
What Is Peculiar About Millennial Workers

Introduction

“There is a desire for change. There is a millennial generation that does not like what they're seeing, but doesn't quite know what the solution is” -Ken Moelis

This report has been written to explore how the complexities, dynamics and uncertainties of the modern business environment impacts on the organisation of work and the contempered employment relationship. Specifically focusing on the relationship between a healthy psychological contract, employee resilience and engagement among millennial workers in the retail fashion industry. This has been written focusing on flexible work, the gig economy and precarious employment. This paper will critically outline the nature of the UK's retail workers and the skills perceived to fit in within the fashion industry. The UK retail market makes up 1 in 10 jobs for the population, the sector is made up of two groups: Female workers and young workers (Johnson,2007) it is whether you can develop healthy psychological contracts within millennial workers that will determine the impacts on your organisation. Retail as a sector focuses on fighting competition to become the best brand in the market, it means having the best store and layout but this paper will show that it goes much further than having a strong brand image, retail workers are effectively branded and moulded to fit the businesses wanted appearance. This paper will explore if businesses can create healthy psychological contracts within their employees.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to critically examine the relationship between a healthy psychological contract, employee resilience and engagement among millennial workers in the fashion industry sector:

The objectives of the paper are to produce persuasive recommendations on whether managers can develop such healthy PCs in millennials.

Psychological contract

A psychological contract described as “In many organisations the drive to achieve high levels of performance, quality and output, often linked with policies about securing employees' commitment to and integration with business goals ... has been advanced alongside organisational restructuring, downsizing and employment change” (Saunders & Thornhill, 2006)

Work characteristics and values of the millennial generation affect the dynamics of psychological contract management that has become more focused on flexibility and employability skill development (Shields,2020). Employers can put in place learning algorithms for millennial workers that will help them learn through social interaction (Everly, G.2011) . To maintain competitive advantage managers, have to focus their efforts on “motivating individuals to contribute enthusiastically to the process of organizational knowledge generation” (Child,

2005). This process of sharing knowledge will help improve the millennial workers decision making, problem solving skills and communication skills within the business (Kochan,2019). Millennial workers are faced with constant pressures of performing to a high standard in the workplace, millennial workers are looking for a better work-life balance. Among millennial workers in the fashion industry 57% have said that a better work-life balance and flexibility in the work place will help them grow in their job and increase in confidence (Mccarthy,2016). This proposition also helps those workers who are parents, carers and workers who are highly qualified. There will be uncertainties regarding income for many families, the economic crisis in the world place uncertainties on job security and if businesses can survive the economy crashing. Through crisis wages become low and income is at an all-time low coming into households. Projections show that millennial workers could face the hardest inequalities between households as projections show low income earners salaries will rise by 1-2% whereas high earners salaries will increase by 5-6%, as the cost of living rises many low paid workers will not be able to afford everything and will have to spend on necessities only (Chapman,2019). The UK by 2030 is on route to have a population where 65 years plus will continue to work, this for millennials will cause a massive issue when looking for work. This aging process will limit availability of jobs and will go against the core wants and desires of millennial staff to have a work/life balance (Nash,2016). Work forces will become more multi-generational and all generations will work together to create success for businesses. (Gay,2017)

Resilience

Resilience is described as “being able to bounce back from setbacks and to keep going in the face of tough demands and difficult circumstances, including the enduring strength that builds from coping well with challenging or stressful events”. (Cooper, Flint?Taylor & Pearn. 2013)

A consistent theme among the range of definitions of resilience is a sense of adaptation, recovery and bounce back despite adversity or change (Luthar,2000). Most of those working in this field identify resilience as a dynamic process that involves a personal negotiation through life that fluctuates across time, life stage and context (Mastem,2001). Everyone is born with innate capacity for resilience. Resilience can be learnt and develops with personal skills, like problem-solving skills, communication skills and feelings of competence or efficacy (Howard & Johnson, 2004)

Building resilience among millennial workers will help them have a solid career. Not only does resilience help you recover from set backs it helps your manager as most managers are often too busy to deal with everything in the business as they have to little time (Schoon,2008). Managers do not want to be constantly intervening in small situations so having the ability to deal with them will be appreciated. Mangers value employees who come with solutions not problems. (Everly, G.2011)

A number of millennial workers do not have the psychic armour or powers of recovery they should., having this mental ability and resilience will help you stand out among your fellow peers (Brown,2005) Having the mental capacity will help you progress and withstand job pressures and will also serve you well dealing with pressures at home also. (Fisk,2010)

Fixed mindset v.s Growth mindset

With a fixed mind set if you believe that your qualities are unchangeable — the fixed mindset — you will want to prove yourself correct over and over rather than learning from your mistakes (Dweck.C.2017). Success is about being your best self, not about being better than others; failure is an opportunity, not a condemnation; effort is the key to success. But those with a fixed mind set - their belief in fixed traits - can't put this into practice because their basic mindset is telling them something entirely different: that success is about being more gifted than others, that failure does measure you, and that effort is for those who can't make it on talent (Dweck, Yeager.2018). Whereas a growth mind set, Dweck's work shows the power of our most basic beliefs. Whether conscious or subconscious, they strongly "affect what we want and whether we succeed in getting it." Much of what we think we understand of our personality comes from our "mindset." This both propels us and prevents us from fulfilling our potential. (Dweck.2015)

Environment

Resilience is wholly dependent on the experiences that a person has with their environment. So, factors external to the individual will determine how resilient a person is, such as how much social support they receive (Kets de Vries, M. 2015). The person's personality is not seen as relevant: 'a multi-faceted process from which people draw and learn from the best they can find in their environment, which can include family, school or the community' (Greef 2002).

