

MILLENIALS' WORKPLACE CHALLENGES AND GLOBAL MARKET TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

In the recent times, organizations across the globe are faced with new challenges due to the generational challenges which must be faced with new approach and handled with extreme care due to the nature of their upbringing. The purpose of the study was to look at the difficulties millennials confront and how their actions impact productivity. Millennials face a variety of difficulties, such as intergenerational conflict at work and generational conflict inside organizational hierarchies. Millennials lack appropriate communication skills, especially with different generations, and are preoccupied with finding a job that will allow them to live comfortable lives. They also want rapid career advancement and tend to be capitalistic naturally though few are socialistic. While millennials' tech-savvy conduct increases efficiency at work, their impatient behavior negatively impacts their productivity. Millennials are known for their inability to focus at work, addiction to social media, indecisiveness, sensitivity to the

opinions of others, and constant desire to fit in and be accepted. Particularly when it comes to their interactions with their bosses, millennials lack formality, which is perceived as disrespectful. When a fresh chance presents itself, they will change occupations. It was also found that millennials perform well in teams, which fosters creativity within the company. Because of their capacity to quickly adopt new technologies, millennials have changed the way that work is done in organizations, leading to increased efficiency. Businesses should develop efficient ways to engage millennials on a range of organizational issues and include them in critical decision-making processes. Millennials are impacting global market trends; thus, it is important to include them on boards. If they are underrepresented, businesses, regardless of their industry, may face dangers.

Key Words: Millennials, tech-savvy, efficiency, social media

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, organizations are faced with multiple challenges due to ever evolving generational gaps and how best to deploy them in workplaces especially the millennials. Millennials, aged 22-38, make up Kenya's workforce and are expected to account for 35% of the global workforce by 2025 as older generations retire (Fullen, 2019). Millennials have a unique work ethic and perspective, presenting numerous obstacles in the workplace due to their productivity-limiting practices. They have become outspoken naysayers, often using social media

to voice their grievances and demands (Silvan, 2021). Millennials have produced more books, blogs, and articles than any other age group, but have faced challenges with names, clichés, and preconceptions in the job market. The millennial generation, well-educated, ambitious, and valuing their identity and work, is rapidly transforming the workforce (Krishnan & Kakada, 2022).

Millennials are optimistic, socially conscious, and high-tech enthusiasts with quick connections. Despite their impressive abilities, they also have perceived drawbacks in the workplace (Waworuntu *et al.*, 2022). Experts have varying opinions on the characteristics of this generation, including independence, sluggishness, disloyalty, rudeness, entitlement, self-centeredness, ambition, social consciousness, and diligence. Fullen (2019) highlights a global silent invasion of millennials, causing conflicts and challenges for organizations as they navigate the expectations and achievements of this younger generation. Espinoza and Ukleja (2016) suggest that their attitudes, hairstyles, and clothing are being scrutinized due to their distaste for the current corporate culture. Millennials' innovative work style could potentially save companies billions of dollars due to reduced turnover costs and productivity if they are not willing to adapt (Fullen, 2019). Carl Max (2016) articulates their desire to accumulate wealth. Millennials desire a work-life balance, prioritizing personal relationships over careers, which may conflict with Baby Boomer coworkers who may question their dedication and allegiance to the company, potentially shaming them as indolent (Alvarez, 2021). Millennials and certain older generations are at odds due to their perceived conceitedness and resistance to corporate culture (Watts, 2019). Older workers are becoming annoyed with millennials due to their flip-flops, ripped jeans, and texting habits, leading to potential dissatisfaction and mistrust in future interactions (Ngotngamwong, 2019).

Millennials face marginalization from experienced colleagues, making it difficult to gain credibility, trust, and respect in the workplace, with job turnover linked to lack of communication support (Williford, 2023). Even though millennials may not place the same emphasis on work as their bosses, if they commit to particular projects, they might comply with workplace expectations and behave more like Baby Boomers. They use responsibility and communication to support corporate transformation (Tallbäck, Ciurovaité, & Hélová, 2022). Millennials' desire for work-life balance may prompt management to reconsider negative discourses about family life abuse and workaholic behaviors, (Petersen, 2021).

