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Human Resource Management Strategies that Influence Millennial Engagement at the Workplace: A Case of OnMobile Global Limited Kenya

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Abstract:

This study sought to examine Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies that influence millennial engagement at the workplace. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: determine the influence of job design in engaging the millennial workforce at the workplace, examine the influence of career management opportunities in engaging the millennial workforce at the workplace, and determine the influence of incentives in engaging the millennial workforce at the workplace. A Descriptive research design was used. The population of 235 employees from were a sample size of 70 was chosen. The main tool for collected primary data is a questionnaire. Data analysis included measures of central tendency like means and percentages and standard deviations. Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression were used to examine the relationship in the study variables. The study reveals that job identity is very important for millennials. The study also shows that employees find themselves fulfilled with modest contributions to the organization when they understand their work role and their overall contribution to the company's mission, and preferred standardized job process that will help them know exactly when and where they have to do certain tasks and lower their mistakes on the job. Further the study indicates that having continuous training and development throughout a career and a pleasant working environment will keep millennial employees engaged with the company. Trust and justice elements are important to millennial employees in terms of creating a pleasant working environment which will ultimately enhance their engagement as well as having flexible working hours. OnMobile Global employees do not use the work-life balance programs because of poor communication about the program availability and improper implementation, and there is subtle negative communication from managers and co-workers towards employees that used flexi-time programmes in their job. This study recommends among other things OnMobile Global management not to ignore the influence of job design and redesigning millennial employee engagement.

Keywords: Millennial employees, engagement, job, redesigning, flexi-time, work, environment, career

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The notion of employee engagement has sparked widespread interest over the last decade (Saks & Gruman, 2011). While research findings vary slightly, most of these studies share a similar conclusion: that engaged employees seem to be an important source of organizational competitiveness (Teng, Huang & Tsai, 2014). Engaged employees are those who give full discretionary effort at work, and are highly vigorous and dedicated to their job, while disengaged employees are those who are motivationally disconnected from work, who do not have the energy to work hard and who are not enthusiastic at work (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). By most accounts, employee engagement affects productivity, profitability, employee retention and customer services (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2009). Even so, not much is offered in the current body of knowledge concerning how best to stimulate employee engagement (Bakker *et al.*, 2007; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008).

1.2. Employee Engagement Defined

As a concept that has developed over time, engagement has been defined in numerous, often inconsistent, ways in the literature, so much so that the term has become ambiguous to many and it is rare to find two people defining it in same way (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Engagement is most often defined within the academic domain as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). More broadly, Kahn (2010)

described engagement as the harnessing of people's selves to their work, such that they fully invest their physical, cognitive, and emotional resources in their work roles.

1.3. Characteristics of Millennial Employees

Millennials have come into the work place with a new wave of energy never seen in other generations (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Millennials work a lot in teams and are technologically advanced and their social mind-set is at a totally different level in comparison to older generations (Horovitz, 2012). Buchanan (2012) states that, one of the characteristics of millennials, besides the fact that they are masters of digital communication, is that they are primed to do well by doing good, and he further states that, almost 70 percent are of the view that, giving back and being civically engaged are their highest priorities. The unique characteristics of millennials demand a different strategic approach to the engagement of employees (Horovitz, 2012). Millennials are looking for more in life than "just a job" or a steady climb up the corporate ranks. They want to do something that feels worthwhile, they take into account the values of a company when considering a job, and they are motivated by much more than money (Buchanan, 2012). Millennials are attracted to employers who can offer more than merely goodpay. That is not to say that pay is not important, since competitive wages made an employer more attractive to them. The biggest draw for millennials, though, is the opportunity for progression, which shows that the ambition and optimism of this generation is high (Zhang *et al.*, 2012; Horovitz, 2012).