Resilience is a product of a person's personality in combination with environmental influences such as family, peers, and social environment: '...categories that promote resilience, namely individual dispositional attributes, family support and cohesion, and external support systems' (Richardson 2002). (Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model shows the microsystem is resilience within. The exosystem is resilience between and the macrosystem is resilience out with the persons control. Resilience can be helped by the following, Collective belief that we have the capacity to make things get better, a sense of autonomy & control in your work, a culture in which it's ok to make mistakes – and learn from them (Kahn, W. A. 1990)

Resilience at Organisational level

Defined in the same way as it is for individuals but with a different focus: It must include not only the individuals within the organisation, but also the processes and culture those individuals work with on a daily basis (Halbesleben, J. R. B., and Wheeler, A. R. 2008). Organisational resilience looks at how well the organisation can 'weather the storm' or adapt to challenges it faces. This requires a combination of resilience and an understanding of the circumstances which pose the greatest threat to survival: for example, organisations may become more susceptible to adverse events if they have faced previous crises, as their resources are stretched and defences weakened (MacLeod, D. and Clarke, N., 2009).

Engagement

Employee engagement described as '...the perceptions of the two parties, employee and employer, of what their mutual obligations are towards each other' (Emmott 2006)

What they increasingly say they are looking for is an engaged workforce (Schmidt et al. 1993). But the problem is – nobody agrees on the definition of employee engagement. Customer service has been described in numerous ways across a huge platform. It is often described as a business giving the best customer service to their customers. (Hothschild,1983) argues that customer service is a rehearsed act performed by workers to interact with customers and use induced or suppressed feelings to connect with them in order to achieve a sale. (Bauman,1998) states that it is much needed in a world of consumer driven society and it is unbelievably valuable to every business.

Engagement has three dimensions

These three dimensions define employee engagement as how engaged workers are and how positively present, they are when at work. This can be measured through their intellectual effort, positive emotions, and connections with other staff. This helps create an engaged work force. (Roden.2012)

In the fashion industry the role of woman will become dominant and the woman breaking into the industry will dominate the senior more advanced roles. Projections show that by 2030 women will be in two thirds of the highly skilled jobs in the industry (Dromey,2017) Technology will help the advancement of bring together different cultures, backgrounds, languages, and races in the fashion industry, this will change and become clearly visible of the distinctions that are in place today in workplaces.

Actively disengaged

Actively disengaged workers are unhappy and resentful and spread unhappiness in the organisation. Such employees are bad for the organisation since they are always provoking and convincing the other employees to leave their jobs and move out of the organization (Brewster,2007). However, these employees last longer in the firm and remove the prospective employees whom they perceive will attain higher position or move to the next job level in the near future. (Brown, D. and Reilly, P.2008).

Non engaged

Non engaged workers this is the category in which majority of the employees in the organisation fall. (Buamruk.2004) These are the ones who seek directions from their superior and do only that work which has been asked for. Such employees do put in their time, but not passion and energy into their work. They like to receive only one instruction at a time and lacks innovativeness (Khan, W. A. 1992) These employees can hold either a negative or positive attitude towards the organization. (Kular.2007)

Positive engagement

Employees who have positive engagement at work are constantly looking for ways to do their jobs better. They are half as likely to leave the organisation as the average employee and are nine times more likely to stay with the organisation than the “disaffected” (Towers Perrin 2005)

Conclusion

My recommendation for millennials would be to change their mind set in regard to working, they need to be willing to relocate, work long hours and working in different nature environments within work. They need to adapt and be willing to work continuously with the new technology and embrace it in the work place. The workers need to take responsibility in ensuring they are up to date and have the necessary skills to continue performing at a high level within the workplace. The only way to progress and keep developing is to take initiative and learn new skills, this for some workers may require taking a step back in terms of jobs or starting from the bottom in a new job but it will help them progress and be strong in the workplace. While embracing technology the workers will need to be open to working in different approaches for example working in peer to peer learning. The highly skilled staff members of the workforce need to be willing to step into demanding roles and go out their comfort zones.

My recommendation for employers would be to let the employees take initiative for their own learning and development in the work place, let them learn on the job as they go, by pushing initiative on the employees it will give them drive to be successful and make them feel like they have more responsibility in the workplace. I would advise employers to work collaboratively as one to ensure all staff get opportunities to develop not just in selected workplaces. I would advise employers to work with schools, colleges, and the government to help young people have a career pathway and show that their opportunities to succeed in the fashion industry even though you are just starting. Employers need to prepare for a more diverse work force, in both culture and multi-generational levels, they need to also be prepared to offer employees a greater range of flexibility in working, this will add more value to the employee's work.