

Millennials Culture in the Workplace: Challenges and Opportunities



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Over the past sixty years five generations of workforce evolved and today's workforce is undergoing a dramatic change due to the growth of Millennials. Millennials labelled as Generation Y are someone born between 1982 - 1996 and interestingly very soon they comprise half of the workforce. The objective of this paper is to study the culture and working style of Millennials in the workplace. It is found that Millennials have different way of working when compared to the previous generation or Gen X. This study is based on Secondary Source which includes extensive analysis on recent and existing literature.

Keywords: Millennials, Culture, Workplace, Generation and Working Style

1. Introduction

It is first time in the history of employment of organisation that all five generations of workforce are working together under one roof wherein majority is dominated by the millennials or Gen Y they are the latest to enter the organisation and they are called as millennials because of their closeness to the new millennium and being raised in the digital age. Pew research center (2018) have been studying Millennial generation or Gen Y for more than a decade in 2018 and defined the term as anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (age 23 to 38 in 2019) and anyone born after 1997 is considered as part of new generation called Gen Z. It is interesting to see that very soon half of the work population will comprise of millennials and the older generation that is Baby Boomers are retiring companies want to hire new generation in order to replace the retiring segment and this generation is creative, innovative and fresh in their ideas and as they belong to different time periods this influence a lot on their behaviour, values, attitudes and beliefs at the workplace and it is need of the day for every organisations to understand their working style in order to attract and retain them. Each generation has different ideas, attitudes and behaviour that are central to their work performance (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, Seifert 2010). Millennials have different ways and styles of working when compared to the previous generation or Gen X. Millennials are open to feedback, have new ideas, flexible, represent new blood in the organisation and characterised as tech savvy that is growing up with technology and have become masters of Internet (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008) they are called "The Digital Generation". On the other hand they hop from one job to another, prefer to work independently rather than teams and like to telecommute. Allen (1995), Hill (2002) has stated that it is actually challenge to the management to manage employees which majorly consist of millennials and especially large population include female employees. Shirom et al (2008), Afolabi et al (2010) has identified in his study men tend to be calmer and less stressed when compared to women.

2. Literature Review

KPMG (2017) if millennial women don't see the opportunity to move up they move out. Companies need to set honest expectations so that they stay longer and when there is a vacancy they must be given priority rather than hiring externally.

Steven Burns (2015) has stated that millennials is growing as largest demographic segment of the workforce; more attention is given to their perspectives, desires and goals. Six in 10 millennials say sense of purpose is the reason for choosing their current employer.

Rachaniphorn Ngotngamwong (2019) ten participants from variety of industries in Thailand were considered for the study using face to face interview. The study found that the millennials are assertive, share new ideas and represent new blood in the organisation on the other side they were found to have low organisational loyalty and commitment and less tolerance towards work and short working span, stubborn, impatient and overly confident.

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Shih Yung Chou (2012) the study was focused on millennials leadership and followership style. The study found that 1. Millennials focus on social aspect of work as having friendly co-workers and interesting work environment. 2. Millennials often seek for positive, frequent and open feedback from this perspective they expect two way communication approaches and overall it is concluded that millennials are closely related to participative style of leadership. It is also found that millennials exhibit exemplary followers who are independent, creative and ask questions to their subordinates.

Putu Irma Yunita (2019) study was conducted on 108 millennials of Dental Clinic Center that include 68 women and 40 men. The study revealed that men are calmer and not stressed in facing work mutations when compared to men. Employees facing mutation experience stress in executing their roles and responsibilities.

Meulenbroek H.A.J.A. et al (2019) has stated that office environment is very important to attract and retain the millennials in the workplace. The author has identified three most important needs that millennials consider are sociable with colleagues, opportunity to grow, Work life Balance. The author conducted research on 302 Dutch office employees from three generations. Anova and Bivariate correlation is used for analysis, the finding reveal that Gen Y prefers more professional growth than balance between work and leisure when compared to Gen X.

Dena Bateh (2019) the researcher has conducted the study on 68 teenagers between the age of 14 and 24 years old. Most of the teenagers were female (70%) with a median age of 17 years. The study revealed that the leader should be able to lead simultaneously different type of employees.

Kowske, Rasche and Wiley (2010) have found that when compared to Gen X and Baby boomers, millennials have higher level of company satisfaction with job security, career advancement and recognition.