1.4. Brief Profile of on Mobile

OnMobile Global Limited has been a pioneer in the Mobile Value Added Services (MVAS) industry and a market leader in the space ever since its inception 13 years ago. With services in 59 countries and 1800+ employees around the world, OnMobile has created a niche for itself in the Mobile VAS realm and is highly regarded as the 'Partner of Choice' by telecom operators around the world. The company was publicly listed in 2008 and has acquired Voxmobili (2007), Telisma (2008), Dilithium Networks (2010) and Livewire Mobile (2013) (OnMobile Annual Report, 2013). The company offers content management, content aggregation and distribution, voice short codes, missed call alerts, multimedia push services, mobile search, ringtones, ringback tones (RBT), voice portals, music products, mobile radio, entertainment products like football, cricket, quizzes and gaming solutions, movies and a safety app called Help Me on Mobile.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on three HR practices that influence millennials employee engagement that include: job and task design, career management opportunities, and incentives. Empirical evidence suggests that engagement is a distinct, unique, and valid construct (Seppala *et al.*, 2009). Leading theorists in employee engagement literature have emphasized the role of job design in fostering employee engagement. For instance, Hackman and Oldham's (1980) proposes that characteristics of jobs drive people's attitudes and behaviours. In an ethnographic study, Alfes *et al.* (2013) found that when people were doing work that was challenging and varied, they were more likely to be engaged. Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job-Demands-Resources (JDR) Model also emphasises the role of job design in generating engagement.

According to Treuren and Anderson (2010) millennial employees tend to find meaning in their work and they are looking for work- life balance. In order to have a higher employee engagement, organizations nowadays are focusing on training, succession plans and career development. Although these are costly to the organization, but when the employees able to work in a healthy and happy condition, there will be less medical leave from employees and the productivity might also increase (Angeline, 2011). According to Golshan and Omar (2011), the war of talent is considered as a critical human resource issue in the future and they found that many organizations tend to retain their talent as well as knowledge in their organizations. Therefore, organizations play an important role in understanding all the features and characteristic of millennials in order to engage those talented employees (Weyland, 2011). This is because the characteristics and capabilities of millennial employees are different from other generation workforce that would be able to provide competitive advantage over their competitors (Golshan and Omar, 2011). There have been contrasting results attained by different researchers for instance, Zaidi and Abbas (2011) found that monetary incentives have greater impact on motivating employees. Contrastingly, other researchers stressed that non-monetary incentives brings greater impact on employee's motivation and engagement (Zaniet *et al.*, 2011; Sonawane, 2008). This study examined the human resource management strategies that influence millennial engagement at the workplace with a key focus on OnMobile Global Limited Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To establish the influence of job design in engaging the millennial workforce at OnMobile Global Limited Kenya.
- To determine the influence of career management opportunities in engaging the millennial workforce at OnMobile Global Limited Kenya.
- To determine the influence of incentives in engaging the millennial workforce at OnMobile Global Limited Kenya.

2. Research Methodology

In this study, descriptive research design was used to explain the HR strategies used at OnMobile Global Limited could engage its millennial employees. The population of this study was 235 in number. The target population included: senior management, operational managers, line managers, and regular employees. This study made use of the stratified random

sampling technique whereby, four sub-populations of the organization's staff were selected. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires that was closed ended using Likert scale type questions. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The questionnaire was piloted and tested for validity and reliability.

3. Results

3.1. Response Rate and Reliability

The researcher circulated 70 questionnaires to the target population and only 68 were retrieved giving a response rate of 90% which is generally acceptable. A reliability test was carried using the Cronbach Alpha Test to for the study variables that included: job design factors, career management opportunity factors, incentive factors, and millennial employee measurement factors, and all the variables met the threshold a coefficient of >0.7.

3.2. Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement

3.2.1. Regression Model for Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement

The researcher computed means for the job design factors into five main factors namely: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. These factors were used to run the regression analysis, and the results were as shown:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.807	.650	.620	.26872

Table 1: Model Summary for Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Predictors (Constant): Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy, and Feedback

Table 1 reports the results of the regression model summary for job design factors: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (independent variables), and millennial employee engagement (dependent variable). The adjusted R square value for the model shows that 62% of the variance in millennial employee engagement could be explained by job design factors.

3.2.2. Regression Coefficients for Job Design Factors and Millennial Employee Engagement

The regression coefficients in Table 2 predicts the relationship between the variables: (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and millennial employee engagement as: $Y = 6.170 + 0.189 \text{ Skill Variety} - 0.365 \text{ Task Identity} + 0.211 \text{ Task Significance} + 0.129 \text{ Autonomy} - 0.888 \text{ Feedback}$

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	6.170	2.839		2.173	.034
Skill Variety	.189	.088	.333	2.139	.037
Task Identity	-.365	.105	-.308	-3.466	.001
Task Significance	.211	.450	.077	.468	.641
Autonomy	.129	.088	.127	1.464	.149
Feedback	-.888	.183	-.506	-4.839	.000

Table 2: Coefficients for Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Employee Engagement

The regression coefficient indicates that skill variety had a positive and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in skill variety, there would be an increase of 18.9% millennial employee engagement. Task identity had a negative, but significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in task identity, there would be a decrease of 36.5% millennial employee engagement due to the inverse relationship. Task significance had a positive, but insignificant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in task significance, there would be an increase of 21.1% millennial employee engagement. Autonomy had a positive, but insignificant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in autonomy, there would be an increase of 12.9% millennial employee engagement. Feedback had a negative, but significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in feedback, there would be a decrease of 88.8% millennial employee engagement.

