Managing Millennials: A Qualitative Study of Millennials Job-Hopping in the BPO Industry

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Abstract: **The study sought to investigate the experiences of millennial employees that led to poor retention rates. Qualitative research was conducted to get an understanding of the variables influencing millennial employee retention rates as well as how firms respond. There has been a lot of research over the last decade that explains why an employee changes jobs. Preceding research about millennials states the reasons behind millennial job-hopping: (1) the impact of job dissatisfaction; (2) the impact of job satisfaction; and (3) the impact of effective leadership and management. According to the findings of this study, in order to retain millennial employees, companies must improve their management and conduct a monthly evaluation of their employees' performance. It is also proven that a salary increase can help the management retain their employees, and healthy communication with the employees can help to keep not only millennial employees but other generations of employees as well.**

Keywords: **Handling, retain millennial employees, Retention, Changing jobs, Job-hoppers**

I. INTRODUCTION

Millennials, born between 1981 and 2000, are the current workforce group and are likewise expected to be a significant economic force in the years to come. They are entering in large numbers (Alexander & Sysko, 2012). A growing number of people are shunning one job in favor of another. Employers have a hard time maintaining employees who frequently switch jobs. Managing millennial employees presents a challenge for the BPO industry, particularly in the call center sector. Willis Towers Watson's (2016) analysis of the demography of the Asia-Pacific workforce reveals that 64 percent of BPO employees are millennials. Numerous studies have found that people facing challenges at work—whether it's an illness, a lack of concentration on their goals, or anything else—underperform in their professions consistently. A large number of millennials change jobs often. They are open to a wide range of job options and would be willing to work for a different company in exchange for a raise of no more than 20%. (Rigoni & Nelson, 2016). While Millennials aren't likely to quit their employment, the amount of enjoyment they feel at work plays an important role in their decision-making process. Attracting the best of these millennial employees is critical to the company's long-term success. The workplace culture of the 21st century can be defined by their career ambitions, attitudes toward work, and knowledge of new technologies. There is no doubt that millennials, who constitute the majority of today's workforce, have unique characteristics compared to their predecessors. People in this generation want to hear how great they are, not how bad they are. Instead of being uncertain, they want rules and duties that are well defined. As a result, they consider technology a significant component of their identity. According to PWC's published "Millennials at Work: Reshaping the Workplace," millennials are often dissatisfied with strict organizational structures and put off by information barriers. They look forward to quick advancement, a varied and exciting profession, and frequent feedback. Thus, millennials seek management styles and corporate cultures significantly different from those of previous generations, tailored to their requirements and preferences.

Due to their constant use of technology, Millennials frequently multitask between mobile devices, social media, and Internet browsing. Technology has made an enormous amount of information readily accessible, and the Millennial generation has refined the capacity to quickly retrieve and filter the material to obtain the necessary information (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). In the era of millennials, the world has become a small, interconnected place where it is easy to communicate with even the most distant neighbor. As a result of continuous information overload and new information overload, the world is constantly changing. Because of Internet exposure and technological advancement, millennials are information enthusiasts with access to all possible sources of information and media (aesthetic, social, and communication) (Roestenburg, 2020). The characteristics of millennials include working effectively as a team member and thriving in an environment that encourages teamwork. Millennials value team success and well-being above individual achievement. Although it was initially assumed that the Millennial generation possessed a culture of entitlement and was challenging to deal with. Research suggests that similar characteristics have been attributed to each generation as they enter the workforce. (Deal et al. 2010). The capability

of Millennials to adapt to evolving change is attributable to their workplace engagement. Employee engagement is defined as the process of intellectually, morally, and socially engaging people to achieve company goals. (Shuck & Herd, 2012; Wollard & Shuck, 2010).

In the Philippines, millennials make up one-third of the population, indicating that they already make up a substantial share of the labor force. According to a survey conducted by the Philippines Statistics Authority in 2015, approximately half of the Philippine workforce comprises millennials aged 18 to 34. (Cullimore, 2017). These statistics show that most of the Philippine population is currently in the labor force, led by the millennials, who have the highest number. (Norona & Reyes, 2019). Millennial turnover is a problem in various industries. One-quarter of millennials would leave their present workplace to join a new company or do something else, and two-thirds anticipate leaving by 2020. (The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey, 2016, p. 2). Human resources are the most significant asset an organization may possess to fulfill short-term and long-term organizational goals. Suppose the people who work for that company put in the effort, demonstrate their devotion, and are willing to try new things to advance their careers. In that case, those organizational objectives can be achieved. Some personnel, without a doubt, are unable to commit their time and energy to the business for an extended length of time—the reasons for moving from one firm to another vary. However, one of the most commonly cited reasons is that individuals anticipate better opportunities in other firms. By frequently changing jobs, millennials are more likely to earn more money, advance their careers faster, and find a better fit with the work culture.

Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to examine the experiences of millennials and to discover the factors that lead millennials to job-hopping. And relatively educated, not only millennial workers but also the human resource managers in the BPO industry.

Understanding the Millennial Generation

Born between 1980 and 2000, the Millennials are the most recent generation to enter the workforce. Due to their proximity to the new millennium and upbringing in a more digital world, they are known as Millennials. (Kaifi et al., 2012). The impact of technological advancement on the millennial generation has been to make them more accepting of non-traditional families and values. (Andert, 2011). The millennials are the first generation born in the digital age; they're technologically proficient and consume technology differently than previous generations. According to Neilsen, the use of technology distinguishes this generation the most. Millennials can quickly learn and master new technologies more than any other generation currently employed. In a fast-paced workplace where technology is constantly evolving, millennials' ability to learn new business tools more quickly than more experienced employees is a significant advantage.

(Wavestone, 2018). These new entrants view the workforce as technologically adept and self-confident (Holt, Marques, & Way, 2012). The Millennial generation is stereotyped as ambitious and impatient with unrealistic goals. (Ng et al., 2010). Despite being ambitious and career-focused, millennials have no intention of sacrificing their personal lives for their careers. They desire career choices and job satisfaction by determining workplace flexibility rather than compensation (Abril-Sánchez, Levin, & Del Riego, 2012).

Leaders, particularly those who employ a conventional strategy, struggle to understand and motivate millennials (Gregory & Thompson, 2012). In scholarly articles, the attitudes and behaviors of the Millennial generation are evaluated in different ways. (Solnet & Kralj, 2011). Numerous negative perceptions exist regarding the Millennial generation. Several articles discussing the worst qualities of the Millennial generation serve as the basis for these generalizations. (Ferri, 2014). Extremely harsh generalizations about the Millennial generation exist. This harshness includes the assumption that Millennials are selfish, attention-seeking hypocrites who lack political, financial, and cultural understanding. Some management believes that Millennial employees must get feedback at least once a month, citing this as evidence that Millennials are needy (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Because millennials are seen as demanding and needy (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). According to research, monthly feedback is reasonable; therefore, managers may need to improve the quality of their feedback. Another common misconception regarding Millennials is that they regularly switch employment. (Bertolino, Truxillo, & Frascaroli, 2013). As aforementioned, 60% of Millennials believe it is improbable that they will stay with the same employer for the whole of their professional careers (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Millennials are regarded as sociable, open-minded, bright, responsible, socially conscious, knowledgeable, and civic-minded (Gergen, Green, & Ceballos, 2014). Positive perceptions of the Millennial generation have grown stronger over time. The media and society at large characterize Millennials as diligent, team-oriented, and quick learners. (Bertolino et al., 2013). Considering that they are the most diverse generation, it is not unexpected that millennials are more culturally sensitive (Clemons, 2014). The Millennial workforce has existed for a sufficient amount of time. The population of Millennial employees has reached a point where individuals must evaluate whether Millennial employees have a positive or negative impact on the workforce. (Ferri-Reed, 2014).

The Millennials' Career-Related Expectations

Many Millennials' career goals and expectations are "supersized," unrealistic, and detached from performance-based compensation. (Ng et al., 2010). The phrase "career expectations" refers to a person's realistic and attainable career goals. Prior research reveals that Millennials' professional expectations, attitudes, and beliefs are radically unlike those of earlier generations. (Kuron et al., 2015). According to

studies, a person's interests and job expectations might be affected by their social behavior, parental supervision, educational level, and race or ethnicity. (Kong, Wang, & Fu, 2015). The Millennial generation is composed of intelligent, ambitious, creative, and career-oriented tech-savvy people with high aspirations. (DeVaney, 2015). In contrast, they are complex, entitled, and narcissistic (Deal et al.,2010). Based on the existing literature on the millennial generation, researchers identified five predominant themes: organizational commitment, work-life balance, a nurturing work environment, meaningful work experiences, and opportunities for advancement. (PWC, 2011; Kuron et al., 2015)

