

Four Factors for Millennial Failure: A Qualitative Study of YouTube Viewer Comments

by

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LU Research Week - 2021



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Premise

- Making money on YouTube can be lucrative
- Anyone can do it
- You can say just about anything
- The more outrageous the conspiracy the more apt people are to buy-in (e.g. Covid19 is a hoax)
- Viewer comments are a source of data
 - Can be used to make decisions
 - Can be used to evaluate your impact
 - Can be used to make money



Problem

- How can thousands of viewer comments be analyzed efficiently
- And summarized coherently



Qualitative Research Methods

- Tools to interpret phenomena documented in ways other than Likert-scale survey questions, physiological responses or other continuous & discrete forms
- Field notes, videos, conversations, photographs (Creswell & Poth, 2018)
- Study phenomena in their natural setting



YouTube → Petri Dish for Social Research

- Millions of videos
- Billions of comments
 - Simon Sinek



Image source: startwithwhy.com

Staff, E. P. S. (2016, October 3). *Simon Sinek: Why Leadership is Better "Together."* Entrepreneur. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/283115>



Talking Heads

- Simon Sinek – “Science-y” Guy
 - 51+ million view TED talk on Millennials in the workplace (Sinek, 2009)
 - 2016 video on Millennials 12+ views (Crossman, 2016)
 - 0.9% likes
 - 0.05% dislikes
 - 2017 video on Millennials 600,000+ views (Sinek, 2017)
 - 2% likes
 - 0.05% dislikes
 - Using Qualitative Methods, helps us understand what people are saying; compartmentalizes vast amounts of text data



Sinek's "Science-y" Conclusions

- Negative public perceptions of Millennials
 - Impatience
 - Poor Attitudes
 - Can't work hard
 - Depressed
 - Discontent
- Four reasons
 - Technology
 - Parenting
 - Environment
 - Impatience



The Postmodern Interpretive Framework

- Postmodernism emphasizes multiple viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2018)
- Seeks universal truths shared among marginalized groups
- Truths are framed in context to the world we live in today
- I looked for shared truths gleaned across thousands of viewers of Sinek videos



Research Questions

- RQ1: Are the four-factors *environment, technology, parenting, and impatience* echoed among viewer comments? What other themes can be found among those who commented on these factors?
- RQ2: How do the four-factors that Sinek attributes to millennial failure correlate with one another?
- RQ3: How does blame relate to the four-factors for millennial failure?
- RQ4: What other themes can be found across all comments?