The impact of Millennials' communication styles and behaviors on older Baby Boomer and Generation X cohorts in the workforce is a topic of concern and conjecture (Herring, 2019). Concerns arise regarding millennials' potential to enhance organizational performance and foster productive relationships with senior staff, and how management should inspire and utilize their unique skills (Ngotngamwong, 2019). Millennial characteristics could make things more difficult at work and have a detrimental effect on colleagues and organizational procedures, even though the current state of the economy might make them more cooperative than people had previously believed (Darby, & Morrell, 2019). Millennials are often viewed negatively by organizations due

to their disloyal, impatient, and self-important nature. However, they can be productive and efficient if their jobs are fulfilling and career-advancing. Employers are resentful of this behavior, as it leads to low retention rates and a lack of loyalty (Reshma, 2020).

The general public perceives millennials as having negative attributes like impatience, self-importance, and disloyalty from an organizational standpoint (McDermont & Jacob, 2023). Businesses must adapt rules to capitalize on millennials' unique skills, as meaningful jobs and career advancement can lead to their productivity and efficiency (Jha, Sareen, & Potnuru, 2019). Boring and unfulfilling jobs lead to low retention rates, causing employers to become irritated by employees' dissatisfaction with their jobs (Alsop, 2018). O'Toole *et al.* (2019) suggests that millennials' ideals and experiences, which differ from earlier generations, influence their bargaining and acceptance by incumbent workers (Perreault-Laird, & Silver, 2019). Expectancy violation theory suggests that millennials' actions may be perceived as breaking expectations, as they are evaluated based on their beliefs and contextual norms (Park, Cho, & Kim, 2021). Members' attributions and reactions to them are influenced when they act beyond what others expect of them (Gómez-Román *et al.*, 2021).

Tolerance for variety, teamwork, access to cutting-edge communication technology, and creative problem-solving skills are traits that define millennials (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019). Joanne *et al.* (2019) highlight millennials as excellent team players, disregarding racial and gender stereotypes, and open to feedback. They value camaraderie, innovative methods, technology, consumer-based justice, collaboration, and professional growth (Ozuem *et al.*, 2023). Millennials embrace charitable giving even though they do not make significant financial contributions, are more conscious of social issues, and actively volunteer to better their communities. They also favor businesses that balance profit with social responsibility (Reavis, Singh, & Tucci, 2021). Millennials are more inclined to support companies that promote social betterment because they are receptive to cause marketing and items that promote social improvement. Because they are adept at multitasking and frequently change careers, managers should strongly encourage them to consider exploring other career paths within the same company (Marston, 2009). Millennials are a remarkable generation with a sober perspective, belief in change, and faith in technology, making them a unique and remarkable generation (Reavis, Singh, & Tucci, 2021).

Millennials

In order to comprehend millennials, one must take into account their varied upbringings, life experiences, and the larger socioeconomic environment that has shaped their attitudes and actions. Those born approximately between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s are referred to as millennials, or Generation Y (Pew Research Center, 2020). Economic, societal, and technical developments have all influenced this generation. As the first generation to have grown up in the digital age, millennials are renowned for their proficiency with social media, technology, and the

internet (Pew Research Center, 2019). Work-life balance, diversity, inclusion, and social justice problems are frequently given top priority (Deloitte, 2020). This generation looks for purpose in their work and favors experiences over material belongings.

With greater rates of college enrollment and degrees earned, millennials are one of the most educated generations (Pew Research Center, 2019). They have experienced difficulties including student loan debt and employment market changes since entering the workforce during uncertain economic times. Due in part to changing social standards and economic pressures, Millennials are delaying important life milestones like marriage, homeownership, and starting a family later than prior generations (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Due in part to easier access to information and the connection that comes with technology, millennials are more aware of global issues and are more globally linked (Pew Research Center, 2014). Due to their desire for flexible work schedules and chances to work for themselves, many Millennials are driven to entrepreneurship and the gig economy (Gallup, 2019).

