction and answers, and sometimes these leaders crack under pressure and lose their temper. The next reason he offered was pressure to perform to gain promotions, and there are a lot of A-type personalities in the industry with people competing for top positions and getting to what he called the top of the mountain. This makes for a very competitive environment and sometimes people clash. He added that when it happens it makes the leader look weak and they lose respect from the team.

Field Leaders - Frustrations

One interviewee stated that it happens more often with field leaders including Superintendents and Foreman. He believes that these leaders are more raw and emotionally volatile than office managers. He asserted that happens with Superintendents because they are under a lot of pressure to meet tight schedules and perform high-quality work. They get frustrated when subcontractors are violating safety rules, not performing and causing the schedule to slip, cutting corners to improve productivity but are not holding to quality standards, or when designers are over-designing items and not considering constructability. When these things happen, the Superintendents tend to lose control of their emotions and their temper. He

asserted that happens with Foremen when they are not getting the resources or communication that they need, but the root cause is typically related to money. When the foreman is not getting the resources, they need then they are concerned about their ability to be profitable and tend to lash out. They compile the issue when the pressure gets high and are up against deadlines by overworking their crews which makes them hot and tired, and look for ways to skip steps to finish quicker which leads to mistakes. He added that construction leaders are passionate people who have the desire to perform at a high level, and when they perceive that their ability to perform is being threatened, they lash out.

Another interviewee recalled a situation with a particular Superintendent who was not good at controlling his emotions or known for his professionalism. During a pull plan session, this Superintendent was frustrated because a sub-contractor was consistently missing their commitment dates. The Superintendent began yelling at the subcontractor's foreman telling him that he was messing up the whole project for everyone and that he could not do their job because he could not accurately project the timelines of his work or hold to those projections once he made them. She believed this particular Superintendent thought that correction of mistakes or behavior issues was more effective when done publicly in front of the other people that were being affected which served dual purposes to humiliate the offender and to show others that he was speaking on their behalf. Another interviewee described a similar situation. He recalled his previous project, and on this project, the Superintendent was nicknamed grumpy. He stated that this person was a yeller and a grumpy old guy. The Superintendent would get very upset if people were not focused and productive. One thing that upset him was people looking at their mobile devices when they were supposed to be working. He recalled one time that the superintendent was upset that a subcontractor was consistently not meeting deadlines, and the

Superintendent lost his temper and vigorously yelled at the subcontractors' manager. He does not believe that this approach was effective, made for a hostile environment, and increased tension and stress.

Conflicting Interests

One of the interviewees described a situation where conflicting interests and views led to tension between the General Contractor and the Design team. He described an issue regarding the façade of one of the buildings his team was constructing. The original design did not meet the owners' requirements, and the design team had to make changes. When they made the changes in an attempt to meet the requirements the new design was over budget. It was determined that they needed a new design and that the new design should incorporate parameters from the manufacturer and installer. This required a lot of coordination and discussions in an attempt to develop a cohesive design, and the conversations were starting to become tense. At some point, the GC and designer started to bicker and fight, because the GC felt that the designer was not considering the input from the installer and that the design was not constructible. The Superintendent lost his temper and started yelling at the designer. The team then came to an impasse where the designer felt that the design, they had was the right design and did not want to change the design, but the PM asserted that the design did not meet budget parameters and the Superintendent asserted that the design was not constructible. The interviewee stated that this went on for over a month where the meetings were very tense and people lost their tempers frequently. After a couple of months of this occurring the client became frustrated and decided to have a conversation with the design team and GC's upper management demanding that they be more collaborative and find a solution. Soon after this discussion the teams become more collaborative and found a solution to the issue.

Incompetence

Another interviewee described a situation in which he lost his temper due to what he described as incompetence from a Superintendent. He had a Superintendent who was leading a twenty-person team that was consistently underperforming with some of the crew displaying behavior that appeared that did not care whether the project was successful and others seemed to be dragging out the job to be able to bill for more hours. He approached the Superintendent to have a discussion and the Superintendent got defensive and deflected. A few days later a good crew member quit because he was tired of the mediocracy, and did not want to be associated with a failing crew. He approached the Superintendent again to discuss the issue and felt that the Superintendent was ignoring him so he raised his voice in an attempt to be heard. The two then started screaming at each other, and this continued for a week or so. After some time, their upper management got involved, heard both sides of the story, and decided to fire the Superintendent. He felt that he was getting undermined and was not being taken seriously. If the project failed, he would get in trouble but it seemed like the Superintendent did not care. He felt that he had to do something right away, and did not know what to do to get the Superintendents attention so he started yelling.

Another interviewee recalled a specific experience on a hospital project when he lost his temper and yelled at someone due to incompetence from a subcontractor. The subcontractor was behaving with difficulty throughout the entirety of the project because they would either not provide the necessary paperwork or turn it in incomplete and below the established standards. This went on for a while so he started to complete their paperwork for them, and his frustrations started to build. One day he noticed that the sub's crew was installing things incorrectly and not per plans, and he approached the foreman and told them that some of their work was installed

incorrectly and needed to be corrected. The foreman became defensive and said no it is not. They got into a yelling match and argued whether it was installed correctly. He then called the owner of the company who was the foreman's grandfather, and the owner became upset and accused him of calling his grandson a liar. He got upset yelled at the foreman and the owner, and threw the company off the job site until they could play by the rules. The crew was banned from the project for one day, and after that, their performance began to improve.

Fear – Change & Loss of Power

Another reason offered by some of the interviewees for why leaders in construction lose their tempers was a fear of change or loss of power. One of the interviewees believed that this was the result of an old-school approach. The fear of change was described as when someone who has been performing their work in a certain manner and had results doing it that way for a long time is asked to do another by another method, they get scared and unsure of whether they will get positive results with the new method. In their fear and uncertainty, they may lash out. The fear of loss of power was described as when seasoned leaders feel challenged, they tend to lose their temper. One interviewee stated that a few times when one of his leaders felt like someone was interrupting them, not listening to them, or not showing them the respect, they felt they deserved the leader lost their temper and in a show of strength they seemingly demanded respect. He stated that it had happened to him directly when he made a minor mistake and a Foreman called him names and even threatened him with physical violence.

One of the interviewees described a specific situation where a leader lost their temper because he felt that his authority was being threatened, had a fear of change, and felt that the younger members of the team were trying to push him out. He stated that the Superintendent for his project was in a meeting, and during this meeting, he was offering his opinion on some

issues, and the younger employees were also offering their opinions. He felt like the team was receptive to his comments, and was more receptive to the comments by the younger employees. He felt like he was not being heard, got frustrated, stood up, slammed his briefcase on the ground, and walked out of the meeting. He described this Superintendent as an old-school construction leader who was afraid of change and had a hard time understanding the changes that the younger leaders were trying to make. This Superintendent had no desire to mentor anyone and would resort to yelling at people very often. He believes that this Superintendent, who has thirty years of experience, expected everyone to perform at the same level as he could, but did not consider that they did not have the same experience. He would get frustrated when people could not perform to his very high standards and this would often result in him yelling at people.