Methods

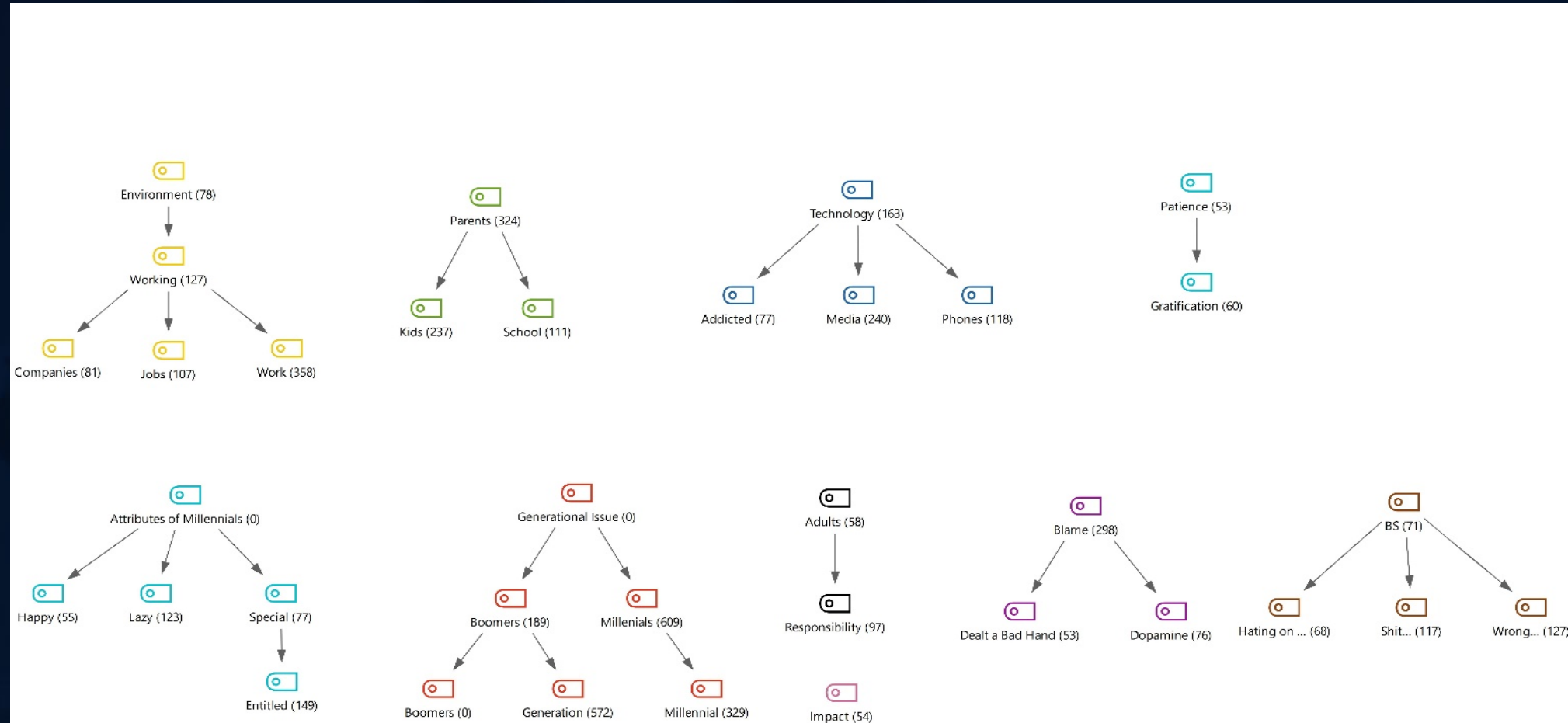
- Sampled 3,784 top-level comments + 7,000+ replies (Crossman, 2016)
- Comment inclusion criteria included:
 - (1) must be English;
 - (2) Must have at least one interpretable comment (e.g., I felt that “aahhh” is not interpretable but “Boomer” is). Swear words were not excluded from the sample.
- Username and user YouTube URL were captured in an effort to identify user gender or geography. However, upon closer inspection, many usernames were nicknames (e.g., *Scorpio Assmödeus*) or were gender-neutral (e.g., *Chris K.*) therefore, the notion of identifying the gender of the user who left a given comment was abandoned. Furthermore, YouTube provides a *channel* URL, but not an IP address. Therefore, reverse geographic tracing was impossible.



Tools

- MaxQDA Analytics Pro 2020
 - Word Mapping
 - Coding Themes
 - Inter-theme Relationship Charting
 - Basic non-parametric testing (Spearman's rho)
- Text2data.com (NLP, AI)
 - Document-level Sentiment Analysis
 - Keyword Analysis
 - Sentiment Keyword Tracing