Challenges Faced by Millennials at the work place

Kumar, Bhatt, and Ganguly (2022) indicate that millennials face job challenges due to lack of essential skills like independent thinking, teamwork, time management, and a strong work ethic. Media amnesia mostly characterized by lack of historical content, narrow range of awareness and lack of global picture cut across the generation (Barnes, 2023). They multitask excessively and have short attention spans, affecting workplaces and businesses. Generational experiences influence ethical beliefs. Ann (2016) reveals that millennials value autonomy, justice, empowerment, and self-development from their workplaces. They seek humble, honest supervisors, open mentors, and team players, and seek regular feedback from friends and family. Millennials are a global, socially conscious, volunteer-minded, demanding, technologically literate, and ambitious generation, preferring high-profile jobs due to their competitive nature and desire for timely feedback (Graham, 2023).

Millennials are eager to learn about various departments and change jobs frequently to fit into the organization. They value expressing their values and creating a productive workforce. However, generational differences in values, perspectives, and communication styles can lead to workplace conflicts, including a digital divide (Ann, 2016). Millennials value leaders who model trust and inspire them, leading to their desire for innovative and self-assured employees. They value flexible work hours, challenging tasks, growth opportunities, high-quality work, strong connections, appealing compensation, and a casual dress code. Private sector employers offering these perks are more likely to retain and retain millennial workers (Smith, 2023).

Millennials have a unique mindset, requiring organizations to adapt their human resource policies to accommodate their needs. They value balance between personal and professional lives,

requiring more flexibility in their workforce (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2018). Successful cross-generational communication is crucial for the 3 billion global workers, challenging preconceived notions about their behavior, work, communication, and thought (McCann & Giles, 2016). Millennials' digital world has significantly influenced their communication style, preferring electronic connections over in-person or phone conversations (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer, 2021).

Millennials prefer less formal communication, using platforms like Facebook, email, and instant messaging. They often miscommunicate, leading to generational conflict due to their lack of understanding of nonverbal cues (Smith, 2023). Millennials' digital nativeness has led to professional conflicts with Baby Boomers due to their technological fluency and impact on social interactions and information flow. Stuart and Lyons (2018) highlight that millennials have specific expectations regarding workplace communication through technology. They also value technology that enhances personal life for innovation, creativity, and communication at work, valuing employers' provision of cutting-edge technology and frequently using office technology and adapting their IT policies to attract millennials by promoting social media use and offering smartphones as rewards, highlighting their constant need for feedback, a distinct trait from previous generations. Additionally, millennials, accustomed to instantaneous feedback from online interactions, value feedback for self-management. Managers must prioritize communication to effectively provide feedback, as they value clear direction and stronger connections, similar to how millennials value feedback. Managers must ensure clear instructions for millennials, as they value open communication and information sharing. Limiting knowledge sharing to "need to know" will not resonate with millennials, who value all relevant organizational information. Supervisors prioritize job instructions over socio-emotional content, but are surprised by Millennials' expectation for information and strategic plans to be freely shared even when top management formulates them.

Millennials, often risk-takers and un loyal to their employers, are causing increased turnover costs and job switching in the workplace. Despite not seeking long-term security or rewards, they constantly seek fresh opportunities, potentially affecting a company's profit (McHaney, 2023). The lack of loyalty among millennials, who change jobs every three years, poses significant challenges for firms. Many feel underutilized and undeveloped as leaders, leading to a significant loss of loyalty for companies employing this generation (McHaney, 2023).

Millennials express dissatisfaction with companies solely focused on financial gain, leading to a decline in employee loyalty. Employers struggle to retain millennials due to their tendency to jump from opportunity to opportunity. They value their bosses and respect authority, leading to dissatisfaction with supervisors. Effective managers are crucial in retaining millennials (Smith, 2023). Many millennials, having witnessed family members lose jobs due to downsizing or outsourcing, may exhibit disloyalty towards their employers (Coleman, 2023). Millennials are self-centered, view employment as optional, and disagree with hierarchical systems. They prefer

mentorship from supervisors, preferring a positive working connection and respect for roles. They may face generational conflict due to their independence and detached manner, leading to potential job loss (Coleman, 2023).