Positive Experiences with Leadership

There were three approaches that the interviewees stated their leader took that they felt were positive and professional. This consisted of support through communication and mentoring, remaining calm in tough situations, and providing an environment of safety and trust. The most common theme among the interviewees of the most positive and professional experiences they have had with leaders in construction was when those leaders were supportive. These experiences involved the leaders taking the approach of supporting the team and/or the individual team members. The interviewees stated that their leaders support them through listening, communication, advice, experience, mentoring, teaching, and directly assisting with some of the more challenging tasks. Some of the interviewees described their leaders as acting professionally and positively by keeping a calm and level head during stressful moments. This approach consists of diffusing difficult situations by remaining calm and asking questions to determine the root of the issue, making a definitive decision, and providing support to implement

the associated plan. Another approach described was treating everyone on the team as equal and valuable members of the team to create an environment of safety, trust, and collaboration.

Support – Group Discussion

One of the interviewees described an approach that his leaders take that showed the team that they support them. The interviewee labeled it as a roundtable approach and described this approach as the leaders conducting a group discussion where they solicit areas of improvement, ask for feedback on how they could support the team better; and provide the team with an opportunity to introduce new ideas, and discuss the implementation of these ideas. The leaders were there to facilitate and guide the discussion, but primarily the discussion was for the team. The interviewee stated that the best part of the discussion was when the leaders would open the discussion to provide every team member with an opportunity to bring up issues that they were struggling with and then the team would work together to determine the best plan to deal with those issues. It was suggested that this discussion facilitated the best development and execution of plans by soliciting a wide range of ideas, incorporating the top elements of those ideas to create the best strategy, and because everyone felt that they had input it produced a high level of buy-in. He suggested that this approach was not done enough and the industry would be better if it were.

Support – Communication & Input

Another interviewee described an example of an approach a leader takes to make the team feel supported by holding team meetings to solicit first-hand information and input from the project teams that are used to make decisions. She stated that the Vice President of the company she currently works for has an overall positive and professional approach that makes the team feel supported. This VP does not work directly on the project but does have to provide oversight.

As a result, he is not as in touch with the day-to-day tasks as the teams who are actively working on the projects but he needs to lead and guide them. His strategy is to hold team meetings where he communicates with them by asking questions such as, are you having any issues on the project, what are they, what do you think is the root of these issues, what are some potential solutions to the issue, and how can I support you? He attentively listens to their responses and considers the information provided when making a decision and formulating an action plan, and then guides the team based on his extensive experience. She feels that is a very effective strategy because the team is challenged to think through their issues, they feel that their ideas are heard and valued, they have a great level of buy-in because their ideas are incorporated into the action plan, and they are not afraid to give their best effort because they feel confident that they can succeed with their leader supporting them.

Support - Communication & Understanding

One of the interviewees described an experience with a leader that was positive and professional where the leader took an individual approach between the leader and the subordinate. He started by stating that most of the time he witnessed a positive experience the leader was willing to listen, consider, and understand other people's points of view. He then described a relationship that he has as a leader working with a foreman on the project he is managing. This foreman is one of his best workers, and the interviewee stated that he is very motivated, and a real go-getter. He is willing to break his back to get the work done and does high-quality work, but he complains a lot. He suggested that sometimes he just needs someone to listen to him and vent, and once he gets it out of his system, he is back to being one of their best employees. He believes that is an example of positive leadership because he is willing to listen to the foreman and offer him advice. He is still working on setting boundaries with this foreman

because the conversations can be very time-consuming, but he continues to have the conversation because he feels that it is the best way for him to keep a good worker productive.

Support - Communication & Appreciation

Another interviewee described a time when his leaders took an individual approach that he felt was positive and professional by taking time out of their busy schedules to communicate that his efforts were appreciated. He went through a stretch where he was consistently meeting or beating deadlines which culminated with obtaining a water meter for his project and helping them to reach a critical deadline. The Project Manager and Superintendent sat down with him and had a one-on-one conversation to provide positive feedback. They let him know that this accomplishment meant a lot to the success of the project, that they recognized his tremendous efforts, that he did a fantastic job in facilitating this, and that they appreciated his efforts. They later took him to lunch to celebrate his accomplishments. He stated that it felt great, was reassuring that his efforts were appreciated, and it made him feel good. He also stated that the support his leaders showed him motivated him to continue to put in a high level of effort in hopes that his efforts would be recognized again and he would get some more positive feedback.

Support - Mentoring & Teaching

One of the interviewees described his company's approach toward leadership within their team as a positive experience. This primarily consists of the mentoring and teaching that occurs between Project Managers and Project Engineers. He called this process I do – we do – you do. The process starts with the Project Manager performing the task with the Project Engineer observing; the next step is for the Project Manager and Project Engineer to do the task; and finally, the Project Engineer completes the task with the Project Manager observing. Throughout the process, the communication is at a high level with the Project Manager mentoring, and the

Project Engineer asking questions. He believes that this approach was very positive and effective, and to maximize that effectiveness the Project Manager sets a clear and achievable outcome but stays flexible throughout the approach to adapt to the person being mentored. He also felt that this approach provides a great balance of relationship and task orientation with the relationship coming first and the task coming second. He added that when the Project Engineers he oversees get behind he steps in to find what the root cause is, works with them to resolve that issue, and then helps them get organized.

Support - Communication & Positive Feedback

One of the interviewees described a time he had a positive and professional experience with his upper management leadership. He started by saying that all of his experiences with his upper management have been both positive and professional and then provided a specific example to illustrate their typical approach. Every time his upper management visits the job their goal is to understand the project budget and schedule status, to discuss upcoming activities and issues, to discuss safety measures, and to check in on the morale of personnel. The experience is positive due to their positive approach and communication with the team. They inspire positive motivation by providing positive feedback complimenting the team's or individual's success on the project, and providing constructive and creative solutions for items that the team is struggling with. He recalled a time when his leaders were conducting an internal audit of his project to verify that it was being managed properly and that there were no budget or schedule issues. During the audit, he was faced with a challenge from the client of a \$500 million project to find savings of \$70 million. His leaders stopped the audit and started to help him work on solutions to the teams' challenges and satisfy the needs of the client.