Michael Scales et al (2014) have found that Gen Y have some unique characteristics which makes them different when compared to the other generation such as ability to overcome challenges, they know how to be frugal because their age suggests that they are less likely to be burdened with the family financial responsibilities, their technological ability will help the organisation to cut cost as most of the Gen y like to telecommute and this will save fixed cost of the organisations, they are considered flexible and innovators who can reinvent themselves.

Arshad Syed Karim et al (2019) has stated that in order to manage diversified workforce it is essential for a manager to possess certain soft skills like communication, emotional intelligence, diversity awareness, leadership and intercultural competence etc.

Muhammad Rizky Afif (2018) have found that this generation are influenced by computers and greatly accept non – traditional families and values, more flexible to new things and are comfortable with change and concluded that both work life balance and integration system should be managed properly so that it can engage millennials and strive them to achieve high productivity and good life.

Douglas main (2017) has characterized millennials as those who want flexible work schedule, more me time on the job and nearly nonstop feedback for career advancement and growth.

Lindsay S. Nolan (2015) has suggested that flexible work arrangement has to be made in order to balance work and personal life, creating meaningful work, perks and benefits can be used to attract and retain millennials, and revealed that true retention lies in the management style.

Objective of the Study to study the culture and working style of millennials in the workplace.

3. Research Methodology

This study is based on the secondary data alone and a thorough analysis has been done by going through a lot of existing literature about millennials and their working style and culture in the workplace. In order to get a deep insight on this subject, survey conducted by Deloitte, Pew research centre and KPMG was very useful some books and websites are also referred.

Scope of the Study

This study is an attempt to study the millennials culture and their working style. The study is confined only to the Gen Y and no comparison is made between other generations.

Challenges to the HR Professionals

Switching Jobs

Millennials prefer to work in the environment where they find new opportunities, continuous feedback, appreciation and surrounded with fun filled peers suppose if the millennials don't see the opportunity to move up they move out KPMG (2017). In today's market millennials wish to be self-employed and want to showcase their entrepreneurial skills and this is a great risk to the HR of losing talented young employee.

Lack of Experience and over Qualified

These days' companies look for experienced candidates at the entry level but millennials lack experience and most of the time they are over qualified to the entry level position in the organisation. According to Pew research center four in ten millennials had at least a bachelor's degree in 2016

Seek Flexibility in Working Hours

This generation don't prefer to work for nine to five jobs rather like to telecommute. Most of this generation are the ones who arrive late and vacate the office early. They defend that work being completed within deadline is important rather their presence in the workplace.

Look for high Pay Jobs

Millennials invest lot of money, efforts and time in completing their studies and they are dissatisfied if they are hired for less pay and little responsibility. This generation gets frustrated for the time it takes to reach for higher pay and position.

Opportunities Millennials bring to the Workplace

Innovation and Creativity

This generation bring with them newness in their ideas, thoughts, work habits and decision making. They never fear in trying something new at the cost of taking risk.

Multitasking

They are the force behind the advancement in new technology. Millennials are productive and multitasking if given with the

right environment and opportunity they excel and produce fruitful results to the organisation they are working with.

Tech Savvy

It is the millennials who understand the technology and they use technology to get their work done in less time and efforts. Their tech sense and knowledge enable them to do multi-tasking and stay connected. According to Cisco World technology report (2014) 84% of the HR leaders noticed generation Y perform task more quickly and faster using their mobile devices and apps when compared to older generations.

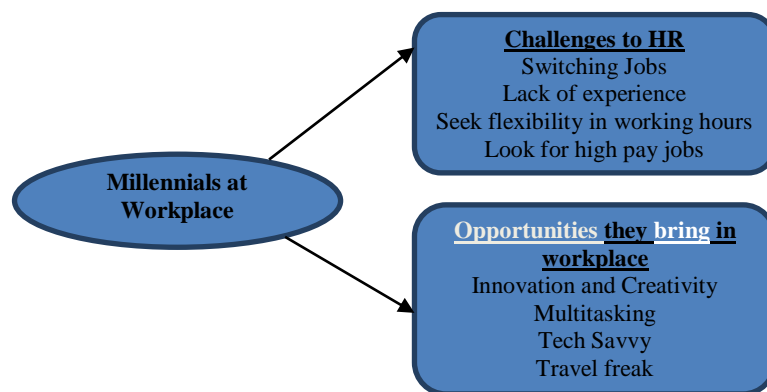
Travel Freak

Millennials are adventurous, like to travel from one place to another irrespective of distance and gender. This is a positive sign to the organisations to assign task and foreign assignments.

