

## RETAINING MILLENNIALS ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING THROUGH CAREER PATH AND DEVELOPMENT

Sista Mayangdarastri <sup>(1\*)</sup>, Khanifatul Khusna <sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jember, Jember, 68121, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

Millennials;  
Career Engagement;  
Career Path;  
Career Development;  
Wellbeing;  
Commitment.

The topic of Millennials (1980-1995) in the workplace raises many business conversations and studies. These past few years, Millennials have filled up the workplace and surprisingly brought an interesting phenomenon. Millennials easily leave their jobs to find another in less than two years after starting the job. The goal of this paper is to examine this phenomenon by understanding the factors related to high millennials turnover. Some things that will be explained related to millennials are their employee commitment, wellbeing, and the function of career path and development in retaining millennials. The method of this writing is through journal reviews. In many studies, millennials are explained to be aware of their wellbeing and value work-life balance. They are eager to learn more and make changes when they could. Organizations that do not provide millennials with a place to grow and explore their capabilities to the fullest would not earn their loyalty. Clear career path and career development create the environment in which millennials feel appreciated, and it leads to employee satisfaction and a healthy workplace. When employees are satisfied, they will perform better to achieve the organization's goals and their own goals. Eventually, satisfied millennials will possess a higher commitment to the organization. It is crucial for an employer to understand millennials' characteristics and provides them with opportunities to grow because millennials' trust must be sought through processes where millennials are looked after.

\* \* Corresponding Author at Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia and Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jember, Jember, 68121, Indonesia E-mail address: s.mayangdarastri@mail.ugm.ac.id; hannifa91@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

Millennials have unique character traits compared to the generations before them, such as Baby Boomers (Buzza, 2017). Millennials were born between the years 1980 to 1995 and are the majority of the workforce in the workplace nowadays. To some, they are the next "Greatest Generation," armed with the tools and eagerness to drive toward a better future and make a change in a world facing economic, geopolitical, and environmental crises (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Hence, companies have high hopes for talented millennials to improve company performance. However, their unique characteristics that are visible in how specific they want their workplace to be led to the phenomenon in which millennials are known to have low organization commitment and are motivated to gain experiences by changing from one company to another.

Millennials were born in an era of rapid technological development and with the main communication using social media and digital technology. Therefore, they are able to create new opportunities along with the development of increasingly sophisticated technology. Millennials are very sensitive and critical of environmental changes that occur around them. Millennials are also easily bored with monotonous environments at work. These different attitudes and behaviors make them a unique workforce that might have an impact on human resource productivity and which might also affect organizational performance (Ramli & Soelton, 2019)

This study provides a contextual overview, review, and commentary on why this phenomenon happens and the probable way of retaining millennials by giving them

the opportunity to grow in the organization. It could be argued that the importance of career development is closely related to millennial's commitment to the organization and their engagement in the workplace. This study is conducted by reviewing journals, theories, and findings.

Millennials are aware of their needs, what they want, and how to achieve it. In order for the organization to retain talented millennials, they must integrate workforce satisfaction with the opportunity to grow through clear career paths and career development programs. Not only is the career path necessary to greater workers' satisfaction, but also an important aspect of increasing productivity and profitability.

## 2. Literature Review

There are points to be addressed in this journal regarding the research questions. First, we will discuss millennials in general, millennials in the workplace, and dive as to what motivates millennials to change the workplace. Then we will explore the broader aims and effects of career path and development in the workplace. Lastly, we will understand employee engagement. These points are provided here to see the connections better.

### **Millennials in General and in The Workplace**

Maximizing and enhancing the role of a qualified workforce has always been one of the most challenging tasks for human resource practitioners. The emergence of the Millennial generation has made it difficult for human resource practitioners to manage the workforce. Most organizations today face the same difficulty in involving the millennial workforce. (Jha, Sareen, & Potnuru, 2019).

The most apparent difference between millennials and other generations in the workplace is their distinct relationship with technology (Hershatte & Epstein, 2010). Millennials were born at a time when technology and the internet were starting to rise. Therefore, their growing environment was supported by technologies. This environment caused a greater difference between millennials and the generations before them. In 2008, UCLA neuroscientist, Henry Small conducted research that shows significant changes in brain function among generations or "brain gap". This leads to millennials (digital natives) who are more effective in multitasking and filtering information. Hershatte & Epstein also stated that millennials seek feedback because it provides them with a progressive path. Millennials are willing to learn from their mistakes to achieve their goals. In theory, millennials or employees in general who are valued, appreciated, and looked after will respond with loyalty.

Millennials pay attention to authenticity and organization values because they will choose to work with organizations that drive change and could fulfill their personal and societal goals. PricewaterhouseCoopers, as cited in Hershatte & Epstein (2008), reported that loyalty for millennials employees means that organizations assure employees with opportunities, professional development, and training, and provide coaching and mentoring. They value loyalty to a wider perspective, and this statement is supported by Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi (2016), who conducted an observation of their students where they realized that millennials were driven by wider priorities. Millennials are concerned in the 'big picture' of what they do.