Calm

Another interviewee described an experience with a construction leader that was positive and professional because the leader remained calm and managed to resolve a difficult situation. In a project pull plan session, the Superintendent asked a Subcontractor's Foreman to be present during the meeting, and the Subcontractor sent a newly hired Project Engineer. During the meeting, it became apparent that this Project Engineer did not have the knowledge necessary to participate in the pull plan activities or the authority to make commitments on behalf of the company. This Superintendent did not yell at the Project Engineer because he understood that the PE was just doing what he was told and yelling at him would not be productive. The Superintendent called the Subcontractor's Project Manager to ask why they did not send a Foreman, the Project Manager stated that it would be cheaper for the company to send someone who had a lower salary, the Superintendent replied that he understood but the meeting was not effective and the project planning cannot be performed without a knowledgeable foreman who can make commitments, and they agreed to reschedule the meeting and their foreman would be present.

Environment

When asked to describe a positive and professional experience one of the interviewees described himself. He works to create an environment of safety, trust, and collaboration. He believes that building safety and trust is important and that it starts with making people feel comfortable communicating with him. He stated that he starts this process by making sure that his team knows he is human, and makes mistakes. When he makes those mistakes, he owns up to them and explains to the team what happened, why, and what he is doing to get better. This lets the team know that mistakes are okay as long as they are communicated, rectified as soon as

possible, they are learned from, and not repeated. He reiterates that when mistakes happen the team needs to communicate right away and then they can start collaborating as a team as early as possible to solve the issue. This approach also helps people to feel comfortable with implementing new ideas without fear of retribution if it does not work, and they know that if something goes wrong the whole team will support them to rectify the situation.

Leader and Leadership Description

Two predominant themes were presented in the interview responses to the question of what is a leader and what is a great leader. These themes described what traits leaders have and behaviors they utilize to inspire and motivate people, and the others were the behaviors they utilize while involved in directing group activities. The traits and behaviors used to describe a great leader are someone who takes an active role in helping their team to complete tasks and provides their team guidance through an extensive amount of knowledge in performing those tasks; they personal responsibility for the outcome of a project, and make quick decisions that keep the project on track; they know team members' strengths and weaknesses, place people in the right roles, and delegate tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses; they possess a high level of communication skills; and they have strong emotional control. The behaviors used to describe the behaviors they utilize while involved in directing group activities included influencing the group by treating them like human beings and with compassion; influencing a group with charisma; making the group better and motivating them; and aligning them with the project goals.

Individual Traits - Active

The interviewees described a great leader as someone who takes an active role in helping their team to complete tasks and provides their team guidance through an extensive amount of

knowledge in performing those tasks. They asserted that a leader leads from the front, is not above-performing work, and jumps in to do some of the work themselves. One of the interviewees stated that the ideal leader was someone who was respected, and this is earned by working with and leading people alongside them in the trenches, and often outworking every member of the team. He asserted that it was important for a leader to show the team that they can do the job or task that is being delegated, to lead from the front, and to be the example of the best employee. Another interviewee described leadership and a great leader as someone who knows the way, shows the way, and goes the way. They show subordinates how to complete the task by doing it themselves first, and that effort should be to the same standard that the subordinates are held to. They show people the work ethic standard through their hard work and dedication. They must act with integrity to conduct and perform their work to the same standards that they expect from others. They also have to be someone with greater knowledge and experience than those they are leading so that they can effectively communicate the needed tasks and describe in detail the steps needed to do so.

Individual Traits – Responsible & Decisive

Some of the interviewees suggested that in construction a leader must take responsibility for the outcome of a project, and make quick decisions that keep the project on track. One interviewee asserted that construction leaders need to develop an all-in mentality to take sole responsibility and accountability for the success of the project, and to ensure the project is successful they need to have the ability to identify a problem and fix it quickly. When issues come up, they need to be able to read people and the situation and respond decisively to keep the job flowing. The interviewee who made these comments typically works on large projects with budgets greater than \$100 million, and their costs of operation often exceed \$100,000 per day.

When issues arise that threaten progress from continuing the project, any delay in decision-making represents thousands of dollars in cost. He illustrated his point with the use of an analogy of two ship captains. He stated that there are two types of captains when the boat is sinking. One captain freeze, is afraid to make a decision or take action, and watches as the boat sinks. The other captain takes action to coordinate and direct. This captain is decisive and calm and gives a clear direction to organize people cohesively. They have worries and doubts but consciously try not to let those emotions consume them or show them to the crew, and their boat stays afloat and moves forward.

Individual Traits – Know Your Team

Another interviewee stated that it is important for leaders to know their team and place them in a position to succeed by knowing team members' strengths and weaknesses, placing people in the right roles, and delegating tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses. They understand people's limitations and ensure that they do not ask them to do something that they are not prepared for and may lead to failure, but they also know how to push people outside of their comfort zones to break through their limitations causing expansion and growth. Once people are in their roles and tasks are delegated the leader needs to support them to ensure follow-through. The leader can support them by providing the resources needed to complete the task properly and helping people to navigate difficult situations when they are stuck by offering guidance based on their experience. She believes that most people are self-motivated if they are given work that they perceive as valuable, and given proper instruction to perform that work. If they are not performing to the standards then they may lack instruction, information, or support. The leader needs to investigate whether the failing employee is lacking any of those items and

determine who they can provide it, and if the employee does have all those items, then they will need to fire that employee.

Individual Traits - Communication

They believe that Clear communication is one of the key traits successful construction leaders should have. Leaders must communicate through their listening and speaking abilities. They stated that a leader should be a great listener to hear what people are suggesting and solicit feedback. They added that great communication is not just listening but being attentive to hear what people are saying and giving consideration to their ideas, suggestions, or feedback before responding. The interviewees asserted that listening is critical to developing the best plans and assigning roles and tasks. Through listening they can solicit a wide range of ideas, and incorporate those ideas to create the best plan possible, and they will better understand everyone's capabilities to ensure they are assigning tasks to the people that are best equipped to accomplish those tasks. Leaders must also be well-spoken and polished. This is demonstrated by asking good questions, expressing the importance of tasks and deadlines and that they will support them while completing those tasks, and ensuring that team members are clear on the goals. Asking good questions is critical to soliciting creative ideas for issues and developing plans, and the feedback needed to drive growth. Leaders must let people know the importance of tasks and deadlines and that they will support them while completing these tasks to motivate them to take the correct action and perform at a high level. A leader needs to communicate at a high level to ensure that people know the end goal. The leader should not get caught up in the moment and calmly communicate to people that the moment is not what is important but ultimately the end goal is important and achieving this goal is what needs to drive the team.

