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Millennials' Adaptation and Satisfaction in Hybrid Work Models: A Study on Technological Comfort and Work-Life Balance in the IT Sector

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the perceptions and adaptations of the Millennial generation to hybrid work arrangements, particularly focusing on their technological comfort and its influence on acceptance and satisfaction. Utilizing a sample of 120 employees from the IT sector in Palakkad District, Kerala, the research employs a quantitative approach, applying the Mann-Whitney U test to analyse data collected through questionnaires. Findings reveal that Millennials generally perceive hybrid work as advantageous for achieving a better work-life balance, contributing to increased job satisfaction and productivity. However, the study also highlights limitations, including a non-representative sample and reliance on self-reported data, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research directions are proposed, emphasizing the need for larger, diverse samples, longitudinal studies, and qualitative methods to capture deeper insights into Millennial experiences. Overall, understanding Millennial attitudes toward hybrid work is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize work arrangements and enhance employee well-being in an evolving workplace landscape.

KEYWORDS: hybrid work model, acceptance, work life balance, job satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of hybrid working, which combines remote and in-office labour, began to gain hold in the early years of the twenty-first century as technology allowed workers to work remotely from any location. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of hybrid working arrangements as companies were forced to embrace remote working to safeguard their employees. Many companies continued to use hybrid working models after COVID-19 to keep their workforces connected and productive. 73% of Indian companies viewed the hybrid working model as their new norm of operation considering the pandemic's benefits, which include increased productivity, reduced expenses, and greater flexibility, according to a CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd poll. The hybrid working strategy combines working in an office environment with working remotely. In addition to allowing employees to work remotely from home or another location, this strategy allows them to interact and collaborate with their counterparts in the office. This strategy aims to improve work-life balance, productivity, and employee satisfaction while reducing the expenses associated with maintaining a physical office location. Combining a physical work arrangement, especially in a workplace, with a remote work system is known as hybridity (Cook et al., 2020). To put it simply, some employees work in person at the company or organization, while others work remotely. The same group of people may also be covered under this arrangement, in which case they would work remotely the other days of the week and physically visit the company's site. Due to the economic crisis, they must have more training than prior generations to obtain employment because of the growing competition.

II. MILLENNIALS'

The Digital natives are ambitious and driven to succeed, in contrast to their parents, Generation X, who are dissatisfied with the environment they live in. Millennials are renowned for their variety, tech-savvy nature, and search for meaning and purpose in both their personal and professional lives. Compared to previous generations, Generation Y is thought of as family- and team-oriented and values variety, self-expression, social responsibility, the environment, and social liberalism. Self-centeredness, selfishness, consumerism, and sloth became associated with Generation Y. As a result, it was named 'Generation Me.' Due to their continuous use of technology, members of this generation are regarded as image-driven and have shorter attention spans than those of earlier generations. As they started their jobs, members of Generation Y faced severe economic obstacles, even though they were well educated compared to earlier generations. Since many of them graduated from high school or college amid a severe economic downturn and its aftermath, their careers got off to a poor start. Many of them suffered from debt, unemployment, and stagnating income, which made it difficult for them to do as well financially as their parents. The tech-savvy nature of Generation Y is one of its notable traits. Members of this generation have grown up with technology and are used to using it to communicate with others all the time.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a 2023 study by **R. Santiago Antony, Selvi, and Vandana Madhavkumar**, the link between employee retention and happiness was explored. They found that the hybrid working model allows IT employees to work at their own pace and meet personal learning goals. This approach enables companies to prioritize their workforce over infrastructure costs. With the flexibility to choose their schedules and locations, employees in hybrid environments tend to have a more positive outlook, leading to improved performance. **Adekoya, Adisa, and Aiyenitaju (2022)** state that advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) and the desire to work more efficiently and safely have fuelled the explosive expansion of remote working.