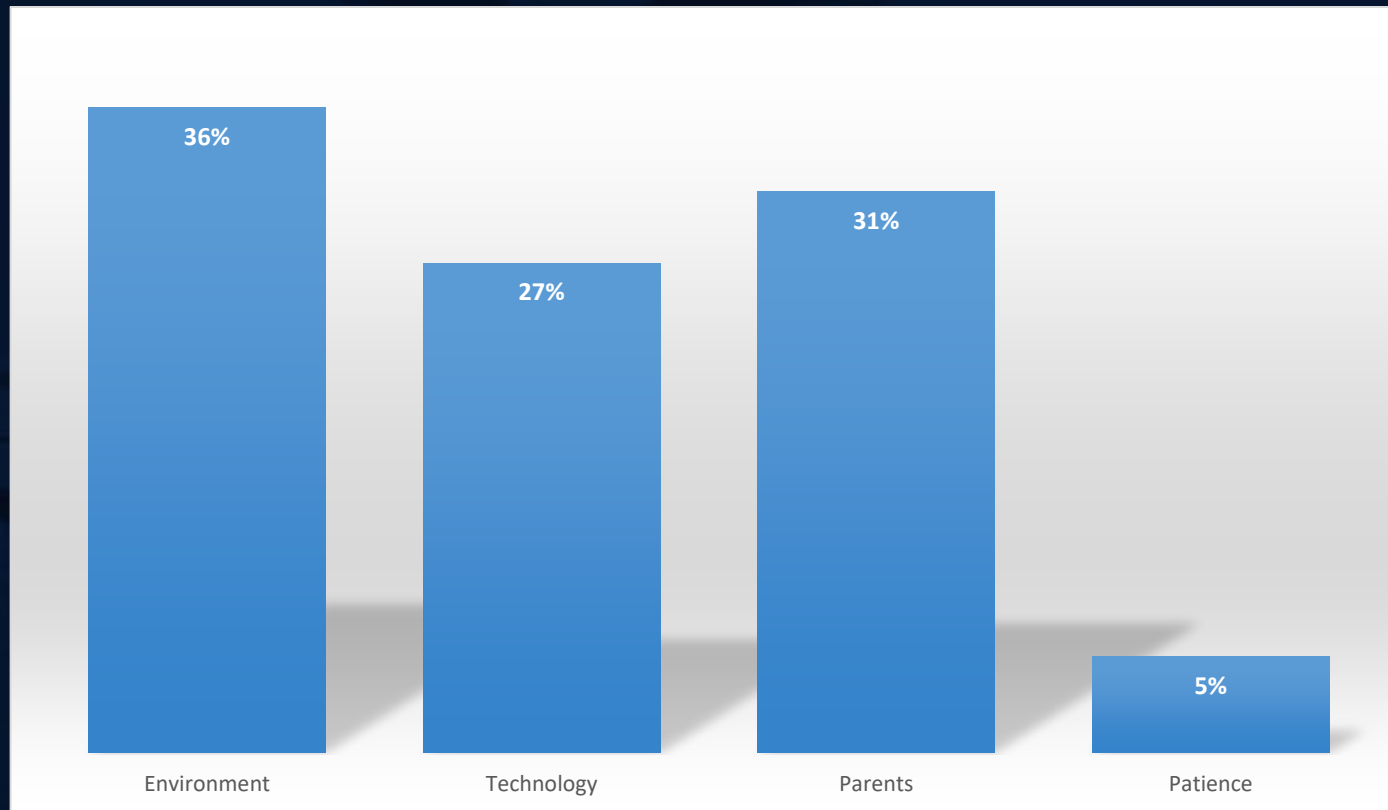
Coded Factors & Themes



- The figure above shows the coded factors and themes and their assigned sub-codes. Number of occurrences is in parentheses next to each coded theme. Themes are grouped by the author.