Individual Traits – Emotional Control

Some of the interviewees stated that a good leader in construction should have the ability to control their emotions. They asserted that the construction industry has a lot of pressure to meet tight schedules and budgets which are consistently being threatened by weather, manpower shortages, jurisdictional requirements, environmental activists, union protests, and procurement issues. The pressure to perform combined with what seems to be a constant stream of issues can lead to having emotions cloud a leader's judgment or emotional breakdowns. A great leader in construction should have enough emotional strength to control their emotions to prevent outbursts that ruin relationships and project morale or let their emotions blind them from making the right decision. They need to be able to keep focused on the end goal and make decisions accordingly without being blinded by emotions. One interviewee suggested that emotional control is important because the industry can be a mental game. He stated that people in the industry will poke at leaders and test them by doing things that they know will irritate the leader to see if they can get them to lose their composure and temper. They want to see if that person is as strong as they claim to be, or if they will crack under pressure, because they want to follow someone that gives them security and they test them to find out if they are that person.

Group Influence – Empathy

One interviewee stated that a leader can influence a group through empathy by treating them like human beings with inherent value and having compassion for them but compassion must be balanced with knowing when to be firm to prevent people from taking advantage of them. All people make mistakes and a leader needs to have the ability to determine if it was an honest mistake or if it was a mistake that involved negligence and can change their approach accordingly. Another interviewee stated that often the first time they make a mistake a softer

approach to correction is sufficient, but the leader must be able to decipher when the employee is slacking off or trying to take advantage of a situation and then be firm and push that person.

Another interviewee described his evolution as a leader. He stated that early in his career he was hyper focused on results, treated people as a means to getting those results, and spent a lot of his time trying to force or convince people to act according to what he thought would achieve the best results. It was not effective, and people often pushed back. Recently he has tried to balance results with relationships which appears to produce more consistent results, the people he works with seem more willing to work with him, and things seem to flow much smoother and less forced.

Group Influence – Charisma

Some of the interviewees stated that a leader can influence a group by having charisma which draws people near them and makes people feel comfortable when around them and people want to work for them. They stated that a leader can display charisma by showing people that they care about their people through compassion and empathy. A great leader can see people on a personal level, encourage/coach positive behavior or intentions, look out for their best interest, and earn and keep their trust by being honest. One of the interviewees expanded on this idea by suggesting that a leader can show charisma and influence others through servant leadership. He stated that he is a big proponent of servant leadership and believes that the most effective leaders are servant leaders and not a boss. They ask themselves and the group, how can we do this together? The leader recognizes and states that you do all the work and I am here to support you, and gives the team the credit when is completed. He believes that it is a trap for leaders to take credit, and this must be avoided. When the leader gives others credit, it makes them look and feel

good, it lifts them and makes them want to work for the leader. A leader should help others be the best they can be personally and professionally.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership approach among Project Superintendents and Managers in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders and to discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among leaders. Interviewees were used to accomplish this purpose and provided some valuable insight into the leadership approach in the industry. The responses to each question were unique to the interviewees, and each interviewee provided a unique insight into the leadership approach in the industry. The only consistent theme throughout the results was that the leadership approach in construction varies according to several variables and that nearly everyone interviewed has experienced or witnessed a leader losing their temper. That suggests that there is an issue in the industry with leadership consistency and emotional control.

One of the interviewees stated that the complexity and irregularity of the industry result in a lack of leadership consistency. He stated that every day brings new project environments and contractors along with unique challenges and issues. This is a significant challenge because each project has a different leader, and the leader and project team do not have a chance to develop a relationship and familiarity with each other to discover the best way to communicate and work with each other. Another interviewee suggested that a lack of leadership consistency is caused by a gap in education and training on leadership. This leads to people being put into leadership positions that do not have the tools or ability to lead. A lack of leadership training combined with the pressure in the industry, which one interviewee described as spending all of their time

fighting fires and dealing with issues, may be what is causing the seemingly unusually high number of emotional outbursts from leaders in the industry. One interviewee stated that most people in construction are good at performing tasks associated with their job, but are not good at leading people or communicating. They tend to assume that people understand what they are describing and fail to describe tasks or the expectations of performance in detail. The leaders then get frustrated at employees when they fail to execute.

Two predominant themes were presented in the interview responses to the question of what is a leader and what is a great leader. These themes described what traits leaders have and behaviors they utilize to inspire and motivate people, and the behaviors they utilize while involved in directing group activities. The traits and behaviors used to describe a great leader are someone who takes an active role in helping their team to complete tasks and provides their team guidance through an extensive amount of knowledge in performing those tasks; they personal responsibility for the outcome of a project, and make quick decisions that keep the project on track; they know team members' strengths and weaknesses, place people in the right roles, and delegate tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses; they possess a high level of communication skills; and they have strong emotional control. The behaviors used to describe the behaviors they utilize while involved in directing group activities included influencing the group by treating them like human beings and with compassion; influencing a group with charisma; making the group better and motivating them; and aligning them with the project goals.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This section includes an interpretation of the findings, recommendations, implications, and conclusion. The interpretation provided explains and provides meaning to the results by comparing the findings of the interviews to the theories and styles outlined in the literature review to give more insight into the current approach; comparing the findings of the interviews to the theories and styles outlined in the literature review section to determine the desired leadership style; comparing what the interview results indicate is the preferred leadership approach it to what the literature review suggested; and comparing what the results indicate is the current perceived leadership approach to what it indicated is desired. The recommendations provide a suggestion for the construction industry based on the results, and the author's experience in the industry and academia. The implications explore whether the results of the interviewees substantiate the problem suggested by the literature, what the implications of that are on the industry, and use those findings to illustrate the importance of implementing the recommendations provided.

Interpretation of the Findings

The literature review section of this paper analyzed some of the prominent literature on leadership, and the Millennial and Z generations to provide a foundational definition of leadership and a leader; explore leadership theories; explore the Generational Cohort theory, and the Millennial and Z generation including the leadership approach that is suggested as effective and desired for leading these generations; and what the literature suggests is the leadership approach in construction. The results section of this paper analyzed the responses to interviews designed to discover the current Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership approach among leaders in the construction industry. The

interpretation of the findings seeks to interpret and provide meaning to the results and is broken into two sections. The first section provides a comparison of the findings of the interviews regarding the perceived leadership approach in construction to the theories and styles outlined in the literature review to determine the leadership style and approach in construction and then compares it to what the literature review suggested the style and approach is in construction, and a comparison of the findings of the interviews regarding the desired leadership approach in construction to the theories and styles outlined in the literature review to determine the desired leadership style and approach in construction and then compares it to what the literature review suggested the desired style and approach is in construction. The section concludes with a comparison of the current perceived leadership approach and style in construction to the desired leadership approach and style in construction.

