Jurnal Pak Pras

by Pengembangan kepangkatan dosen

Sense of Work Community among Millennials in Jakarta

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Abstract. Millennials at the workplace are full of uniqueness. In various studies, work spirituality has influenced Millennials' productivity, creativity, intention to stay, benefit insensitivity, and loyalty toward the organization. The three main components in the spirituality of work are the meaning of work, the sense of community, and the alignment of organizational values. This phenomenological study focuses on the sense of community. As an exploratory study using phenomenological analysis, it was found that a sense of community at work is based on three important factors: feeling solidarity among colleagues, experiencing the meaning of kinship, and having experiences beyond the workspace. Millennials assign a sense of community as one of the main considerations for their intention to stay. This exploratory study suggests some important practical implications for managing and dealing with millennials in the workplace.

Key words: millennial, spirituality, community, intention to stay, phenomenology

1 Introduction

The significant presence of start-ups in the digital economy, with Indonesia being home to a considerable number of them, has implications for the sense of work community among millennials. As millennials dominate the workforce and contribute to the start-up ecosystem, the entrepreneurial and innovative culture of start-ups fosters a unique sense of work community. Millennials will play a key role in the digital economy, particularly through start-ups. As per startupranking.com data, Indonesia had 2,079 start-ups, ranking 5th globally after Canada. Ministry of Communication and Informatics reported 992 start-ups in Indonesia in 2018. The collaborative and dynamic nature of these organizations often aligns with the preferences and values of millennials, who seek meaningful and engaging work environments. The presence of a thriving start-up ecosystem provides millennials with opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals, collaborate on innovative projects, and develop a sense of community within their workplace. This sense of work community can contribute to their job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being in the digital economy.

According to a study, familiarity with workplace spirituality has been positively connected with various work attitudes of employees. These attitudes include intuition, creativity, trust,

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honesty, personal fulfillment, customer orientation, organizational commitment, adaptability, organizational performance, ethical selling behavior, and employee loyalty (Aboobaker, 2020; Albuquerque et al., 2014; Gully et al., 2002; Movassagh and Oreizi, 2014). Insufficient emotional and behavioral connection to one's work and workplace can result in adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations (Landrum, 2017).

The study of the sense of work community holds significant importance in the millennial context, particularly as Indonesia enters a phase of demographic bonus. According to the data from Badan Pusat Statistics Indonesia in 2018, it is projected that Indonesia will experience a demographic bonus between 2020 and 2030. During this period, the millennial generation, born around 1980, will dominate the workforce. This demographic shift will have wide-ranging impacts on the economic, social, and political aspects of the country. It is estimated that millennials will make up approximately 50.36 percent of the productive age population, thereby shaping the structure and dynamics of the workforce. Consequently, the influence of millennials will significantly shape the direction and development of the workplace. The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought forth a compelling discussion on spirituality, particularly in relation to the connectedness within the millennial work community. In this era that prioritizes information technology and is susceptible to disruptive forces, the meaning of work and the work environment face challenges. The disruptive nature of this era and the crisis of value meaning within the social community present further complexities for millennials themselves (Tulgan, 2016).

2   Literature Review

Millennials are considered the most high-maintenance workforce, seeking customization of their minds, bodies, and spirits. The customize their minds through the vast array of content available on the Internet, catering to education, skills training, self-help, health, entertainment, news, and spirituality. Millennial entitlement has emerged as a significant management crisis, described as an "epidemic" by The Wall Street Journal Zaslow (2007), and recognized by TIME Magazine as the "age of entitlement" and a "predicament of unfulfilled outlooks" (Franklin, 2014; Stein, 2013). In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in organizational goals, moving away from a sole focus on wealth maximization towards a more holistic approach that emphasizes sustainability and overall growth (Amui et al., 2017; Angeline, 2011; Houghton et al., 2016). This shift has sparked an increased interest in workplace spirituality, leading to a surge of scholarly studies in this area. Although the term "spirituality" carries various meanings, workplace spirituality is generally understood as a multidimensional concept that involves seeking meaning and purpose in life (Houghton et al., 2016). It encompasses dimensions such as openness & care, inner connectedness, respect, humility, compassion, and transcendence (Gilson et al., 2015; Gully et al., 2002; Milliman et al., 2003). Workplace spirituality refers to how individuals experience and express their spirituality within the context of their work (Sheep, 2006).