Organizational Commitment

Sixty percent of Millennials in the workforce have left within the first three years of employment in 2010. (Pew Research Center, 2015). According to Ertas (2015), professionals in human resources are increasingly concerned with retaining and motivating the next generation of workers. Current research supports the applicability of Herzberg's two-factor theory to identify workplace characteristics and their potential influence on organizational commitment. According to Alexander and Sysko (2013), incentive variables such as prospects for promotion and leadership opportunities, as well as hygiene aspects such as remuneration, devotion to their management, and a connection to the corporate objective, motivate the millennial generation workforce. Millennials feel that organizations should be built on equity-based principles. These equity systems include fair salaries, a reward system for workplace achievements, and an organization's adaptability to the work preferences of millennials. In addition to these hygiene aspects, significant factors that promote organizational commitment include motivational factors such as job security and helpful and nurturing relations between employees and supervisors. (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a vital issue for all states and corporate employees nowadays. When a company fails to examine and manage employee work-life balance correctly, employee productivity and performance will decrease (Abioro, Oladejo, & Ashogbon, 2018). The first work-life balance programs occurred in 1930. They believe that productivity, not hours worked, should establish their value (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Firm policies and regulations enable employees to work effectively and efficiently and provide flexibility for addressing personal matters. Workforce members value work-life balance more than money alone (Meenakshi, V., & Ravichandran, 2013); (R, S, & Murthy, 2015). A study by Nielsen in Indonesia indicated that maintaining a balance between work and family remained the top concern for locals (Post, 2012). Employees in Indonesia believe that work-life balance suits their needs, including flexible work hours that enable them to work remotely and participate in personal activities, particularly for female employees (Mittal, 2017). Work-life balance has

become an essential issue for Millennials and businesses (Luscombe, Lewis, & Biggs, 2013). (Roebuck, Smith, & Haddaoui, 2013). Throughout their careers, millennials are more likely to negotiate their employment conditions (Ng et al., 2010). According to studies, a company's unique work-life balance policies can enhance its reputation, helping it to attract and retain more applicants (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013).

A Nurturing Work Environment

A nurturing work environment is a feature of a company that encourages and stimulates productivity, improves self-esteem, increases job satisfaction, and fosters peer cohesion and employee retention (Gomes & Neves, 2011). Supportive organizations attract millennials who are positive, team players, collaborators, goal-oriented, socially adept, and well-educated (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011; Gomes & Neves, 2011). In school, Millennials have participated in several group projects and presentations. They emphasize the social side of employment. (e.g., pleasant coworkers, engaging atmosphere). Millennials like to work with and learn from respected colleagues and supervisors and want to develop connections with coworkers. Millennials like supervisors and managers who are always available for feedback; hence, "management quality" is a primary motivation (after money). (Ng et al., 2010). The human element of work may also improve engagement among Millennials. Generation Y favors mentors who are visionaries, strategic thinkers, inspirational, and personable. The millennial generation prefers a collaborative work environment to one that is competitive. Collaboration enhances Millennial employees' satisfaction.

Opportunities for Advancement

Employers may rely on their eagerness to gain new skills and express their creativity to retain high-performing Millennials. Peter Stark, a business consultant, asserts, "Millennials believe they can do anything given the right opportunity and access to learning and growth." However, less than 2% of Millennials believe their employer or supervisor promotes their professional development, presenting a tremendous opportunity for leaders to fill this hole (Conlan, 2021). For millennials, professional progression and advancement possibilities are essential for a career (Kong et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2010). According to Ng et al. (2010), the Millennials' top priority for promotion possibilities reflects their eagerness for rapid advancement. Positively, people with high professional expectations are often willing to embrace their careers, cultivate job-related skills, and accept complex tasks.

II. METHODS

Ethics

This study has been approved by the Branch Research Ethics Board (BREB) of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines—Quezon City Branch. Each participant received a consent form stating that there are no foreseeable risks to the

participants if they choose to partake in this interview, and since this participation is strictly voluntary, it will not affect them in any way. If they choose to withdraw from the interview, they can do so at any time. The researcher will not hold the participant/s accountable, and all the records the researchers get from them will not be used in our research or for other purposes. The compensation is given by the researchers as an appreciation for the effort of participants who willingly participated in the conducted interview.