Leadership Approach In Construction

The results suggest that the leadership approach in construction varies based on crew type, whether the leader is an office leader or a field leader, the individual leader, the project funding type, and the influence from upper management. Leaders of crews who perform work that requires a high level of labor intensity with a low level of complexity tend to be transactional and task-oriented, and leaders of crews who perform work with a low level of labor intensity with a high level of complexity tend to be transformational and relationship-oriented. Field leaders tend to delegate and lead through control and take a task-oriented approach, and office leaders tend to take a more collaborative and relationship-oriented approach. Whether the leader is task or relationship-oriented may be dependent on the personality traits of that leader. Publicly funded projects select contractors based on the lowest bid price and leaders of these projects tend to be task-oriented, and privately funded projects select contractors based on

qualifications, and leaders of these projects tend privately funded to be more relationship-oriented. Upper management influences whether leaders in their companies take a task or relational approach through the culture they create. Throughout the description of each of the variables, two themes were discovered which were termed by the interviewees as old school and new school. The descriptions of these themes can be utilized to define the approach in construction by comparing it to literature. A comparison of the existing literature to results also reveals some areas that they align and some information that the literature does not consider. These two items are discussed further in the corresponding sections.

Old School - Task Oriented

The old-school approach in construction was described by the interviewees as task-oriented where people are seen as resources to complete tasks the leaders attempt to impose their will on others with frequent displays of power, and the leaders are hard-nosed, stuck in their ways, and reluctant to listen to new ideas. Interviewees stated that the leaders displayed this approach by dictating tasks and deadlines immediately before starting them with very little explanation of how to perform them or why they are important, rarely soliciting or allowing feedback or input from the crew members, exchanging for monetary rewards for the completion of tasks, and treating crew members as easily replaceable. This old-school approach aligns with early studies ranging from 1900 to 1929 which focused on control and power, and leadership was defined as the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and to induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation (Moore, 1927; Northouse, 2021). It also aligns with transactional leadership which focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers where leaders exchange the completion of tasks for monetary rewards, and Managers practice this when

they offer monetary rewards to their employees for the performance of tasks and ending the employee arrangement if tasks are not completed (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2021).

New School – Relationship Oriented

The new school people approach in construction was described by the interviewees as relationship-oriented where people are seen as valuable assets that should be managed and developed and the leader seeks to find what people are passionate about and assign roles and tasks accordingly. Interviewees stated that the leaders displayed this approach by discussing tasks and deadlines with team members days or weeks in advance, providing detailed explanations of how to perform them and why they are important, soliciting and allowing feedback and input, developing and mentoring people, leading through collaboration, and taking time to develop and leverage relationships. This approach aligns with studies in the 1980s when the study of leadership focused on influence, traits, and transformation, and leadership was defined as a noncoercive influence (Northouse, 2021). Interestingly, which will be expanded on later in the paper, is that despite terming this approach as a new school it still does not align with what studies have focused on in the 21st century. These studies on leadership focused on authentic leadership, ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, discursive leadership, humble leadership, and inclusive leadership, and leadership was defined as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers (Burns, 2012; Northouse, 2021). It also aligns with transformational leadership which describes the process of how leaders inspire followers to accomplish great things and use behaviors to encourage creativity, recognize accomplishments, build trust, and inspire a collective vision (Northouse, 2021).

Results & Literature Alignment

The literature reviewed suggested: that the perception of leadership in construction is that it relies heavily on power, authority, and task orientation; to prevent the breakdown of stability and achieve meaningful goals, leaders seek to control tasks and activities by focusing on vertical forms of leadership; and a clear line of leadership is utilized to rapidly facilitate information from relevant decision-makers up and down the line (Graham et al., 2020; Toor & Ofori, 2008). The results of the interviews indicated that the leadership approach in construction varied but was defined as a mix of old-school and new-school approaches with a majority of leaders in construction utilizing an old-school approach. The interviewees stated that leaders in construction attempt to impose their will on others with frequent displays of power, and rarely solicit or allow feedback or input from the crew members. This old-school approach aligns with the leadership approach that the literature reviewed suggested is utilized in the industry, but it appears that the literature reviewed does not reveal the whole picture based on what was revealed by the interview results.

Results & Literature - Divergent

The results revealed two points that were not considered by the literature reviewed. This includes ignoring the leaders in construction whose approach does not align with what was suggested by the literature reviewed, and the leadership approach in construction is in a transition phase which was ignored by the literature reviewed. The literature reviewed generalizes the approach in the industry and ignores the minority of leaders who do not utilize this approach. It suggests that leaders in construction are task-oriented and rely heavily on power, and authority, but makes no mention of the leaders who do not align with this approach. The interviewees stated that some of the leaders in construction utilize a relationship-oriented

approach and utilize collaboration. The interviewees also suggested that the industry is in a transition phase with the number of people using this approach increasing. Some of the interviewees suggested that the world along with the construction industry is evolving and that the leadership in construction is evolving as well. One interviewee asserted that the people recently entering the industry are changing the current leadership approach by taking a more collaborative and relationship-oriented approach. They promote the sharing and implementation of the best regardless of the position of the position or experience of the person who is suggesting it.

Desired Leadership Approach in Construction

The interviewees described a great leader as someone who takes an active role in completing tasks and provides guidance through extensive knowledge; takes personal responsibility for the outcome of a project, and makes quick decisions that keep the project on track; knows the team members' strengths and weaknesses, and delegates tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses; possesses a high level of communication skills; has strong emotional control; influences the group with charisma and treating them like human beings and with compassion; makes the group better by motivating them; and aligns them with the project goals. One interviewee stated that the industry is based on schedule and budget, there is a lot of pressure and challenges in the industry, and the industry needs strong leaders who can make tough decisions and keep team members focused on tasks during times of stress; but they need to balance their strength with a collaborative approach, a high level of communication, and mentoring. This suggests that members of the Millennial and Z generations in construction desire an approach that includes a mix of what the literature suggests task-oriented and relationship-oriented. The literature suggests that a relationship-oriented leader assigns meaningful tasks to

provide people with a connection between themselves and what their work contributes to, is approachable and attends to the needs of followers, enables others to act by building trust and fostering a culture of collaboration, and inspiring the team by encouraging the heart of a workforce (Bennis, 1984; House & Mitchell, 1975; Kipfelsberger et al. 2022; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Northouse, 2021). The literature described a task-oriented leader as maximizing organizational gains through a series of exchanges of gratification and governing through contractual obligations that focus on reward and punishment to meet performance standards (Burns, 1978; Young et al., 2021).