A white paper published by Robert Walters contains research resulting in these findings listed below:

1. 91% of millennials value rapid career progression that is communicated to them during the recruitment process. They have high expectation on the employer when they first undertake the recruitment.
2. 71% of millennials believe that their employer should provide guidelines for bonuses and promotions. In other words, millennials want their employer to explain the possibility of career development and clear career path.
3. Career progression is the strongest reason for what keeps millennials engaged at work, followed by the opportunity to exercise influence, recognition of individual achievements, and personalized training. These factors are all included in what the company should pay attention to when preparing a career path and development.
4. 25% of millennials change jobs because of higher salary and bonuses, 25% to find a more fulfilling job, and 20% for a better career opportunity.
5. 53% of millennials felt disappointed by the lack of personal training and development in their new job. This shows that the employer has not been able to provide millennials with a clear career path and career development. Millennials prioritize fulfilling job and opportunities for career development rather than salary.

Millennials are considered a disloyal generation because of how quickly they leave an organization, creating a high turnover and

high financial expenses (Buzza, 2017). A few of the reasons for this phenomenon is stated in the findings of Robert Walter's research. Therefore, attaining work-life balance to decrease turnover and avoid burned-out is significant. When employees are burned-out, they tend to easily leave their job because of dissatisfaction of their work-life balance.

In addition, Millennials want quick returns on their work. Compared to the previous generation, millennial generation emphasizes the balance of work with their personal goals and interests. They want a flexible environment with many better and faster career development opportunities. Millennial generation believes in mutual relations. They have no commitment to anything unless they find personal interest in an organization. The millennial generation also expects their superiors to help them achieve their personal goals in return for commitment and emotional behavior towards the organization (Jha et al., 2019). Millennials think that having a flexible work schedule means that work is not measured by the time they spend on their work. The most important thing is whether the work has been completed and the requested from leaders' goal is reached (Putriastuti & Aless, 2019).

### **Career Path and Development**

Career development consists of actions undertaken by workers (career planning) and the organization (career management) to encounter career objectives and job necessities (Al-Shawabkeh, 2017). As obtained in the literature, the definition of career development can be viewed from different approaches; 1) congruence between career development, individuals' personality, and their occupation; 2) a process for achieving specific employee's and

organization goals. career development can help reduce costs spent on recruiting and training new employees in organizations. (Osibanjo, Oyewunmi, & Ojo, 2014)

At the individual level, career development processes in work that helps the employee in managing their mental health and wellbeing (Redekopp & Huston, 2018). Career development is positively connected to happiness, wellbeing, and the employee's quality of life. Waddell & Burton as cited in Redekopp & Huston (2018), said that "work and paid employment are generally beneficial for physical and mental health and well-being." With career development and counseling services, employee's wellbeing will be well-served, and they will continuously adapt to changes and create a healthier workplace. Nevertheless, good leadership is still one of the factors that strongly affect wellbeing and absences. (Redekopp & Huston, 2018).

Career paths can provide individuals and organizations with the structure needed for career development. A person's career path can be defined as the sequence of work positions or roles they have during their lives. Individual career paths can change during a career; therefore the characteristics that determine career paths and their use in organizations are individual career movements over time (Hedge & Rineer, 2017).

According to Chen and Choi (2008), as cited by (Putriastuti & Aless, 2019), millennials are idealists, highly optimistic, and confident. Millennials have high expectations and very proud of themselves. Millennials believe that if they make a good contribution to the organization, they expect to get rapid promotion and career development.

## Employee Engagement

An engaged employee will commit intellectually and emotionally to their organization's success (Hewitt Associates, 2009). In other words, their contribution to organizational performance will increase, and they will be likely to remain in the organization.

International Survey Research (ISR) explains that employee engagement as a process by which an organization increases commitment and continuation of its employees to the achievement of superior results. The ISR separates commitment into three parts, 1) cognitive commitment, 2) affective commitment, and 3) behavioral commitment. In other words, the three dimensions of commitment are thinking, feeling, and act (Woodka, 2014).

A survey of 1,798 participants (Cravens et al., 2015) found that there are three factors positively affecting organizational commitment; job satisfaction, self-performance, and retention.

Other than that, they found no relationship between organizational commitment and organizational culture. When employees are satisfied and could actualize themselves, they become more invested in achieving organizational goals, which lead to higher organizational commitment, higher levels of engagement, and less turnover.

Commitment and trust are products of communication that are designed by the organization through processes and policies with the end result of satisfaction in both parties (Chia, 2005), as cited in Mishra (2014). Likewise, employee engagement is affected by workforce well-being. Saripudin and Rosari (2019) investigated that engaged employees included millennial generation, have a relationship with their spiritual well-

being. Their research suggested that employers or leaders should accommodate spiritual needs to enhance employee or work engagement (Saripudin & Rosari, 2019). Engagement and commitment are crucial for organizations because they can make potential contributions to valuable business results (Robert J. Vance, 2006).