3.3. Career Management Opportunities and Millennial Employee Engagement

3.3.1. Regression Model for Career Management Opportunities and Millennial Employee Engagement

The researcher computed means for the career management opportunities factors into four main factors namely: career adaptability, career planning, career development, and career satisfaction. These factors were used to run the regression analysis, and the results were as shown:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.943	.890	.882	.14960

Table 3: Model Summary for Career Management Opportunities and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Predictors (Constant): Career Adaptability, Career Planning, Career Development, and Career Satisfaction.

Table 3 shows the results of the regression model summary for career management opportunities: career adaptability, career planning, career development, and career satisfaction (independent variables), and millennial employee engagement (dependent variable). The adjusted R square value for the model shows that 88.2% of the variance in millennial employee engagement could be explained by career management opportunity factors.

3.3.2. Regression Coefficients for Career Management Opportunity Factors and Millennial Employee Engagement

The regression coefficients in Table 4 predicts the relationship between the variables: (career adaptability, career planning, career development, and career satisfaction) and millennial employee engagement as: $Y = -6.356 + 0.613 \text{ Career Adaptability} + 0.387 \text{ Career Planning} - 0.723 \text{ Career Development} + 0.212 \text{ Career Satisfaction}$

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-6.356	.554		-11.483	.000
Career Adaptability	.613	.042	.976	14.608	.000
Career Planning	.387	.062	.559	6.242	.000
Career Development	-.723	.091	-.913	-7.954	.000
Career Satisfaction	2.123	.146	1.171	14.565	.000

Table 4: Coefficients for Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Employee Engagement

The regression coefficient indicates that career adaptability had a positive and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in career adaptability, there would be an increase of 61.3% millennial employee engagement. Career planning had a positive and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in career planning, there would be an increase of 38.7% millennial employee engagement. Career development had a negative, but significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in career development, there would be a decrease of 72.3% millennial employee engagement due to the inverse relationship. Career satisfaction had a positive, and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in career satisfaction, there would be an increase of 12.3% millennial employee engagement.

3.4. Incentives and Millennial Employee Engagement

3.4.1. Regression Model for Incentives and Millennial Employee Engagement

The researcher computed means for the job design factors into five main factors namely: pay rise, stock option, training and development, pleasant working environment, work-life balance. These factors were used to run the regression analysis, and the results were as shown:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.978	.956	.952	.09570

Table 5: Model Summary for Incentives and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Predictors (Constant): Pay Rise, Stock Option, Training and Development, Pleasant Working Environment, and Work-Life Balance

Table 5 shows the results of the regression model summary for incentive factors: pay rise, stock option, training and development, pleasant working environment, and work-life balance (independent variables), and millennial employee engagement (dependent variable). The adjusted R square value for the model shows that 95.2% of the variance in millennial employee engagement could be explained by incentive factors.

3.4.2. Regression Coefficients for Incentive Factors and Millennial Employee Engagement

The regression coefficients in Table 6 predicts the relationship between the variables: (pay rise, stock option, training and development, pleasant working environment, and work-life balance) and millennial employee engagement as: $Y = -0.463 - 3.578 \text{ Pay Rise} + 4.035 \text{ Stock Option} + 0.925 \text{ Training and Development} - 0.668 \text{ Pleasant Working Environment} + 0.045 \text{ Work-Life Balance}$

The regression coefficient indicates that pay rise had a negative, but significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in pay rise, there would be a decrease of 57.8% millennial employee engagement due to the inverse relationship. Stock option had a positive and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in stock option, there would be an increase of 3.5% millennial employee engagement. Training and development had a positive, and significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in training and development, there would be an increase of 92.5% millennial employee engagement. Pleasant working environment had a negative, but significant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in pleasant working environment, there would be a decrease of 66.8% millennial employee engagement due to the inverse relationship. Work-life balance had a positive, but insignificant influence on millennial employee engagement, meaning, for every increase in work-life balance, there would be an increase of 4.5% millennial employee engagement.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.463	.412		-1.122	.266
Pay Rise	-3.578	.218	-7.832	-16.429	.000
Stock Option	4.035	.227	8.865	17.768	.000
Training & Development	.925	.098	.713	9.426	.000
Working Environment	-.668	.061	-.655	-10.950	.000
Work-Life Balance	.045	.032	.063	1.431	.158