The literature reviewed suggests that the Millennial and Z generations prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, listen carefully, give personalized attention and mentoring, and frequent communication and feedback (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). This generation wants their ideas to be valued, are reliant on technology, want open communication and timely feedback, flexible working arrangements, and a relational approach to leadership (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Chillakuri, 2018; Chillakuri, 2020; Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019). The literature reviewed on what these generations desire in a leader matches the focus of the studies of the 21st century where leadership is defined as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers. The leadership desired by the Millennial and Z generations aligns with the literature reviewed to some extent but is not completely applicable to what is desired in the construction industry. Based on the interview results what they desire in a leader aligns closer to the studies in the 1980s which focused on influence, traits, and transformation, and leadership was defined as a noncoercive influence (Northouse, 2021). Some of the interviewees suggested that some of the leaders in construction

do utilize this approach but they are a minority in the industry. This indicates a gap between the predominant approach in the industry and what these generations desire.

Recruiting and Retention

The literature suggested that the construction industry is facing a shortage of skilled labor due to challenges associated with attracting and retaining quality people, poor leadership is a significant factor inhibiting people from choosing construction or staying in the industry, Millennials and the Z generation represent the industry's best means for resolving its labor shortage, and the leadership in construction and leadership styles perceived as effective for recruiting and retaining Millennials and the Z generation are in opposition (Bae et al., 2022; Bosco & Harvey, 2013; Dwidienawati et al., 2021; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gaidhani et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2020; Morello et al., 2018; Showalter and Backus, 2010; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Welfare et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). This inference was made by drawing a correlation between some of the research regarding the Millennial and Generation Z cohort's workplace and leadership expectations, and those practiced by construction industry professionals, but the literature reviewed did not directly study leadership traits in construction as perceived by these generations or what members want they desire in a construction leader. This study determined the desired leadership of members of the Millennial and Z generations, and their perception of the current leadership in the industry by directly interviewing members of these generations.

The results indicate that the general approach in industry is old-school, transactional, task-oriented, and focuses on control and power; and that they desire a leadership approach that is new-school, transformational, relational, and focuses on collaboration. This indicates that there is a divergence between the predominant approach in the industry and what these generations desire which means that the industry will have an issue recruiting and retaining members of these

generations. This represents a significant issue for the industry in obtaining the skilled labor that it requires because Millennials and the Z generation represent the largest group currently entering the job force. The literature also suggests that this may cause a greater socio-economic issue due to perceived increases in costs and reductions in quality. Construction is a labor-heavy industry and skilled labor is a critical resource that directly affects the performance of a construction project, and a shortage of skilled labor may cause surges in project costs and delays, a decline in project quality, and prevent the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure (Bae et al., 2022; Morello et al., 2018; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Welfare et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). The industry should act with urgency to change its approach to leadership and put itself in a better position to recruit and retain members of the Millennial and Z generations.

Conclusion

The interviews provided good insight into the current leadership approach in construction as perceived by members of the Millennial and Z generation within the industry and what leadership they desire, and revealed some disparities in the prominent literature reviewed. The results of the interviews suggest that the leadership approach in construction varied based on a range of variables, but the approach in the industry could be broken into two predominant styles that were termed old school and new school. The old-school approach aligns with early studies ranging from 1900 to 1929 and the transactional leadership approach. The new school approach aligns with studies in the 1980s and the transformational leadership approach. The results of the interviews also indicated that the leadership approach in construction is beginning to transition. The literature reviewed indicates that the leadership approach in construction is task-oriented and relies heavily on power, and authority, but does not mention the leaders who do not take this

approach and does not consider the leaders in construction who take a different approach. It takes a generalized approach to defining the leadership approach in the industry by discovering the approach of the majority and applying that to the entire industry, nor does it consider that the leadership approach in construction is in a transition phase. Some of the interviewees stated that the industry is in a transition phase towards a new-school approach. This is also not mentioned in the literature reviewed. The results of the interviews indicate that members of the Millennial and Z generations in construction desire an approach that includes a mix of being task-oriented and relationship-oriented. This is different from the literature reviewed that suggests the Millennial and Z generations prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, and that they do not like leaders that are task-oriented.

The literature on leadership is essential to include in the research on leadership in construction because it provides the theories and styles and contains essential information on managing people that become the foundation of the research, results, and recommendations; but it takes a generalized approach that does not consider the unique elements within the industry that must be accounted for in a complete study of the subject matter. The literature on the leadership approach in the industry is insightful but incomplete. It does consider some of the unique conditions in the industry, but it too takes a generalized approach by suggesting that everyone in construction takes the same approach, ignoring the ones that do not practice this approach, and it does not consider what people in construction desire in a leader when making suggestions. The industry is unique because of the number of day-to-day changes, every project is unique, the team composition and dynamics change and evolve often, the stakes are high on projects with large but tight budgets and schedules, pressure to perform is high, and labor and procurement challenges are occurring constantly. The members of the Millennial and Z

generation interviewed recognize these challenges when describing the leader, they desire. Although some of the traits and behaviors that they desire in a leader align with what is suggested in the most recent studies, it does not match completely. One interviewee stated that based on its unique factors and challenges the industry needs strong leaders who can make tough decisions and keep team members focused on tasks during times of stress; but they need to balance their strength with a collaborative approach, a high level of communication, and mentoring. This paper considers all those factors when making its recommendations.

Recommendations

The results indicated that the general approach to leadership in construction does not align with what is suggested to be effective for the upcoming generations, is inconsistent and varies due to many factors, a large number of the leaders in the industry lack emotional control, and the industry lacks training to prepare its leaders. One interviewee stated that leaders in construction are good at tasks and are promoted into leadership positions because of their ability to perform tasks, but they do not possess leadership skills, the ability to communicate, or the patience to lead people and control their emotions. She suggested that is due to the lack of formal training. I suggest that the industry and its educational partners provide this training, by incorporating leadership courses into the curriculum of construction-related collegiate education programs, and that an extensive training program be developed within the industry. The collegiate system can start the leadership training process but without experience, there is no context to promote true learning. A training program needs to exist in the industry either by companies in the industry or a third-party company that caters to the construction industry. There also needs to be a path for people in the industry trades to become leaders and receive the needed training. Companies in construction or a third-party company that caters to the industry should

develop a program that trains team members in the industry who are identified as having leadership potential early in their careers. For both team members in the trades and those who come from collegiate backgrounds, the training needs to continue periodically throughout their careers. The leadership program developed needs to be comprehensive by including the essential elements of leadership, considering the unique conditions in the industry, and starting early in the participants' careers and continuing throughout their careers. The essentials of the program should include communication and people management.