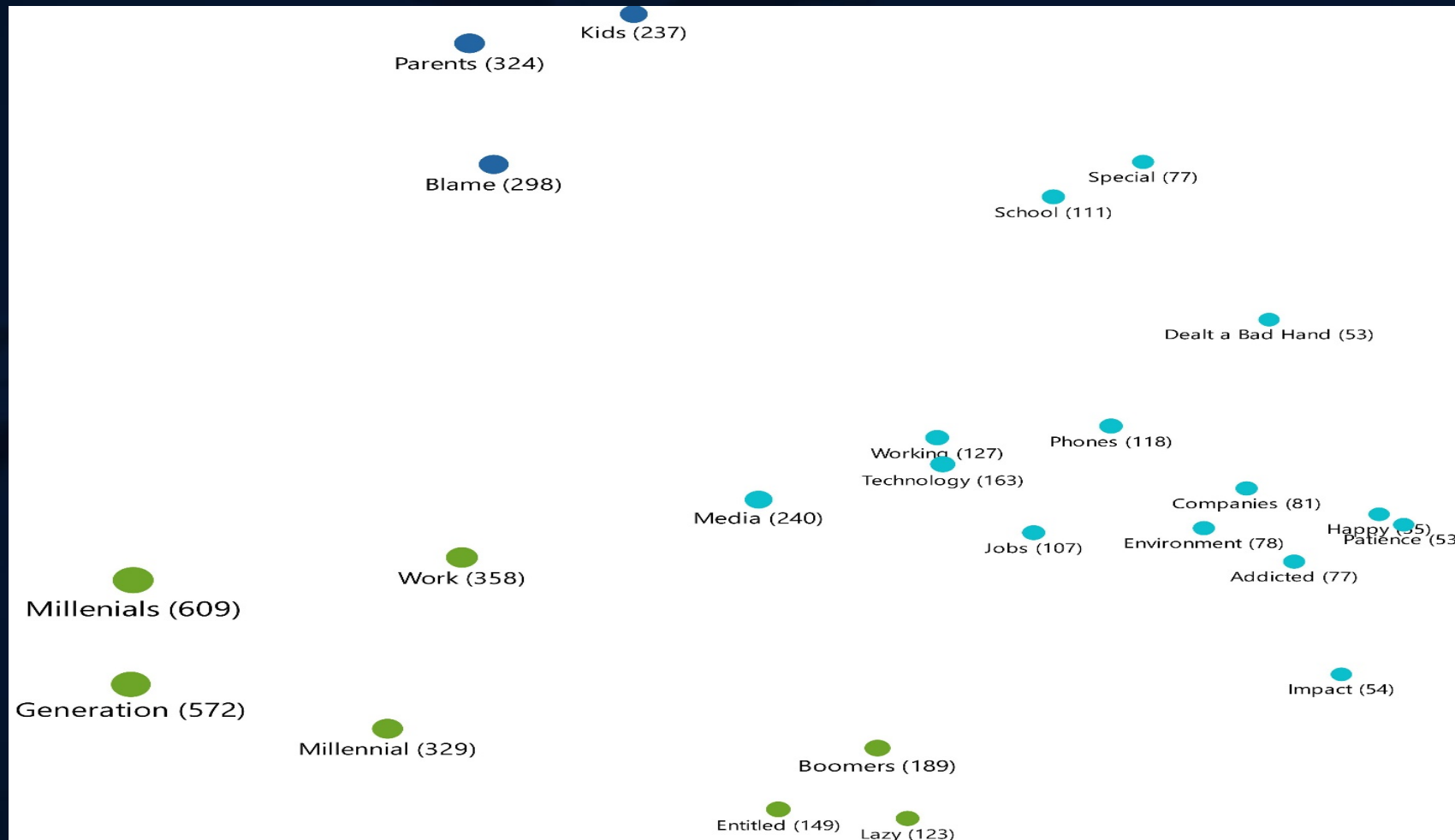


Frequency of Sinek's Four Factors



- Sinek discussed four-factors that conspire against millennials. These include *parenting*, *technology*, *patience*, and the *environment*. These factors were used to explain why millennials struggle in the workplace. The figure above displays a distribution of occurrences of each factor across comments found to include at least one of the factors (n=1141).