Suleman *et al.* (2021) suggest that millennials are increasingly open to changing jobs and reshaping their skills, making it crucial for companies to allow them to explore multiple career paths within the same organization to retain their talent and advance financially. Millennials, influenced by their parents' stressful work lives, seek a purposeful life, unlike baby boomers who often leave organizations due to perceived underutilization and devaluation, while older generations like baby boomers and others retire (Okros, 2019). Employers are prioritizing recall over retention for millennials, allowing them to return to their former jobs if unhappy. This strategy attracts new hires and retains the current workforce, as millennials are more likely to stay with a firm's ideals. Intergenerational conflicts arise when different groups' interests, values, and aspirations clash, affecting goal achievement. Millennials, despite their positive traits, may struggle with pushiness and conceivability, while baby boomers view them as emotional (Ann, 2016). Organizational conflict can arise from conflicting feelings, lack of resources, ideologies, values, communication, and working practices. Disparate values can appear inconsistent due to communication breakdowns. Age-specific workplace behavior is influenced by events, cultural trends, and organizational culture. Companies must adapt to generational shifts and less experienced workers (Fiset, Bhave, & Jha, 2023).

The millennial generation, born during a time of rapid technological advancement, globalization, and economic upheaval, exhibited unique attitudes towards ownership, delayed marriage, independent living, and the sharing economy. They exhibited different work ethics, expectations, and a short fuse with senior staff. Noreen (2015) highlights millennials' innovative approach to tasks, potentially causing workplace chaos as they advance into senior management roles. Millennials, unlike other generations, are expert negotiators, capable of rational decision-making and bargaining with various stakeholders, but their tension increases when labeled as arguing (Nitya, 2016). Millennials, raised in an era of constant internet advertising, are more skeptical of promotional materials and prefer to listen to their peers, leading to unproductive traditional marketing strategies and hiring techniques. Conflict among millennials in the workplace is a challenge due to differences in needs, expectations, and personalities. Mishandling disputes can negatively impact future conflict levels, job performance, organizational commitment, and productivity. Effective dispute handling reduces stress, enhances relationships, and reduced emotional defensiveness (Leila, Messarra, & Abdul, 2016). Generational differences in the workforce impact business strategies, employee motivation, and performance. Companies must understand the global workforce makeup to gain a comprehensive talent pool. This understanding helps employees perform at their best, regardless of age, and is crucial for effective hiring, team building, change management, and employee motivation (Ann, 2016).

Studies show work values vary between generations, enabling businesses to create policies that cater to different needs. These values, which include opinions on job merits and outcomes, influence an organization's results, decision-making, dedication, satisfaction, and performance. They also predict choices and behaviors (Nitya & Anand, 2016). Socioeconomic factors significantly influence labor values between generations, influenced by the scarcity principle and socialization hypothesis. Socialization theory suggests that adult beliefs are shaped by childhood socioeconomic environments, while the scarcity principle values scarce socioeconomic characteristics. These values remain constant throughout an individual's life, varying attitudes towards their jobs. Work value remains constant throughout adulthood, even during economic distress. Generational influences significantly impact work values, with intrinsic work values linked to job significance. Research shows variations in fundamental work values between generations. Millennials desire individual-organization fit, with attitudes and conduct influenced by their workplace relationship (Nitya & Anand, 2016).

The attrition model explains the link between value similarity and staff turnover intention, highlighting why people choose companies reflecting their qualities. Armstrong (2021) argues that attraction between employers and employees drives job satisfaction, while work-reward disparity can lead to increased turnover intention when attraction diminishes (Chelladurai & Kim (2022)). Millennials' high career mobility rates highlight the importance of work value discrepancy in their turnover intention. They are less committed and more likely to leave their jobs due to unmet organizational expectations. Differences in personal and organizational work values are expected to affect their intentions to leave an organization (Chelladurai & Kim (2022)). Millennials often set high standards for meaningful work and career advancement, and if their expectations aren't met, they are more likely to change jobs (Lyons *et al.*, 2015).