Design, Sampling and Data Collection Method

Qualitative narrative research was used in this study to understand how participants in the study develop personal stories and narratives from their own experiences through interviews. As seen by the study participants, a more in-depth understanding of the corporate workplace may best be achieved using this recommended technique. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative researchers must rely on participants' opinions, make broad statements, and primarily collect textual data to facilitate the discovery of new information. The researchers are responsible for analyzing the data to identify themes, recognizing that qualitative analysis is subjective and biased. Using narrative research will allow each participant's experience to be more clearly defined and understood by the researcher.

In order to address the objectives of the study. We used the focus group participants as our data collection method. The focus group participants in this study consisted of five (5) millennials who have experienced changing jobs in a BPO company in Quezon City twice or more, ranging in age from 21 to 36 years old. These focus group participants will contribute to an open discussion for research purposes. Each study participant provided primary demographic data such as their generation, gender, and industry occupation. The key informants of this study are the two (2) experts in managing their employees in the company; the supervisor/TL and the HR Manager; the ones to share the information about the millennial employees who tend to be job-hopping and have worked in their company for more than five years.

An online interview was used in this study in order to collect the required data for the research. A qualitative narrative study included a semi-structured set of open-ended questions was used throughout the online interviews to guarantee that each online interview session was conducted consistently, to explore further specific responses, and to better understand the real-world experiences of millennial job-hoppers and the perspective of the HR manager and supervisor on millennials. Using this method, the researcher can watch and interview study subjects in their natural environments. The data was gathered using Google Meet and Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) to record online interviews, which were then manually transcribed into a word document/textual form.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study are semi-structured, in-depth, and recorded interviews since it will be conducted virtually with a maximum of 8 participants using an open-ended question established by the researchers. The questionnaires that was be given to the participants consist of various domains related to job-hopping, and the questionnaire should be proven reliable because all the questions stated can answer all the research questions and the statement of the problem.

The researcher obtained a signed consent form from each participant prior to conducting interview sessions. Each participant agreed to the use of a digital recorder and a backup recorder as the main sources for controlling bias and producing reliable data for qualitative analysis. All interview sessions were transcribed and checked by the participants for the accuracy of their answers to researcher questions. All participants in the study answered the interview questions.

Data Analysis

After all the data had been gathered, the analysis was conducted. The participants were interviewed individually using a questionnaire that consisted of eight semi-structured, open-ended questions. Clarification of questions was given as needed. The two groups that emerged from the sample population were able to communicate their personal views of their experiences as millennial job-hoppers (group one), team leaders (TL), and HR (group two) in the BPO industry. Furthermore, to determine the experience of millennials in a BPO company in Quezon City, the study included not only millennial viewpoints but also those of their team leader and HR to ensure a full and rich picture was presented. The researchers manually transcribed all-digital audio/video interviews from the recorded interviews, and each participant agreed on their transcript copy.

The interviews were transcribed, coded, categorized, and analyzed by the researchers from the recorded interviews to examine the information about the purpose of the study. The researchers manually categorized common thoughts from the interview transcripts into emerging themes and, eventually, significant themes. To verify findings and themes, the researchers thoroughly examined the collected data results by manually comparing each finding to the interviewees' transcripts. The researchers collected data through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. The researcher ensured triangulation by gathering data from various participants via interviews, interview transcripts, questionnaires, and observations and recording the online interview. All participants were given pseudonym identifications and kept anonymous.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the interviews with the seven participants, who are five (5) BPO millennial employees, one (1) HR, and one (1) supervisor, the most

common factors that affect the motivation and decision of the millennial employees to change jobs are salary, benefits, management, and work environment. According to the two participants that the researcher interviewed, they will resign the moment their management forces them to change their current work setup. This research shows that millennial employees tend to job hop when there is a risk of them being forced to change from working from home to working in the office and vice versa. Thus, it shows that having more freedom to choose the work setup millennials want will increase their chances of retaining them. According to Abioro, Oladejo, & Ashogbon (2018), work-life balance is a vital issue for all states and corporate employees nowadays. When a company fails to examine and manage employee work-life balance correctly, employee productivity and performance will decrease, and sometimes a company's failure to notice the needs of the employees, especially the millennials who do not hesitate to job-hop, will result in millennial job-hoppers and will cause a further problem for the company and management. Mr. Hoshi, an HR professional, claims that millennial job-hoppers create a problem for the company, particularly concerning the replacement and training of the new employees. It also creates an unhealthy environment in the management office. Furthermore, according to the other three (3) BPO millennial employees that the researcher interviewed, they will resign and change companies if they find a better opportunity and a higher salary in another BPO company.