## 3. Discussion

Millennials, in general, are aware of their surroundings. They tend to choose an instant way or the fastest way to get to what they wanted. They are eager to make changes in the world where changes come and go as fast as the flip of a wrist. They easily adapt to technologies and do tasks all at the same time, but negatively they are less adept in face-to-face communication. They tend to use modern technological devices for their primary communication. More communication takes place in virtual space, and their online presence never ends (Bencsik, Juhász, & Horváth-Csikós, 2016)

In a globalized world where information and communication flow easily, millennials are interested in collecting as many experiences as they could. One of the results in this behavior is their high turnover. Similar research conducted by Saragih (2016) as cited in (Friani & Mulyani, 2018) shows several factors that affect millennial employee turnovers such as salary, facility, career opportunity, supervision, relationship, work, job flexibility, and work location. The main interesting recommendations of Millennials in their work are flexible work schedules and integration of work-life and/or work-life balance.

Studies have shown that millennials appreciate the opportunity and space for them to grow in organizations. Even though

higher salary and bonuses is one of the reasons why millennials change jobs, two other reasons are related closely to career development. They are willing to learn to step on their progressive path. As the generation who value self-grow and self-actualization more than any other generations, millennials will be loyal to an organization that provides a better understanding of millennials' characteristic itself.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the employer must understand millennial's characteristics and provide them with opportunities and space to grow. When the career path and development in an organization are clear, millennials will be more interested in contributing to the organization's goals. As millennials are respected and appreciated with clear communication on how to achieve their work-life balance, millennials will show loyalty and commitment to the organization.

The author hopes this review journal could benefit many parties. Even though there are many flaws and limitations in this journal, this journal could raise some questions to be answered later: Are there other factors possibly related to millennial's engagement and wellbeing besides what was already stated here? Will this problem also occur in the next generation?

#### References

- Attracting and retaining millennial professionals. *Robert Walters (Whitepaper)*
- Buzza, J. S. (2017). Are you living to work or working to live? What millennials want in the workplace. *Journal of Human Resource Management and Labor Studies*, vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 15-20. DOI: 10.15640/jhrmls.v5n2a3
- Hershatter, A., & Epstein, M. (2010). Millennials and the world of work: An organization and management perspective. *Springer Science*, 25:211-223. DOI: 10.1007/s10869-010-9160-y
- Mishra, K., Boynton, L., & Mishra, A. (2014). Driving employee engagement: The expanded role of internal communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, vol. 51(2), 183-202. DOI: 10.1177/232948841452539
- Redekopp, D. E., & Huston, M. (2018). The broader aims of career development: mental health, wellbeing, and work. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. DOI: 10.1080/03069885.2018.1513451
- Stewart, J. S., Oliver, E. G., Cravens, K. S., & Oishi, S. (2017). Managing millennials: Embracing generational differences. *Kelley School of Business, Indiana University*, 60, 45-54.
- Al-Shawabkeh, K. M. (2017). Career Path Development and its Impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Greater Amman Municipality. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 12(3), 79. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v12n3p79>
- Bencsik, A., Juhász, T., & Horváth-Csikós, G. (2016). Y and Z Generations at Workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 6(3), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2016.03.06>

- Frian, A., & Mulyani, F. (2018). Millennials Employee Turnover Intention in Indonesia. *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.12959/issn.1855-0541.iiass-2018-no3-art5>
- Hedge, J. W., & Rineer, J. . (2017). Improving Career Development Opportunities Through Rigorous Career Pathways Research. *RTI Press Publication*, (March), 20.
- Jha, N., Sareen, P., & Potnuru, R. K. G. (2019). Employee engagement for millennials: considering technology as an enabler. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 33(1), 9–11. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-05-2018-0057>
- Osibanjo, A. O., Oyewunmi, A. E., & Ojo, S. I. (2014). Career Development as a Determinant of Organizational Growth Modelling the. *American International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(7), 67–76. Retrieved from <http://www.fcmb.com/about-us/fcmb-at-a-glance>
- Putriastuti, B. C. K., & Aless, andro S. (2019). How to Lead the Millennials: A Review of 5 Major Leadership Theory Groups. *Journal of Leadership in Organizations*, 1(2), 12–13.
- Ramli, Y., & Soelton, M. (2019). The millennial workforce: how do they commit to the organization? *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 19(5), 7–18.
- Robert J. Vance, P. D. (2006). Engagement and Commitment. *SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines*, 1–45. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/special-reports-and-expert-views/Documents/Employee-Engagement-Commitment.pdf>
- Saripudin, W. & Rosari, R. (2019). Does Spiritual Leadership Enhance Work Engagement? Empirical Evidence Form An Islamic Hospital In Yogyakarta. *Journal of Leadership in Organizations*, 1(2), 112-133.
- Saripudin, W. And Rosari, R. (2018). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Spiritual pada Work Engagement Melalui Kebermaknaan Kerja dan Keanggotaan: Studi Pada Rumah Sakit Islam Yogyakarta PDHI. Yogyakarta: Library of Gadjah Mada University.
- Woodka, M. (2014). Employee engagement. *Provider (Washington, D.C.)*, 40(5). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203889015.ch18>