Connectedness with the work community (sense of work community) is an indicator of work spirituality (Yogatama and Widyarini, 2015). The sense of community had a positive association with the intention to stay and benefit from insensitivity. The experience of workplace spirituality has a significant positive influence on the organization. Besides that, work spirituality can influence other aspects of building creativity and work productivity. The aspect of spirituality will mean when employees experience self-transcendence, meaning, and a sense of community at work (Shamsuddin et al., 2013). Beneficial to support organizational performance:

(a) Spirituality improves the welfare and quality of life of employees; (b) Spirituality gives employees a sense of purpose and meaning in the workplace; and (c) Spirituality gives employees a sense of connectedness and a sense of community (Karakas and Sarigollu, 2019).

Spirituality at work fosters a sense of community and connection with one's job and workplace, leading to increased attachment and a sense of belongingness (Duchon and Plowman, 2005; Milliman et al., 2003). This study draws on the social exchange theory, suggesting that when employees perceive a sense of purpose and connection in the workplace, they are more likely to have higher intentions to stay and engage in extra-role behaviors. Social exchange theory posits that there is a mutually dependent exchange of tangible and intangible factors between employees and their employer/organization (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

In an era of increasing mechanization and technological advancements, the role of humans in the workplace is being replaced by robots and technology. Consequently, it becomes challenging for employees to establish a meaningful connection within the work community. However, fostering connectedness with the work community is crucial for creating a psychological climate where employees perceive their work as meaningful and experience a sense of care within a community. Work units that prioritize spirituality often have higher performance levels. Nonetheless, a study by Javanmard (2012), found no significant impact of the sense of community on employees' work performance.

The sense of community (spirituality) arises from recognizing the inner strengths of individuals, such as honesty, creativity, proactivity, kindness, kinship, dependability, and courage. This fosters a motivational environment that enhances team performance and contributes to achieving the organization's vision and mission, while maintaining well-being within the work community (Tulgan, 2016). The sense of community is closely linked to solidarity and kinship, as it fosters a shared identity and a sense of togetherness among individuals. When there is a strong sense of community, people feel connected and invested in each other's well-being, leading to a greater willingness to support and stand in solidarity with one another. This solidarity manifests through acts of cooperation, collaboration, and collective action, as individuals work together towards common goals and address shared challenges. The sense of community nurtures a sense of solidarity and kinship, creating a supportive and cohesive social environment that promotes mutual support, empathy, and a collective sense of responsibility (Prouska et al., 2023; Rorty, 1985).

In conclusion, millennials present a unique combination of mystery and magic. Understanding and appreciating their characteristics calls for identifying solutions that promote a balanced and healthy coexistence within a multi-generational work environment (Khan et al., 2019).

2.1   Problem Statement

The millennial generation has unique characteristics and expectations compared to previous generations, and their sense of work community plays a vital role in shaping their workplace experiences (McCarthy et al., 2010). However, there is a lack of in-depth research on the factors that contribute to or hinder the development of the work community among millennials. Furthermore, limited empirical evidence exists on the impact of the work community on millennials' well-being, job satisfaction, intention to stay in the organization, and organizational outcomes, such as productivity and employee retention. Without a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the work community among millennials and its impact, organizations may struggle to create supportive and engaging work environments that cater to the needs of this generation (Berg et al., 2013; Twenge, 2010).

2.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to examine the factors influencing the sense of work community among millennials in the workplace and explore its impact on their well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. By investigating these factors, organizations can gain insights into how to foster a positive work community for millennials, thereby promoting their engagement, productivity, and retention. So the key objectives of the research study are:

- To explore the sense of community of millennials in the workplace
- To explore the criteria that millennials feel connected in the work community
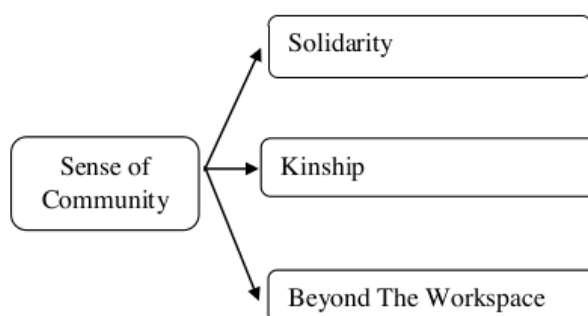
2.3 The Conceptual Model

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3 Research Methods

This is a qualitative study using an inductive phenomenological methodology. Eight people took part in the interview; their data were then thematically categorized and categorized using Ashmos and Duchon's study as well as the behavior indicator from Agung and Yogatama's work (Yogatama and Widyarini, 2015). The following stages are used to analyze the interview's results: Selection of Participants based on criteria: second half of millennial age (phase), i.e., born 1990-2000 Tulgan (2016) and have worked at least 2 years in an institution.