Excessive reliance on gadgets and social media, despite being technologically advanced, can lead to distractions that can negatively impact concentration and productivity (Ng & Taksa, 2017). Millennials are known for wanting feedback right away, appreciating credit for their work, and anticipating regular recognition (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). For Millennials, striking a healthy work-life balance is paramount, and they frequently look for remote work or flexible work schedules (Costanza *et al.*, 2012). Organizational cultures may clash as a result of millennials' attitudes and expectations about their job differing greatly from those of previous generations (Agarwal & Mohapatra, 2015).

Millennials and their impact on Global Market Trends

Across the world, industries have seen a transformation due to their ethical consumer habits, need for sustainability and authenticity, digital fluency, and preference for experiences. Companies are more likely to succeed in the changing market environment if they can properly adjust and match their strategy with Millennial preferences. According to Pew Research Center (2020), millennials

are now a major force influencing trends in the worldwide economy. Their unique tastes, attitudes, and actions are radically changing consumer patterns and forcing companies to adjust to satisfy their needs. Being digital natives, millennials are very skilled at utilizing technology and the internet for a variety of activities, such as socializing, shopping, and information collecting (Pew Research Center, 2019). Experiences that are easy to use, frictionless, and customized are what this tech-savvy generation demands. In order to appeal to Millennial consumers, firms have changed their strategy to prioritize online presence, mobile-friendly interfaces, and e-commerce platforms.

In contrast to earlier generations, Millennials give sustainability, ethical behavior, and genuineness top priority when making purchases (Deloitte, 2020). Customers are more likely to support companies that exhibit ethical sourcing, environmental consciousness, and social responsibility. In response, businesses have emphasized corporate social responsibility programs, adopted transparent supplier chains, and integrated sustainability efforts into their operations. Spending on experiences rather than tangible goods is more popular among millennials (Deloitte, 2020). This tendency has caused market trends to shift in favor of the sharing economy, entertainment, and travel and hospitality sectors. Companies are modifying their products and services to reflect this trend, highlighting events, travel, and subscription-based services that satisfy the demand of Millennials for uncommon experiences.

It has been difficult for traditional sectors like banking, retail, and auto to adjust to Millennial demands. For example, the need for convenience and competitive price has caused a shift in the retail sector from brick-and-mortar establishments to online purchasing platforms (Gallup, 2019). In a similar vein, financial institutions have modified their offerings to include digital payment methods and mobile banking in order to satisfy the tech-savvy tastes of Millennials.

Possible solutions to address millennial challenges

Millennials are a special breed of people and unless they are handled and managed with care, the success of any Organizations depend on them to remain relevant in today's market. Their capability and unexploited potential cannot be underestimated especially in the field of information and technology. A millennial friendly environment should be created for them to feel comfortable and accommodated holistically. Such environment should include: a freelance dress code as long as one is comfortable, should be given opportunity to work from home and not necessarily lock them in confined spaces, they should be given room to be creative as long as is within the organization goals, should have a well stipulated career progression path with motivational factors to retain them, job placement should be a top priority in order to deploy one where they are best suited, most organizations should ensure they have a tech hub to nurture the young talent and capitalize on artificial intelligence potential.

While inclusiveness and diversity are prevalent in business cultures across the globe, millennials characterize diversity as the mixing of distinct viewpoints within a team, or what's known as cognitive diversity. They contend that a team can produce novel goods and services and obtain a competitive edge through diversity and inclusion by fusing various concepts, methods, and solutions (Christie & Stephanie, 2015).

It's possible that millennials will become more conscious of their surroundings. They are likely to have gained exposure to organizational and cultural diversity, grown more empathetic toward those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and became activists for important social causes as a result of these experiences (Pew Research Center, 2007). Because of these experiences, millennials are likely to come into businesses with a plethora of knowledge that will help them in their many organizational responsibilities (John, 2016). They may also be more at ease and adept at engaging with people of different cultures, ethnicities, and origins since they are more accepting of them. These abilities and experiences could apply to supporting millennials in forming professional connections with coworkers, clients, and other stakeholders (Raines, 2002).