The results of the interviews and the literature reviewed indicate that communication should be a vital piece of a leadership training program. The literature reviewed on leadership suggests that communication is the leadership tool that empowers others to become their best (Caldwell & Dixon, 2009; Caldwell et al., 2002; Cote, 2017). The literature reviewed on leadership in construction suggests that communication must be utilized if construction firms are to manage the complexity of environmental and social issues and address the expectations of a wide range of actors in the industry (Graham et al., 2020); and the results of the interviews reinforce this by stating that communication ensures the team is clear on priorities and direction which increases the likelihood of success. The literature reviewed on the Millennial and Z generations suggests that they seek a team-based workplace culture with close contact and communication with superiors as well as frequent feedback (Stewart et al., 2017); and the results of the interviews reinforce this by stating the younger generations desire a high level of communication and the best way to improve performance is through direct communication. The literature reviewed on the Millennial and Z generations also suggests that they rely on technology and text messaging primarily for their interaction and have missed out on learning some vital rules of conversation (Chillakuri, 2020; Stewart et al., 2017); and the results of the

interviews reinforce this by stating that the newer generations lack communication skills, an inability to relate personally to others, and rely too heavily on technology. The literature and interview concur that communication is vital to leadership and that the Millennial and Z generations are not proficient in this area, because these are the people who will be the future leaders in the industry it is vital that the industry begin training them soon on effective communication.

The results of the interviews and the literature reviewed indicate that people management should be a vital piece of a leadership training program. The literature reviewed on leadership suggests that leadership is defined as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of followers (Burns, 2012; Northouse, 2021). The literature reviewed on leadership in construction suggests that ethical issues, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills are considered by recruiters to be key significant competencies, but the preferred styles of leaders in construction are autocratic and boss-centered (Ahn et al., 2012; Jung et al., 2014); and the results of the interviews reinforce this by stating the leadership in construction is task-oriented and hierarchal, and leaders in the construction attempt to control with displays of power. The literature reviewed on the Millennial and Z generations indicates that they perceive the supervisory relationship as important and prefer leaders who choose interpersonal relationships, give personalized attention to employees, display care for others, are people-oriented, and charismatic (Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gursoy et al., 2008; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010); and the results of the interviews reinforce this by stating that they desire a leader that influences the group by treating them like human beings and with compassion, influences a group with charisma, motivates the group to make them better, and aligns them with the project goals. The literature and interview concur that that the Millennial and Z generations desire a leader with

strong people management skills, and that a majority of the leaders in the industry lack these skills. This makes people management skills a critical component of a leadership training program.

Implications

A construction project is composed of several organizations, individuals, and teams from different parent organizations and/or departments brought together, and after the project, project teams are disintegrated and members return to their parent organization and/or departments; despite the importance of leadership and unique conditions in the industry, it appears that comprehensive and industry-specific research on leadership in the construction industry is limited (Ali et al., 2020; Toor and Ofori 2008). The literature reviewed suggests that increasing demands for new infrastructure and a decreased availability of skilled construction workers are making the need to recruit and retain workers critical, and a potential divergence between the leadership approaches suggested to be effective for recruiting, retaining, and leading members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts and the leadership approaches utilized in the construction industry may prevent the industry from filling these positions (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. & Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). Some of the research reviewed suggests that the conventional practice within the construction industry focuses on driving productivity through power and intensity and neglects an overall strategy for leadership, and members of the Millennial and Generation cohorts possess an aversion to directive leadership by indicating that they are opposed to commands and authoritarian behavior, and they value opportunity and encouragement to make their own decisions (Easton & Steyn, 2022; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017; Skipper & Bell, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). The results of the interviews

align with the literature in this area. To accomplish the growth needed within the industry, leaders may consider changing their approach by adopting contemporary leadership styles and traits (Morello et al., 2018).

The results of the interviews indicate that the leaders in construction are being promoted for their ability to complete the tasks associated with the work and not their leadership ability, and they are not being provided the training required to lead people. One of the interviewees stated that people in construction are good at tasks and promoted into leadership positions because of their ability to perform tasks, but they do not have leadership skills or possess an ability to effectively communicate. Another interviewee stated that some people have good intentions to be relationship-oriented leaders and have meaningful conversations with people to seek their input and feedback but when the pressure of deadlines becomes a reality, they tend to revert to being task-oriented and demand results and dictate actions. When the pressure is on, they start to act with urgency and dictate, and there is no time for conversations or explanations. Leaders in construction need extensive and continuous training so that when they are placed in pressure situations they fall back on their training. This training will allow them to provide leadership that aligns with what the literature reviewed and interview results indicate is desired by members of the Millennial and Z generations. This will allow them to recruit and retain members of these cohorts at a higher level.

Conclusion

The problem addressed by this study is a potential divergence between the leadership approaches suggested to be effective for recruiting, retaining, and leading members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts and the leadership approaches utilized in the construction industry (Chillakuri, B. & Mahanandia, R., 2018; Easton & Steyn, 2022; Gabrielova, K. &

Buchko, A., 2021; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017). These cohorts represent the industry's best source for filling its hiring needs as suggested by the US Department of Labor occupational employment projections (2023), and if the industry cannot fill the projected hiring needs it may prevent the industry from meeting socioeconomic demands for housing and infrastructure. This qualitative study seeks to add to the body of knowledge by discovering Millennial and Generation Z construction workers' perceptions of the most common leadership traits among Project Superintendents and Managers in the construction industry based on their personal experiences and interactions with these leaders and to discover what traits these workers perceive to be desirable among site leaders. Previous sections contributed to this goal with a literature review of the prominent literature on leadership and the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, and a qualitative study containing interviews of Millennial and Generation Z professionals in the construction industry.

The literature review utilized themes in the prominent literature to define leadership and a leader, explore the perception of construction leadership, explore what is suggested to be desired from leaders by the Millennial and Z generations, and determine a gap in the literature. To define leadership this paper narrowed its focus to a synopsis of shifts in leadership research as provided by Northouse (2021) who suggests that leadership is a process of behaviors used to influence and direct a group to take action towards shared goals. An exploration of leaders suggested a definition suggested by Kouzes and Posner (2006) who state that leaders model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. The literature on the Millennial and Z Generational cohorts indicates that they share many traits (Chillakuri, 2020; Scroth, 2019). They want their ideas to be valued, are reliant on technology, want open communication and timely feedback, flexible working arrangements, and a relational

approach to leadership (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018; Chillakuri, 2018; Chillakuri, 2020; Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021; Scroth, 2019). The literature reviewed on leadership in construction suggests leaders focus on driving productivity through power and intensity and neglects an overall strategy for leadership (Easton & Steyn, 2022; Graham et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2017; Skipper & Bell, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). An inference drawn by connecting individual and separate studies focused on either the perceived leadership styles in construction or what is perceived to be effective in recruiting, retaining, and leading Millennials and Generation Z, may imply that there may be a divergence between the predominant leadership style in construction, and what is perceived to be by Millennials and Generation Z. A gap was discovered in the existing literature because no literature was found that directly studies leadership traits in construction as perceived by these generations.