Danijela Sokolic (2022) argues that both organizational and individual factors influence work performance. The study highlights how changing technologies, varying organizational structures, and potential pitfalls of teleworking policies shape businesses' views on their most asset employees. It aims to underscore the impact of geographic flexibility on the workplace and its broader implications for both companies and workers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, **Sarangi, Kim, and Rafael (2022)** investigated the impact of remote work on mental health. While recognizing the benefits of increased independence and flexibility from working from home (WFH), the review also raises concerns about potential negative effects on mental and emotional well-being. These include enforced family interactions, technological challenges, social isolation, and unclear work-life boundaries. The study further explores emerging work-from-home models that could provide employees with greater freedom and flexibility. **McHugh, Fraone, and Zhang (2021)** offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of mental health in the workplace. Recent years have seen a growing recognition of the significant impact mental health has on work environments. Challenges such as stress, burnout, and the need for an authentic, inclusive workplace culture underscore the importance of prioritizing employee mental health to create a motivated and productive workforce. This focus has intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has heightened mental health concerns by raising issues related to health, safety, social isolation, work-related stress, and childcare responsibilities. **Lutz Bellmann (2020)** explores the potential for telecommuting to supplement or even replace traditional office environments. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, work-from-home policies were more common, while telecommuting arrangements were less widespread. However, extending telecommuting beyond regular business hours could negatively impact work-life balance. The author's research suggests that while remote work may initially boost job satisfaction, it also has other consequences. Specifically, the reduction in in-person interactions and the reliance on remote communication can strain relationships among coworkers, even as it contributes to lower labour costs and productivity. **Jodi Oakman's (2020)** data analysis highlights the impact of working from home (WFH) on both mental and physical health. It indicates a considerable risk of experiencing stress, tension, depression, and fatigue, which have been shown notably impact work motivation and job satisfaction. **Ravalier (2018)** suggests that negative work habits lead to increased turnover and reduced control, which are exacerbated by presenteeism, low job satisfaction, and high expectations and demands. **Jones et al. (2020)** explore critical aspects of the growing associate professional workforce using a purposive sample of 801 experts. Through nuanced examination of organizational climate and support variables, the study identifies distinct multivariate groups and their correlates. Results reveal a notable seven- group solution, with strong organizational climate and cohesion among mutually supportive organizations. Partner-led programs notably excel across all measured aspects, including organizational climate, career development support, and service quality. This study offers valuable insights into the working conditions and experiences of peer service providers across various organizational settings in

the mental health field. **Bangura's (2023)** study aims to explore hybrid work organizations with a particular focus on how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected employee work arrangements. The study intends to comprehend the opportunities and challenges associated with hybrid work and offer suggestions for its successful application on the unit network by analyzing 15 papers from databases such as Google Scholar, ebsco-host, and Ja-Emerald. According to the literature study, post-COVID hybrid work arrangements may have psychological repercussions like loneliness and a blurring of the lines between work and home life.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

While many studies address hybrid work's overall impact on employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational dynamics, there is a lack of focused research on how the Millennial generation specifically perceives and adapts to hybrid work arrangements.

Objective of the study

- 1) To explore how the Millennial generation perceives and adapts to hybrid work arrangements.
- 2) To identify Millennial’s technological comfort that influence their acceptance and satisfaction.

Hypothesis for the study

H1: Millennials perceive hybrid work arrangements as beneficial for work-life balance, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity compared to traditional in-office work.

HO: There is no significant difference in job satisfaction and productivity between Millennials working in hybrid arrangements and those working in traditional in-office settings, regarding their perceived work-life balance.

H2: Higher levels of technological comfort among Millennials positively correlate with their acceptance and satisfaction of hybrid work arrangements, as they feel more empowered to utilize digital tools for collaboration and communication.

H0: There is no significant correlation between levels of technological comfort and the acceptance and satisfaction of hybrid work arrangements among Millennials.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An analytical research design is adopted in the study. A questionnaire was conveniently administered among the sample size of 120 employees who belongs to IT sector whom works on hybrid work model in Palakkad District of Kerala. The data and statistics shown below is done by doing Mann-Whitney U test, which is a non-parametric test used to assess whether there is a statistically significant difference between two independent groups on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable.

Table:1

Ranks				
	Acceptance-*	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Demo*	1	45	33.44	1505
	2	16	24.13	386
	Total	61		

***Demo: 1: level of employment, Demo 2: Experience of the respondents. Acceptance: perceive of hybrid model**

Test Statistics	
	Demo-2
Mann-Whitney U	250
Wilcoxon W	386

Z	-2.085
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.037
a. Grouping Variable: Acceptance-3	

This test statistic (U = 250) indicates the Mann-Whitney U value calculated for comparing the ranks between the Demo-2 and Acceptance-3 group.