It shows that millennials give importance to the factors that will help them advance their career and provide a better living standard. Following this result, a nurturing work environment will help the management attract and retain employees with potential and skills. Lastly, according to Mr. Hoshi, millennials are a generation that gives importance to open criticism and communication, while other generations tend to be more reserved regarding criticism and communication. Millennials are employees who are always open to guidance and correction and see criticism as an opportunity to improve their skills. Millennials, according to research, require monthly feedback, which is reasonable; thus, managers may need to improve the quality of their feedback (Bertolino, Truxillo, & Frascaroli, 2013). In the interview, Mr. V, the supervisor, claims that millennials are the generation who change jobs most often because they are always looking for something that will fit them and the ideals of their work environment. Furthermore, one of the strategies that Mr. V suggested when the researcher asked about how to retain millennial employees, Mr. V said that when it comes to managing employees, particularly millennials, it is important to "fit your shoes" to the situation of the employee. Some rules can be bent, and sometimes it is better to understand and correct the employee without giving severe punishment.

According to the research findings, millennials are a generation that requires a new style of management and leadership because they are products of the digital era and have learned that traditional leadership styles will not help them achieve their desired growth and results. As evidence for these claims, Mr. Hoshi and Mr. V, both HR and supervisors who are millennials, stated that traditional leadership styles are not always effective, especially for their millennial employees who are not afraid to job-hop. According to Alexander and Sysko (2013), incentive variables such as prospects for promotion and leadership opportunities, as well as hygiene aspects such as remuneration, devotion to their management, and a connection to the corporate objective, motivate the millennial generation workforce. As a result, the Two-Factor theory, or the Motivation-Hygiene theory, of Frederick Herzberg(1965), can be used to determine the factors that can affect the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of millennials. Furthermore, Peter Stark, a business consultant, asserts, "Millennials believe they can do anything given the right opportunity and access to learning and growth." Thus, allowing millennials to grow can help the company and management attract and retain their millennial employees.
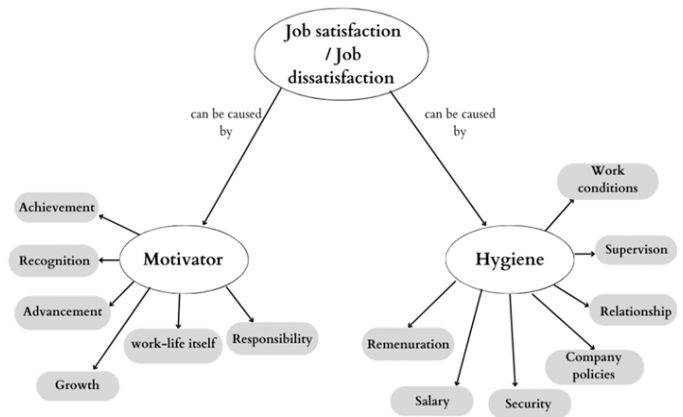

Figure 1: Concept Map of Millennials' Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework used in this study of the Two-Factor theory or the Motivation-Hygiene theory of Frederick Herzberg (1968). There will be two aspects considered in this study: (a) *job satisfaction factors*, which define millennials' interests and demands; and (b) *job dissatisfaction factors*, which comprise all of the company's policies, initiatives, and events. Millennials are employing tactics designed to improve their employment happiness. This research aims to assess the compatibility between millennial job satisfaction factors and management initiatives to determine whether or not BPO organizations satisfy the job satisfaction demands of their millennial workforce in the workplace.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions that the researcher draws:

Company management must find a new style of leadership that will fit the needs of both their millennial and previous generation employees. Another finding is that millennials are a problematic generation to manage because they require constant attention and guidance. Millennials, just like any other generation, are independent workers. Although they find joy in working with a leader and co-worker who can help them grow and improve, millennials are still a generation that can produce excellent results while working independently. Lastly, millennials are a generation that is always in search of better jobs that can improve their standard of living, so giving them more opportunities to grow while earning money will undoubtedly work in retaining them.

According to the findings of this study, in order to retain millennial employees, companies must improve their management and conduct a monthly evaluation of their employees' performance. It is also proven that a salary increase can help the management retain their employees, and having healthy communication with the employees can help to retain not only millennial employees but also other generations of employees.

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