Millennial as the Job Hopping Generation: Meeting the Career Demands of Young Talents

A Case Study of Tesco Graduate Talents

Dissertation Proposal

1

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Millennial talent population has enjoyed comprehensive academic coverage in virtually all domains, and HRM is by no means an exception. Driven by the prevailing notion of HRM and its enhancing role in sustaining performance, it is by no means surprising that in the last 10-15 years, this talent cohort has received considerable research attention (Plessis et al., 2015). Millennials are often labelled as 'job hoppers' with unrealistic expectations for work, significantly lower work morale than previous generations (Pandey, 2019). As Millennial talents are well set to make up three-fourths of the talent population in the next 5-10 years (Deal and Levenson, 2017), the investigation of Millennial attitudes, work and career expectations remain timely as of 2021. The dissertation proposal is a preliminary plan covering the key elements of the case study.

Research Aim, Objectives and Question

The overall research **aim** is to explore Millennial and Generation Z talents' attitudes and work expectations as the basis for framing effective and successful retention strategies. The aim further corresponds to clarifying the scale and scope of generational differences in the workplace. In addition to the research aim, four research objectives will govern the overall course of the inquiry. These are listed below.

1) to *review* the current literature on the challenges and opportunities of managing a multi-generational workforce;

2) to *compare* different findings on viable strategies to retain the 'job hopping' Millennial workforce;

3) To *analyse* graduate talents' work expectations and factors influencing organisational commitment and

4) To *frame* actionable recommendations for the case study organisation to optimise Millennial talents work experience.

Combining the research aim and the research objectives, the proposed study seeks to address the following research question:

RQ: Which staffing policies and HR practices are most conducive to retaining and engaging the Millennial and Generation Z workforce?

Preliminary Literature Review

The generational theory has prevailed in modern HRM literature: as demographic shifts are taking place in the developed world, it is no longer extraordinary to see several generations working together (e.g. Baby Boomers and Generations X, Y, Z) (Deal and Levenson, 2017). The generational theory assumes that individuals born within a set time and exposed to similar global events socialise in a unique pattern (Deal and Levenson, 2017). Consequently, there are differences in work attitudes (Kultalahti and Viitala, 2015). For instance, some of the most commonly noted workplace expectations among Millennial and Generation Z talents include demand for collaboration, meaningful work, work-life balance, career progression, and frequent feedback on performance (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons, 2010). In theory, it is of paramount importance for HR professionals to attend to these idiosyncratic variations across generations and plan interventions coinciding with these needs.

Fuelled by the generation theory, Millennial employees are often affixed with the attribute of being job-hoppers and unable of developing a long-term commitment to the organisation (Hassan et al., 2020). From an HR point of view, a constantly high turnover rate among talents is indicative of misaligned staffing practices and wastage of human capital. According to Adkins (2016), 6 out of 10 Millennials are likely to change jobs if new opportunities arise. This sentiment further shows the low degree of engagement among Millennial talents and the seeming helplessness of HR professionals in reverting the chronically high turnover intentions among Millennial talents (Ozcelik, 2015). The solutions proposed so far by research are quite

diverse, ranging from arguments completely rejecting the applicability of generation theories to those sources directly advocating implementing a Millennial-focused retention strategy.

These differing viewpoints sustain a kind of cross-road for talent professionals to proceed with a concrete action plan and meaningfully increase Millennial ad Generation Z talents' work experience. For instance, Parry and Urwin (2011) claim that despite the amplified narrative around generational differences at work, these differences are far from being as significant as these may have previously appeared. That is, whereas there might indeed be some new expectations, employees generation might not be the important variable when it comes to developing effective retention strategies. Even if the proposed dissertation might not conclude the debate around the applicability of generational theories at work, the contextual inquiry is still facilitative for framing effective retention strategies.

Research Methodology

The planned methodological design follows the inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning is generally recommended if the goal of a study is to assess the contextual elements potentially shaping the socially constructed reality, mainly if past research findings have reached inconclusive findings (i.e. the depth and breadth of generation-specific work expectations) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Correspondingly to the inductive research design, the primary data collection tool entails series of semi-structured interviews. Interview research subjects will be recruited on a first-come-first-serve basis by utilising a non-probability convenience sampling frame. Conditional upon attaining the organisation and each research subject's approval, the interviews will be audio recorded to facilitate the subsequent transcription and the thematic coding analysis. An informant briefing sheet will be released for all potential research subjects to declare and informed consent of participation.

Potential Limitations

The main limitation of the proposed study entails the narrow focus on one case study organisation. First, the findings might solely reflect the sample's work experience in the case study organisation and thus may not be accurate for other organisations. Second, the small sample size does not allow for generalising the statements beyond the research setting. Third, managerial perspectives (representing the employer) will not be incorporated into the study due to resource constraints. Despite these limitations, the research entails a range of practical implications for Tesco Plc. to recruit and retain Millennial talents.

Conclusions

The proposed study looks at a highly contemporary topic relevant to a broad range of organisations and sectors. Millennial and Generation Z talents are soon evolving into one of the largest employee cohorts. Preliminary findings from the literature and industry reports have all projected some fundamentally different workplace expectations compared to previous generations. A closer examination of these expectations is a precursor to reframing talent management strategies and positioning organisations as attractive employers in labour markets.

References

Adkins, A. (2016). *Millennials: The Job-Hopping Generation*. [online] Gallup.com. Available at: https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231587/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx.

Deal, J.J. and Levenson, A. (2017). *What millennials want from work : how to maximise engagement in today's workforce*. New York: Mcgraw-Hill.

Hassan, M.M., Jambulingam, M., Alagas, E.N., Uzir, Md.U.H. and Halbusi, H.A. (2020). Necessities and Ways of Combating Dissatisfactions at Workplaces Against the Job-Hopping Generation Y Employees. *Global Business Review*, 2(2), p.097215092092696.

Kultalahti, S. and Viitala, R. (2015). Generation Y – challenging clients for HRM? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 30(1), pp.101–114.

Ng, E.S.W., Schweitzer, L. and Lyons, S.T. (2010). New Generation, Great Expectations: A Field Study of the Millennial Generation. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), pp.281–292.

Ozcelik, G. (2015). Engagement and Retention of the Millennial Generation in the Workplace through Internal Branding. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 10(3), pp.10–33.

Pandey, D.L. (2019). Job Hopping Tendency in Millenials. *NCC Journal*, 4(1), pp.41–46.

Parry, E. and Urwin, P. (2011). Generational Differences in Work Values: A Review of Theory and Evidence. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 13(1), pp.79–96.

Plessis, L.D., Barkhuizen, N., Stanz, K. and Schutte, N. (2015). The Management Side Of Talent: Causal Implications For The Retention Of Generation Y Employees. *Journal of Applied Business Research (JABR)*, 31(5), pp.176–182.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th ed. United States: Pearson.