Chapter 13
Reconfiguring the New Normal:
Workplace Spirituality, Millennial Employee Engagement, and Turnover Intentions

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the magnitude of experience and perception of work, leaving a permanent mark on the fundamental principles of the workplace as information workers still continue to work from home. While the turnover intention of millennials is highest in the I/T (information technology) industry, organizations strive to adjust to the work order that is supposed to be the new normal. This chapter unfolds the mediating impact of employee engagement on the relationship between workplace spirituality and turnover intention of millennials in the post-pandemic era. A cross-sectional study was conducted through an online survey and data were analyzed through the AMOS 20.0 and Hayes Process macro (model 4). To respond to the long-standing problems extended by the pandemic, establishing deep connections with organizational members, and injecting meaning and higher purpose at the workplace may prove to be effective.

INTRODUCTION

While the COVID-19 pandemic changed the magnitude of experience and perception of work, it has left a permanent mark on the fundamental principles of the workplace as information workers still continue to work from home. Business leaders and human resource departments are striving to make adjustments to the work order that is supposed to be the new normal. It includes work from home, shift to altered work, diverse timings or no work (Crowley, et al.,2020). Employees envision a future that combines remote and onsite work (McKinsey,2021). COVID-19 also may be classified as a traumatic event that has led to expeditious changes in working conditions on a large scale, inducing severe psychological and spiritual issues in organizations (Horsch et al.,2020).

Millennials comprise 68% of the workforce in the information technology(IT) sector and are aging into a dominant workforce cohort (Deloitte,2023). Parker, et al., (2020), report that millennials feel isolated and demotivated by solitary working conditions losing focus and are less engaged in the new normal. Their turnover intention was the highest in the software industry (Sharma & Stol,2020). A few reasons for retaining millennials are stress at work, high workload, work-life balance, lack of social contacts and physical interaction with co-workers, professional development, and work motivation (PAMUNGKAS, et al., 2023; Putri & Amran, 2021).

Thus, one of the critical aspects of people management in the post-pandemic is to lower employee turnover intentions (Silva et al.,2022). Being a costly affair that involves termination, advertising, recruitment, selection, and hiring, employee turnover has a far-reaching impact on organizations (Cakal, et al., 2021). More so, the efficiency of the remaining employees is also acutely damaged when other employees leave the organization. This specifically holds true for the millennials who exhibit higher turnover intentions most of the times (Aboobaker, et al.,2020). This entails effective manpower management to ensure that the most experienced and useful staff remain with the organization in the novel normal era post-pandemic (Awada, et al.,2021).

Thus, to respond to the long-standing problems extended by the pandemic, establishing deep connections with organizational members, and injecting meaning and higher purpose at the workplace is a priority for the millennials. Workplace spirituality may play a central role in this realm (Yin & Mahrous, 2022). It provides a framework of organizational values that promotes an employee's experience of transcendence through the work process (Haldorai et al.,2020). It also promotes a sense of being connected to others and nurtures the feeling of completeness and joy (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Based on the principles of sharing, openness, and co-evolution, workplace spirituality reduces employee intention to quit thereby, improving individual and organizational outcomes (Bhaskar & Mishra,2019). More importantly, the global turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made business executives realize the importance of workplace spirituality providing employees with a strong sense of purpose to reduce employee turnover intentions (Yin & Mahrous,2022). Consequently, workplace spirituality may be considered a robust strategy to retain a quality workforce in the contemporary workplace (Hwang and Yeojin,2022) lowering employee turnover intentions (Hwang & Yi, 2022).

The intricate situation mentioned above demands feasible conditions to achieve desired outcomes. In this regard, millennials also need to be engaged to maximize their effectiveness in the new work situation (Golden & Gajendran, 2019). Such conditions accompanied by efficient systems in the post-pandemic era also require employees to be engaged in their work specifically in the IT sector (Singh, et al.,2023). Being a holistic investment of employees into their work to bear on role-related tasks (Yin, 2018), employee engagement generates such outcomes as improved performance, counterproductive behaviour, innovation, and corporate growth (Parent and Lovelace, 2018; Yin, 2018). Importantly, employee engagement is a powerful predictor of turnover intention (Wang et al.,2020). The importance of millennial employee work engagement in lowering turnover intentions post-pandemic cannot be ignored (Oktavia, et al.,2020; Wilkinson, 2022).

Although noteworthy studies have evaluated the links between workplace spirituality, employee engagement, and turnover intention, the present study tries to integrate them in the context of the post-pandemic era. To address the research questions, the study uses millennials employed in Information technology (IT) firms in India. Software industry 5.0 remains to be technology, innovation, and human-intensive as it proceeds unrelentingly to manage the ever-increasing complexity of software projects globally (Babkin,

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