Table 6: Coefficients for Incentives and Millennial Employee Engagement
a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Employee Engagement

4. Discussion

We have been concerned with three questions: first, does job design influence millennial employee engagement; second, whether career management opportunities influence millennial employee engagement; and third, whether incentive are related to millennial employee engagement in OnMobile Global limited. We shall examine each of these three questions in turn.

4.1. Job Design and Millennial Employee Engagement

The study showed that job design is used in the organization to integrate employee's personal needs and those of the organization. These results are in agreement with Xanthopoulou *et al.* (2009), who argue that, job design has three aims: first, to satisfy the requirements of the organization for productivity, operation efficiency and quality of product or service, and to satisfy the needs of the individual for challenge and accomplishment. Similarly, Bakker *et al.* (2008) states that, clearly, these aims are interrelated and the overall objective of job design is to integrate the needs of the individual with those in the organization. The key job design components that were studied are task identity, autonomy, feedback and all were found to be significantly correlated to job millennial employee engagement.

4.2. Career Management Opportunities and Millennial Employee Engagement

Career management is the other area that was covered in this study. Results indicated that employees have developed career using goals and career strategies to obtain career goals. Similar results were reported by Wortley and Grierson-Hill (2013) who assert that career management process involves career exploration, development of career goals, and use of career strategies to obtain career goals. OnMobile Global has increased their employees' employability and has broadened their range of potential job roles. These results concur with Woodruffe (2012) who states that, it is about increasing employability that broadens the range of potential job roles open to the individual and extends the value of their staying with the employer consequently millennial engagement.

4.3. Incentives and Millennial Employee Engagement

On this parameter the study found that appropriate administration of pay schemes such as pay rise would have a positive impact on employees in terms of engagement. These results are in agreement with Burgess and Ratto (2013) and Swiss (2015) who state that, the appropriate administration on pay schemes such as pay rise is believed to have positive impact on employees' engagement with the company. It acts as a strong motivator to enhance employees' efforts and performance. Other incentives that are used by this organization are stock options, continuous training and development flexible working hours, and positive feedback. These findings compare well with Oyer and Schaefer (2014) who state that,

stock option grants align the incentives of the worker with the value of the entire firm, rather than with his individual performance and with. Lyons and Mattare's (2011) research conducted in the US showed that continuous training and development throughout employees' career keeps them more engaged with the company as this makes them feel secure and confident with the company concurring with the findings of this current study.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study indicate that job design was used by OnMobile Global to integrate employees' personal needs and those of the organization. Employees find jobs that are high in skill variety more challenging because of the range of skills involved and tasks that require skill variety because of their personal development and growth. Further, our findings indicate that employees have developed career using goals, and career strategies to meet career goals. OnMobile Global had increased employees' employability and broadened their range of potential job roles. Employees had developed career adaptability skills to organizational and job changes and the organization had low employee turnover, which had increased its productivity and performance. The study also concludes that appropriate administration on pay schemes such as pay rise, continuous training and development, trust and justice elements, a pleasant work environment would increase employee engagement. An important issue that was found out is that OnMobile Global employees did not use the work-life balance programs available because of poor communication about this facility's availability and improper implementation. Further, there was subtle negative communication from managers and co-workers towards employees that used flexi-time programmes in their job.

6. Recommendations

From this study it is recommended that OnMobile Global management should not ignore the influence of job design and redesigning on millennial employee engagement. The management needs to unleash the talents and motivations of all its millennial employees if it aims to achieve peak performance. The study also recommends that the management of OnMobile Global implement training and development programs that would facilitate career development of its staff in order to maximize on their employees' potential as well as increase their engagement of millennial employees. The study further recommends that the organization should have a clear and concise communication channels put in place of all millennial employee engagement programs such as life work balance available and to ensure that those taking advantage of these programmes are not victimized to ensure its employees take full advantage and stay engaged. The scope of focus for this study was limited in nature hence it is recommended that further research be conducted in other organizations to determine whether the human resource variables used in this study plus others also influence millennial engagement at such work places.

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