- Prepare all interview questions based on research.
- We conducted in-depth interviews with each Participant.
- The details of every interview were recorded verbatim.

Analysis of interview data was done following the below-given steps:

1. Bracketing or epoch of knowledge and beliefs that have been owned and believed so far to get the true essence or pure essence of the phenomenon being studied and using the Van Kaam phenomenological analysis technique (Clark, 1994).

2. Manual coding was done (Jones et al., 2017).

3. Expert Judgment was taken, as this stage is the consideration/opinion of experts/experienced people from academic circles.

4. Inference of models and prepositions was also done. Where the model is a way to represent the pattern of relationships obtained from human behavior. While propositions are the language of the mind that is used as a concept in cognitive psychology.

4   Findings and Conclusion

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, this research reveals three phenomenal themes about how millennials feel connected to the community in the workplace. Specifically:

1. Millennials have a feeling of being connected to the community, which is felt through the experience of co-worker solidarity in providing support, feeling the same fate, and appreciating them as important individuals in the workplace

2. Millennials have a feeling of being connected to the community through a kinship experience through the attention and warmth of colleagues

3. Millennials feel connected to the community through the free time created outside of company affairs.

Of the eight participants, it was found that five participants felt connected to the work community. However, Participant 2 specifically only felt cared for as a family and did not feel support in terms of work solidarity and time outside the worker context. And equally, Participant 4 felt the support of worker solidarity and they had time outside working hours, but did not feel a sense of being connected as a family who gave attention and warmth to the work team.

Participant 1

Support each other in terms of overtime. Remind each other to eat and stop work first. Very comfortable. More than like family at home. Cooked (food) like their own children. I call it a family because our relationship is not only in the office. But even when he got sick, he was immediately picked up from the boarding house and delivered to the hospital.

Participant 2

No feeling connected. Including personal problems. Our caring is very high. It hurts to pay attention to development. I feel like a family. No experience.

Participant 3

The value instilled by our founder is that the success of one person becomes a success together and the failure of one person becomes a failure together. Yes, that's right (feels like a family). It's nice to hang out, chat, and be like close friends. We often have sharing sessions after working hours to help friends solve problems.

Participant 4

Sharing sessions, and meet-ups, some people have learned something, then invite other colleagues, invite other friends, and open to the public. No feelings emerged. After working hours hang out together, coffee, so not just in the office.

Participant 5

If we have trouble, we help each other. Even if my position is above, we can help each other. Yes, we care for each other. We apply. We have a shortage that we can borrow. Yes, as a family. We often go together, because we are a small team.

Meanwhile, the four Participants did not feel connected to their community except for Participant 2 who felt there was a concern for things outside of work. Specifically:

1. Millennials don't feel any support for solidarity at work or the difficulties they face.

2. Millennials don't feel connected as a family that provides care and warmth.

3. Millennials don't feel connected through the shared time they provide outside of work hours.

Participant 2

He supports other people. So just supported it. But they don't want to grow. As long as it's not him who does it, he supports it.

Participant 6

There is competition between marketing and ways to achieve targets. Not yet to the stage of being a family, but comfortable anyway.

Participant 7

Not comfortable, I work hard, besides I'm relaxed. Each of them is close but only limited to work.

Participant 8

If there is a seminar or concert, like it or not, fellow teachers have to help out. Can just vent, and reduce the burden on the mind.

5   Discussion

5.1   Solidarity

The theme of solidarity is prominent among millennials, contrary to the misconception that they are antisocial due to their social media usage. In their workplaces, millennials demonstrate

strong connections with their co-workers. They offer unwavering support to each other, particularly during demanding overtime work that seems endless. They show genuine concern for their colleagues' well-being, reminding them to take breaks and care for themselves.

Togetherness is highly valued among millennials, who believe that individual success contributes to the success of the entire team. Conversely, failure is seen as a collective responsibility. This sense of unity is evident in their willingness to share knowledge and innovations with one another. When someone learns something new, they gladly invite others to share that knowledge, dispelling the notion of selfishness often associated with their generation.

Informant 5 emphasizes the camaraderie experienced while facing difficulties as a team, disregarding hierarchical positions that might otherwise create divides within the workplace. Collaboration is seen as essential, especially in roles that demand teamwork, as mentioned by informant 8's experience during concert planning.