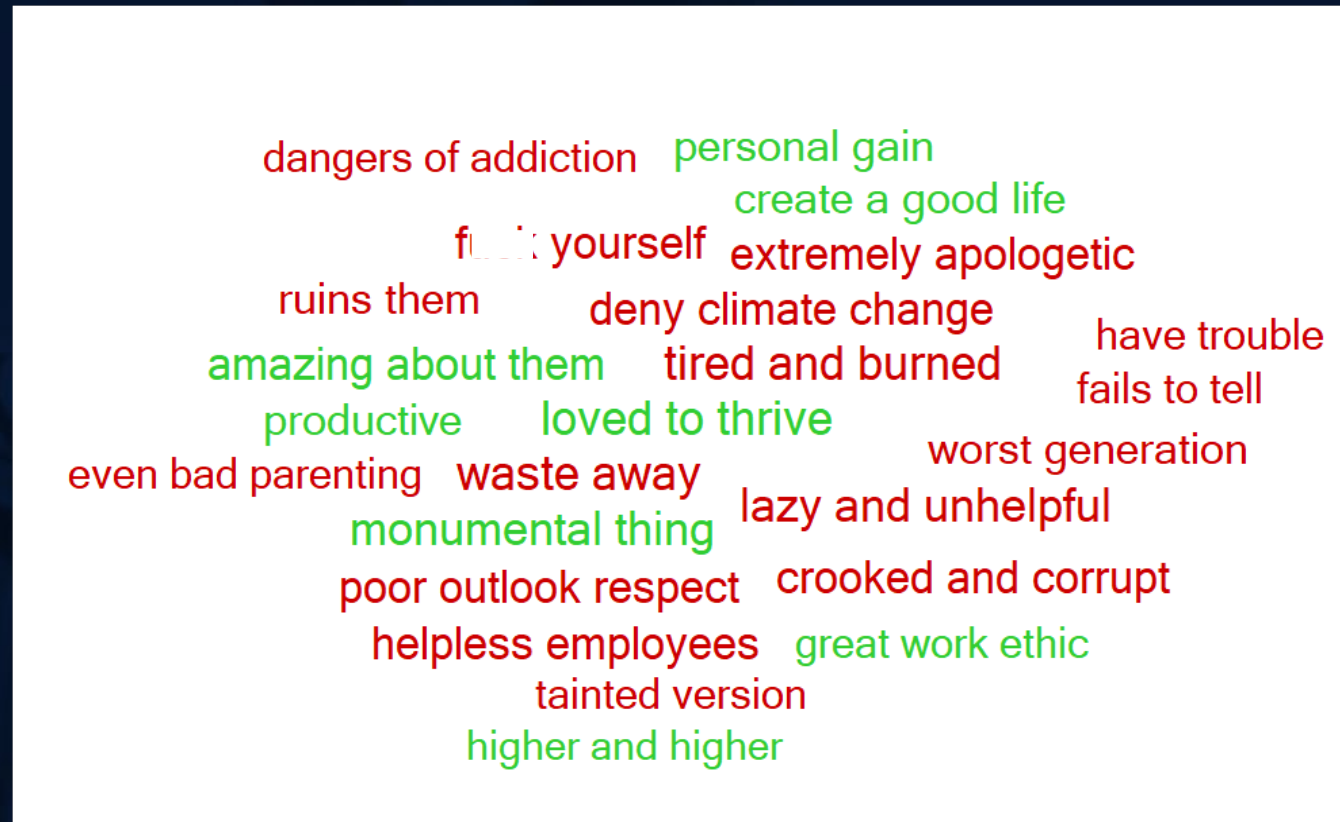
Code Map of Themes that Appear Near One Another Across & Within Comments



- Circle size and font size correspond to frequency (displayed in parentheses). Position on chart indicates how frequently the same themes appear in comments.



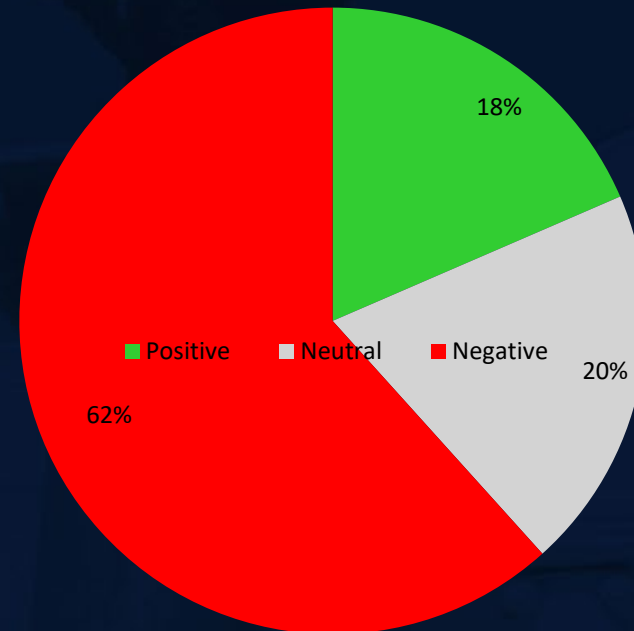
New Word Cloud Based upon Comments about Four Factor Themes