According to Camille and Nicole (2011), millennials believe that diversity and inclusion have a significant impact on participation, creativity, and innovation in business. The cognitive variety that is, the diversity of perspectives, ideas, and philosophies and the collaborative culture that solves corporate challenges are far more important to millennials. According to millennials, inclusion goes beyond simply bringing people of various religious backgrounds together in a room (Christie & Stephanie, 2015). It also entails building relationships between these people, forming teams in which each member contributes, and leveraging a range of viewpoints to have a greater business impact (Ann, 2016).

Having grown up in the era of the dot-com boom, millennials have witnessed the emergence of MP3 players, YouTube, cellphones, and the pervasiveness of technology in every facet of their lives, including banking, healthcare, transportation, and communication (Jacqueline, Rajesh, Sara, Donnie, & Mitch, 2014). The technical advancements that this generation experienced in their youth, college years, and professional lives have tremendously influenced them and continue to do so. The millennial generation is incredibly tech-savvy; they use technologies and modify them to fit their requirements (Gibson, 2009). In addition to being irritated with older, slower coworkers and expecting instant access to knowledge through digital devices, millennials value and rely on technology to make their jobs simpler (Jacqueline *et al.*, 2014).

Millennials have distinct expectations on workplace technology since they favor electronic communication over telephone or in-person interactions. They anticipate that creativity and communication will be fueled by personal technology. Modern technologies should be made available by employers for communication and job consideration. However, texting and instant messaging are the favored communication tools for digital natives, who prefer them above email

(Martin, 2012). Companies that cater to millennials, such as Google and Apple, are modifying their IT regulations, providing cellphones as rewards, and promoting social media usage. Since this change has the potential to cause generational strife, businesses must adopt successful tactics to engage and retain millennial employees. It is anticipated to use blogs, social networking, and instant messaging, (Norum, 2003).

Millennials are comfortable with technology and dissatisfied with disconnected work environments. They are the most connected generation, using cell phones, internet, and social networks to connect with retailers and brands. They demonstrate higher integration of interactive media, blogging, and couponing behaviors, demonstrating a national sense of community. Teams, particularly self-managed and self-directed teams, are frequently used by businesses as the basis for official work arrangements. Few research, however, have provided conclusive evidence linking teams to improved performance, and even fewer have examined the effect of teamwork on business performance statistically. Due to their penchant for risk avoidance and their view of work as engaging and exciting, millennials, who like collaboration, work in teams, (Alsop, 2008)

Millennials instill a sense of teamwork in organizations when workers engage with one another voluntarily or in response to management's directives to accomplish a certain objective. Due to cognitive rather than affective factors that are linked with small group work that are emphasized in the organization behavior and human relations tradition of job design, self-directed teams are more likely to share information and perform better (Cekada, 2012). Employees in teams learn how to use technology more quickly than individuals in separate groups, which is proof of the cognitive component (Dan & Kip, 2014). In order for collaboration to be valuable, it needs to work with business processes, organizational drivers, and promote measurable outcomes among a heterogeneous, distributed workforce. Today, most important work cannot be attributed to a single employee (Robert, 2003).

Companies are starting to encourage millennials to do some of their work outside of workgroup bounds after realizing the drawbacks of teams (Alsop, 2008). Millennials are overly at ease with team-based supervision, guidance, and decision-making. They can avoid the risk involved with making decisions and thinking on their own if they can collaborate as a team. While it's true that some decision-making processes can be enhanced in group settings, a mindset that depends too much on the group does not promote personal development, decision-making confidence, or the potential for people to show off their own originality and skills. Most managers are aware that sometimes decisions must be taken swiftly and without the benefit of group consensus, even in entry-level roles held by millennials (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008).

Conclusion

Millennials face challenges in the workplace, including lack of key skills like listening, communication, independent thinking, time management, teamwork, job commitment, and a good work ethic. They multitask and have a short attention span, requiring organizations to adapt. Ethical ideologies are shaped by generational experiences. They are fully independent, rich, knowledgeable but very rational and dangerous to any organization. They owe loyalty to no one even in their relationship but believe in artificial intelligence and social media. If properly deployed and given room for initiative, millennials can transform organizations and make the highest percentage of possible clients in the market since they buy everything online.

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