Collaborate and Connect

Millennials like to be involved and included in the teams they are working. They gel well irrespective of workforce diversity. Millennials are 24/7 connected in this way they seek opportunities even in small things. They are connected, very well informed and prepared for the opportunities.

Research Model – Millennials: Challenges and Opportunities



4. Discussion

By exploring millennials culture and working style in the workplace this paper provides a new perspective on understanding the millennials. This study is intended to study the millennials culture and working style in the organisation. The purpose is to provide the organisation and managers to get a deep and thorough analysis on the millennials as the half of the population in the organisation is going to be occupied by this generation by 2020. Gen Y is different in their attitudes, behaviour, and style of working, when compared to the other generation so it is at most important to understand them. It is found through existing literature from various articles, books on millennials culture and some websites that millennials are different in sense they possess altogether different attitude, beliefs, values. Like to travel, work not as per fixed timings, flexibility in the working environment, hop from one job to another, late start and early exit, need feedback to grow and advance in career development, tech savvy, influenced a lot by computers, internet and social media. The culture poses by this generation creates challenges to the HR leaders and managers and at the same time they bring lot of opportunities with them when they enter the organisation some of the interesting challenges and opportunities of this young generation is been developed as the research model. In recent times the need of the day for the managers to deal with these challenges effectively rather than taking serious actions against them which in turn is not liked and preferred by them. The opportunities they bring in must be utilised to the maximum extent to the fullest to reap fruitful results for the benefit of the organisation as well as individuals this will create a win-win situation for both.

5. Key Findings from the Existing Literature

1. Millennials seek opportunities to grow to increase their skills
2. They are flexible enough and focus on productivity rather than no of working hours spent in completing the task or seen in the office
3. Millennials value interesting work and are easy going, prefer travel and like to build rapport.
4. Millennials very well balance work and life
5. Millennials are loyal to the company and have strong ethics
6. Millennials are tech savvy and like to update themselves
7. Millennials are multi-task oriented, build network with people and versatile.
8. Millennials are quick learners and adapt to changes faster when compared to other generations.

Implications for Practice

- Understanding millennials will give a deep insight in designing the work environment wherein the performance of the individual, group and overall organisation will be maximized.

- More attention must be paid to millennials as this generation occupies most of the population in coming years and builds the future of the organisation.
- Organisations must provide interesting work and opportunities and also lend support and help in their professional development.
- Organisation must take the advantage of the electronic literacy of the millennials.
- Focus must be on their salary package and the amount of responsibility given as this generation switch jobs if they don't find work interesting and as per their qualification.
- Companies must allow for telecommuting options and provide with flexible work timings as this generation don't prefer to work for nine-five jobs.

6. Limitations

1. Due to time constraint this study is based on the secondary data alone.
2. The study could not apply millennials in particular sector but has been explored in general.

Further Research

This study is focused on millennials culture in the workplace in the general sense and the data is gathered from the secondary source alone. Further research can be carried on to study millennials culture and their working style in any particular sector. Empirical study can also be conducted to get deep insight and understanding of Gen Y.

7. Conclusion

Each one is unique and millennials have their own unique style of working. I have sought to explain the attitudes, culture, working style of the millennials by exploring the various existing literature in order to get an insight of Gen Y and came up with the theory and implication of managerial practice for the organisation. The study found that in recent times most of the workforce population consists of the generation Y who differ from other generations in many aspects like they come late and leave early from the workplace sometimes they prefer to work collectively and sometimes individually, they like to switch from one job to another not maintaining stability at the workplace and demand flexibility in terms of working hours and on the positive note they are creative, talented, tech savvy, look for new opportunities. This paper will be useful to the organisations, business leaders and managers to structure the workplace environment to match with the generation Y wherein the performance is maximised. In order to bring win-win situation for organisation and millennials, mutual understanding, co-operation and support is at most needed. Companies should build strategies to attract and retain them for a longer period of time. We conclude this generation is definitely going to enjoy work and break many walls and ceilings in the work place.

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