- Besides articles, emoji's, and valueless words, this chart has not been edited.



Pie Chart Showing Distribution of Positive, Negative, and Neutral Sentiments Derived from Four Factor Themes (Comments)



- *Note:* This chart shows sentiment for comments regarding Sinek's four-factor themes.



Results of Statistical Testing

- *Environment*
 - Environment is correlated with the sub-coded theme *working/work* ($\rho = 0.089, p < .001$). The sub-code theme *environment/working* is correlated with *working/companies* ($\rho = 0.076, p < .001$), *working/jobs* ($\rho = 0.124, p < .001$), and *working/work* ($\rho = 0.212, p < .001$). The sub-code theme *working/companies* correlates with *working/jobs* ($\rho = 0.152, p < .001$) and *working/work* ($\rho = 0.091, p < .001$). The sub-code theme *working/jobs* correlates with *working/work* ($\rho = 0.183, p < .001$).
 - Cronbach's alpha test of internal reliability found $\alpha = 0.364$, which is a considered low reliability (high error) (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).



Results of Statistical Testing

- *Parents*
 - *Parents* is correlated with *parents/kids* ($\rho = 0.287, p < .001$) and *parents/school* ($\rho = 0.123, p < .01$). The sub-coded theme *parents/kids* is correlated with *parents/school* ($\rho = 0.199, p < .001$).
 - Cronbach's alpha is $\alpha = 0.446$, which is considered low internal reliability (high error) (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).



Results of Statistical Testing Themes

- *Patience*
 - When *Patience* and its sub-coded theme *patience/gratification* (i.e., immediate gratification) were analyzed, Spearman's rho showed they were significantly positively correlated ($\rho = 0.135$, $p < .001$)
 - Internal reliability is low; Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = 0.240$
- *Technology*
 - Significantly correlated with sub-themes ($p < .001$); but low reliability (Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = 0.368$)
- Other statistically sig. themes were found but none had high internal reliability



Summary & Discussion

- The distribution of Sinek's four themes were not necessarily echoed throughout viewer comments.
- Only 5% of those who commented wrote about patience.
- Most viewers commented on *work* and *environment*, followed by *parents*
- The personality traits most described in the comments were that millennials were *entitled* and *lazy*. This suggests a preponderance of negative opinions of millennials.
- The results also showed that while Sinek proposed that millennial addiction to *dopamine* was to blame for their foibles, the rate of viewer comments re-using the word dopamine does not support it (20.8% among those who blamed).



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Going Deeper

- Many more themes arose than the 4 Sinek expounds upon
 - Relationships found among
 - Company, jobs, and environment were related;
 - Kids, parents, and school;
 - Patience and gratification;
 - Technology, media, addition, and phones
 - Sub-coded personality-trait themes arose
 - Laziness & Feeling special
 - Feelings of entitlement
 - Social Relationships
 - Placing blame
 - Being “dealt a bad hand”



Value in Qualitative Data

- Most Western empirical research based upon results of quantitative analysis
- Fails to “dig deeper” into hidden themes
- Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)
 - Explore
 - Discover
 - Reveal
 - Forces researchers to deal with ambiguities (Prasad, 2019)
 - Data are in the language of their subjects
 - Collected in more natural settings



References

- For a complete list of references, please email mferdock@liberty.edu
- To discuss further, please call me at: (484) 571-9458