The results section contributes to the body of literature and fills a portion of that gap by conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the Millennial and Z Generations who are currently active in the construction industry to determine the perceived and desired leadership traits of construction leaders. The interview responses indicated that leadership in construction has two overall approaches including an old-school approach described as hard-nosed, delegating with authority and little to no feedback allowed, stuck in their ways, and reluctant to listen to new ideas, and new school described as being collaborative, open to new ideas, and consistently looking for ways to improve efficiency. It also indicated that currently there are leaders that utilize the old school approach rather than the new school approach, but the leadership landscape in construction is currently under a transition and to flip that mix in the coming years. Results of the interviews also indicated construction leader losing their temper is a common occurrence that occurs due to leaders in construction being passionate people whose

passion sometimes boils over, ambitious with a desire to perform under a lot of pressure, and fearful of change and losing their power. Two predominant themes were presented in the interview responses to the question of what is a leader and what is a great leader which indicated that members of the Millennial and Z generations in construction desire a leader to provide their team guidance through an extensive amount of knowledge in performing those tasks; they personal responsibility for the outcome of a project, and make quick decisions that keep the project on track; they know team members' strengths and weaknesses, place people in the right roles, and delegate tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses; they possess a high level of communication skills; and they have strong emotional control.

The discussion section includes an interpretation of the findings, recommendations, implications, and conclusion. An interpretation of the findings indicates that the general approach to leadership in construction does not align with what is suggested to be effective for the upcoming generations, is inconsistent and varies due to many factors, a large number of the leaders in the industry lack emotional control, and the industry lacks training to prepare its leaders. The literature on the leadership approach in the industry is insightful but incomplete because it does consider some of the unique conditions in the industry and takes a generalized approach by suggesting that everyone in construction takes the same approach. This study considers the unique conditions of the industry by obtaining detailed information from people actively in the industry and does not take a generalized approach by considering the unique experiences of each of the interviewees. The recommendations suggest a comprehensive and extensive training program that includes communication and people management. This recommendation is based on the results of the interviews, suggestions from some of the interviewees, and the authors' experience in the industry and academia. The implications suggest

that the results corroborate the problem suggested in the literature reviewed. This implies that the current leadership is not in an optimal position to recruit, lead, or retain members of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts and the industry could benefit from a training program that would place them in a better position to do so.

This paper seems to paint construction leaders in a bad light which might not be fair, and was not the intention. In defense of leaders in construction leading people is challenging, and they are not provided with training sufficient to effectively manage people. Leading people has always been challenging, but it is especially difficult in the current landscape. Based on my history as a Project Manager in construction, I believe that leading people takes an enormous amount of emotional control, stress management, and patience. There is seemingly a never-ending supply of issues to deal with. People call in sick, they have personal issues that prevent them from performing, and they make mistakes. As leaders, we are ultimately responsible for the outcome, and when people fail to perform the leader must shoulder the burden and pick up the slack. Creating a team and culture can also be difficult due to the challenges of finding people who fit the vision the leader is trying to create. I used to work for a union concrete subcontractor and when we needed five people, we would ask the union for twelve knowing that at least seven would not be a good fit with our culture and we would have to let them go. Once we had the people we needed and felt they were a good fit it would take them a couple of weeks to get them fully incorporated and until then they did not produce at the level needed. All of this falls on the shoulders of the leader responsible for the outcome regardless of any of these personnel issues. Managing this requires extensive experience and training, and the training is not being provided.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey to obtain information regarding perceived common and desirable leadership traits among site leaders in the construction industry?
2. Overall themes and results will be used for educational purposes and may be shared, but identities and associated individual responses will be confidential.
3. How would you define leadership?
4. What makes a great leader?
5. Describe the leadership traits among site leaders and how they lead others.
6. Please describe a couple of situations that illustrate these traits.
7. How would you describe the leadership style among site leaders – i.e., positive, negative, effective, modern, etc.?
8. How do site leaders motivate the team?
9. If a team member is underperforming, what steps do site leaders take to improve their performance?
10. Please describe the culture commonly promoted by site leaders.
11. How has leadership among site leaders evolved?
12. What is a common communication style among site leaders?
13. What are the most important skills for a site leader to have?
14. What are the most important traits for a site leader to have?
15. If you could change or improve one aspect of site leaders' traits or tactics, what would it be?

Appendix B

Recruitment Script

Hello,

My name is **Jason Miller** and I am a Doctorate of Business Administration student at California Baptist University working on a dissertation project focused on studying Millennial and Generation Z perceptions of the leadership approach of construction leaders, managers and superintendents, in the industry. Eligibility requirements for this study include ages eighteen to forty, and currently active in the construction industry. I am contacting you to briefly explain the purpose of the study, your involvement, and the interview process, and to confirm your interest.

Participation in this study involves a thirty-minute to one-hour in-person or Zoom interview conducted by myself, and the interview will be recorded via a handheld audio recorder. The interviews are conducted in a one-on-one and private setting. You will not be asked private questions. The initial interview questions are listed below, and additional questions may be asked based on responses to the initial questions. Participation in this study is completely voluntary; if you choose to participate, you may end the interview at any time.

Your responses will be transcribed, stored, and secured on a password-protected laptop that only I can access. Once the data is analyzed, all identifiable descriptions of the subjects will be removed. When results are published the responses will not be linked to individuals. The companies will not know if any individual response was made by one of their employees or an employee of another company. This study will also be reviewed and receive clearance through the Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions regarding the Institutional Review Board process, please email me at the contact below or Institutional Review Board at irb@calbaptist.edu. Henry Peterson, Ph.D. is the faculty advisor for the CBU DBA program that is providing oversight for this project, and if you have any questions or concerns you may reach out to him at any time. His contact info is 951-343-2457 or hpetersen@calbaptist.edu.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at Jason.miller@calbaptist.edu or **916.969.7235**

By replying to this email by replying, you are consenting to participate in research and understand the risks/benefits.

Sincerely,

Jason Miller

Appendix C

Contact Script

Hello,

My name is Jason Miller and I am a Doctorate of Business Administration student at California Baptist University working on a dissertation project focused on studying Millennial and Generation Z perceptions of the leadership approach of construction leaders, managers, and superintendents, in the industry. Eligibility requirements for this study include ages eighteen to forty, and currently active in the construction industry. I am contacting you to determine if you might be interested in participating, and if I can email you an informed consent. Indicating that you are interested at this time does not mean you are agreeing to participate. It only means that you are allowing me to send you the conformed consent and that you will consider participating. You will be given time to review the informed consent and an opportunity to confirm or deny based on your review of the informed consent.

Thank you for your time.

Jason Miller