However, not all millennials feel this sense of kinship at work. Informants 2, 6, and 7 have different experiences, leading to a lack of mutual support. Informant 2 feels isolated as the youngest and only millennial in their workplace, receiving little encouragement or teamwork from colleagues. Informants 6 and 7 encounter a competitive atmosphere, where everyone focuses on individual success in marketing roles. This results in a lack of solidarity and a feeling of unease. All-inclusive, the evidence suggests that millennials, far from being antisocial or selfish, are actually quite solid and supportive towards their co-workers. Nevertheless, some workplaces may foster environments that hinder this sense of togetherness, leading certain individuals to consider seeking opportunities elsewhere.

5.2   Kinship

For millennials, the workplace holds more significance than merely being a means to earn a living; it becomes a place where they experience a sense of family and belonging. The spirit of kinship is highly valued by millennials as it helps them establish a meaningful identity within their work community.

The presence of kinship spirit is notable among millennials, as evidenced by Informant 1's experience. They felt treated like family, with co-workers showing care by cooking food and ensuring they take breaks from work. Similarly, Informant 2 received special attention and care from colleagues when he was sick. Informant 5 shared how, during times of scarcity, the workplace transforms into a sharing and supportive family-like environment.

However, Informants 2, 6, 7, and 8 had different experiences, lacking a sense of kinship and solidarity within their workplaces. This lack of connectedness further motivated these informants to consider leaving their current jobs. The importance of a relational approach akin to kinship is highlighted in research by Derbani et al. (2022); Pariyanti et al. (2022), which suggests that organizations fostering opportunities for social interactions among members can reduce employee turnover and cultivate positive social capital. Thus, millennials place great value on the kinship spirit within their workplaces, as it provides them with a sense of belonging and meaningful identity. Nurturing such an environment can have positive effects on employee retention and overall social capital within organizations.

5.3   Beyond The Workspace

The third theme observed among millennials is their connection to the work community through activities beyond the workplace. Informants 1, 3, and 4 exemplify this by engaging in

activities with their colleagues outside of working hours. They spend time together at cafes, share stories, and continue discussions related to work even after office hours. Additionally, Informant 1 experienced strong support from co-workers during times of illness, accidents, or personal problems.

Tulgan (2016), supports this observation, noting that millennials may view their workplace as a place to socialize with friends, which can be both advantageous and challenging for employers. While it fosters enthusiasm and willingness to come to work, it may also shift the focus away from work-related tasks.

This presents an opportunity for managers and leaders to create a work environment that allows for friendship and camaraderie among team members. Such connections can enhance a sense of belonging, loyalty, and resilience within the workforce.

Contrary to the stereotype of millennials as individualists, this study highlights their strong sense of community and interconnectedness within the workplace. They demonstrate solidarity, shared destinies, and a kinship-like bond among co-workers. For millennials, work is not merely a job but also an opportunity to build meaningful friendships.

Experts support the idea that solidarity and kinship are similar, and they do not necessarily need to be separated. However, they recognize that solidarity often pertains to problem-solving and support within work contexts, while kinship extends to personal matters beyond the workplace.

Identity plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of connection to the community. When workers share a common identity that they embrace as part of themselves, solidarity and kinship naturally emerge. This connection extends beyond the institutional context, leading to social gatherings, events, and activities outside of work organized by the company. In Indonesia, this sense of community goes beyond the boundaries of work, creating a strong and proud millennial identity.

While millennials prefer smaller social groups and may rely on social media interactions for connectivity, the primary cultural aspects of kinship and solidarity remain significant in their lives. These cultural practices, rooted in Indonesian society, contribute to the enduring sense of community and interconnectedness among millennials.

In conclusion, millennials forge meaningful connections with their work community through activities beyond the workspace. They exhibit strong solidarity and kinship bonds, debunking the misconception of them being individualistic. Managers and leaders have an opportunity to leverage this sense of community to foster a positive work environment that promotes loyalty and employee well-being.

6 Conclusion

Millennials have a feeling of being connected to the community through the experience of co-worker solidarity in providing support, a feeling of shared destiny, and respecting them as important individuals in the workplace. Millennials have a feeling of being connected to the community through a family experience through the care and warmth of colleagues. Thus, millennials seem to be integrated into an identity in which they can give spiritual meaning. Millennials have a feeling of being connected to the community through the free time created outside of company matters. That is what fosters millennial spiritual connectedness among co-workers.

Further research needs to be done by focusing on one area of work. Can also be compared

to the Alpha generation (born in 2000) for comparison. Practically, this conclusion can be used by managers, company leaders, HRD, or human capital in developing the capacity of millennial resources. HRD needs to create a work community that is warm, not bureaucratic, as well as leaders who can be inspirational. So that millennial talent can survive and develop companies with all the creativity and capacity they have.

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