Wilcoxon W: This is another name for the Mann-Whitney U statistic, here shown as W = 386.

Z-value: The Z-value (-2.085) is the test statistic that follows an approximate standard normal distribution under the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed): This is the p-value associated with the Z-value, indicating the probability of observing such a difference in ranks between the groups under the null hypothesis of no difference.

Objective: The Mann-Whitney U test here assesses whether there is a statistically substantial variance in ranks between the Demo-2 and Acceptance-3 groups.

Interpretation:

- **U statistic (250):** Indicates the sum of ranks of the smaller group (Acceptance-3) relative to what would be expected if the distribution of ranks were the same in both groups.
- **Z-value (-2.085):** This negative value suggests that the ranks in the Demo-2 group tend to be lower (or higher, depending on the direction of comparison) compared to the Acceptance-3 group.

Table: 2

Ranks				
Acceptance*		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Comfortness-1*	1	40	26.11	1044.5
	2	19	38.18	725.5
	Total	59		
Comfortness-2*	1	40	25.81	1032.5
	2	19	38.82	737.5
	Total	59		

*Acceptance-: Millennial Perceives, Comfort- 1: Job satisfaction, 2: technological comfort

Test Statistics		
	Efficiency-1	Efficiency-2
Mann-Whitney U	224.5	212.5
Wilcoxon W	1044.5	1032.5
Z	-2.982	-3.268
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.001
a Grouping Variable: Acceptance-2		

- For Efficiency-1: U = 224.5, Z = -2.982, p = 0.003.
- For Efficiency-2: U = 212.5, Z = -3.268, p = 0.001.

Both groups have significant p-values ($p < 0.05$), indicating strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between Efficiency-1 and Efficiency-2. The negative Z-values indicate that Efficiency-2 tends to have lower ranks (higher efficiency) compared to Efficiency-1.

Based on these results, Efficiency-2 is statistically significantly different from Efficiency-1 in terms of whatever variable or measure is being analysed (likely efficiency based on the group names). Efficiency-2 tends to have higher efficiency than Efficiency-1. The study identifies that there is no significant difference in the acceptance and perceive of Hybrid work model based on the acceptance, comfort, and the demographics of the respondents.

VI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has several limitations that impact its findings and generalizability. The sample size of 120 employees may not adequately represent the broader Millennial population in the IT sector, limiting the applicability of the results to other regions or industries. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling introduces potential selection bias, as respondents may not reflect the diverse experiences within the sector. Reliance on self-reported data can lead to response bias, with participants potentially overestimating their acceptance and satisfaction. The cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time, making it challenging to assess long-term impacts. Furthermore, the focus on technological comfort and demographics may overlook other important factors, such as organizational culture and personal circumstances. Conducted in Palakkad District, Kerala, the context-specific findings may not extend to other geographical locations. Lastly, while the Mann-Whitney U test is suitable for the data, it does not convey the magnitude of differences, and the lack of qualitative insights limits the depth of understanding regarding Millennial perceptions of hybrid work.

VII. FUTURE OF THE STUDY

Future research can build on this study's findings by addressing its limitations and exploring the perceptions of Millennials regarding hybrid work arrangements. Conducting studies with larger, more diverse samples across various industries and geographical locations would enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies could track changes in job satisfaction and productivity over time, while qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups would provide deeper insights into Millennials' experiences. Additionally, examining factors such as organizational culture, leadership support, and mental health impacts could offer a more holistic understanding of hybrid work dynamics. Comparative studies across generations and cultural contexts would further illuminate the nuances of Millennial attitudes toward flexibility and technology in the workplace.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into how the Millennial generation perceives and adapts to hybrid work arrangements, highlighting the significance of technological comfort and its impact on acceptance and satisfaction. The findings indicate that Millennials generally view hybrid work as beneficial for achieving a better work-life balance, which in turn enhances job satisfaction and productivity. However, the research also identifies key limitations, such as the small and homogenous sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future studies should aim to explore these perceptions further by employing larger, more diverse samples and incorporating qualitative methodologies to capture the nuanced experiences of Millennials. Additionally, examining the influence of organizational culture, mental health, and technological advancements could enrich our understanding of hybrid work dynamics. Overall, as organizations increasingly adopt hybrid models, understanding the unique needs and preferences of the Millennial workforce will be essential for fostering an environment that promotes both employee well-being and organizational success.

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