UNDERSTANDING THE TRIO AMONG MILLENNIALS, THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY, AND THE CONTEMPORARY HR ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

Abstract

Background: The use of technology in HR engagement practices has been one of the major shifts amid generations where baby boomers have been inclined towards using technology, millennial are inclined towards making its best use and harnessing their full potential in the working environment.

Aim: The main aim of the study is to analyse the trio among millennial, the use of technology and the contemporary HR engagement practices.

Methodology: The research has adopted quantitative method where data has been collected by using survey questionnaire. The sample size of 250 respondents has been used for collecting information through survey. SPSS tool has been used where correlation, regression and descriptive analyses have been conducted for analysis.

Results: Coefficients of motivation, values, use of technology were also found to be highly associated HR engagement practices, with coefficients of 9.9380, 0.8260, and 9895 respectively. All the four variables have been found to have a p-value of <0.05, indicative that working behaviour, motivation, values, and use of technology has a high significant relationship with HR engagement practices with negligible probability of such an association occurring at random. It was found that use of technology is highly impactful with all the independent variables except for working behaviour.

Conclusion: Through statistical analysis, it was found that all the three variables have significant impact on HR practices; hence the entire formed hypotheses were found to be correct.

Recommendations: It has been recommended that the use of technology should be the main focus of the organisations today due to the nature of millennial of being tech-savvy. Hence, they should be further motivated to put their efforts into proposing more advanced HR engagement practices in the firm.

Keywords: Millennial, HR Engagement Practice, Technology Use, Working Behaviour, Motivation, Values

Introduction

Technology is no longer a background process but a strategic area. In the same vein, millennial are inclined towards taking advantage of automation in many areas, so they can trigger everyday activities such as downloading email attachments, processing invoices and customer documents, or checking data (Woldeamanuel & Nguyen, 2018). Automation increases efficiency, reduces human error, streamlines costs, and gives employees more time to solve more creative tasks. They are revolutionising many organisational activities from data analysis to risk analysis to customer management (Mosquera et al., 2018). Over the past years, it has become clear that teams of employees with diverse and diverse backgrounds make better business decisions. The number of millennial staff is constantly growing, and the company is working to increase the proportion of millennial generation in science, information technology, and engineering and mathematics jobs at the industry level (Weinbaum, Girven & Oberholtzer, 2016). Not surprisingly, nearly 60% of Millennial used chatbots as they are early adopters of the latest technological advances (Selamat & Windasari, 2021). While chatbots and artificial intelligence itself have existed in one form or another for decades, companies have only recently adopted them to use them in their interactions with customers as well as for increasing communications amongst employees (Selamat & Windasari, 2021). This may be another reason millennial are willing to use technology in the organisations. Hence, technology can be found in millennial's permanently connected messaging apps. Like e-commerce, millennial are more likely to use a service or purchase if they do not have to quit an app or website they are already using (Charlebois, Juhasz & Music, 2021). Therefore, the use of technology in HR engagement practices has been one of the major shifts amid generations where baby boomers have been inclined towards using technology, millennial are inclined towards making its best use and harnessing their full potential in the working environment (Ismail & Lu, 2014). Millennial generation is also able to embrace change and to communicate it with the firm for having better engagement of employees. The purpose of this research is to find how millennial mind-set has influenced the HR engagement practices with

the use of technology playing mediating role between the two. In this way, the following objectives have been formed:

- To assess the significance of millennial mind-set for efficient tech-savvy HR engagement practices
- To find the factors affecting millennial mind-set in the organisations
- To assess the relationship between millennial mind-set and HR engagement practices with the mediating role of use of technology
- To find the impact of millennial mind-set on the HR engagement practices with the mediating role of use of technology
- To provide recommendations regarding how millennial can be motivated for using technology as the way of enhancing HR engagement practices in the firm

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The average workplace does not fit in well with the future generation of employees which is known as tech-savvy and the app generation. This is apparent from a recent study into the impact of the arrival of a new generation in the workplace (Özçelik, 2015). It cannot be denied that there are many differences between the different generations in the workplace. The elderly have grown up without a computer and have had to teach themselves these digital skills, while the youngest generation grows up with a smartphone in hand and is constantly online (Anshari et al., 2017). Some articles even claim that the mind-sets of millennial have evolved and they are much more capable of multitasking (Holt, 2018; Puspanathan, Muthurajan & Singh, 2018). The common denominator of these articles is that there is a dichotomy in the workplace and that organisations have to adapt to modern standards, otherwise the latest generation cannot be fully productive. Working behaviour of millennial is characterised by their desire and ambition to move upward quickly and to keep learning in the organisation (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Millennial have working aspirations and attitudes define the culture of workplace in 21st century (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011).

H1: Working behaviour of millennial influence the HR engagement practices

The study of PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011) has found that millennial are motivated to work for the firms that are tech-savvy. Technology and its familiarity have been the biggest reason for millennial to work for the firms whereas the online working environment appeals to their desire and needs of flexibility and information access. It is one of the reasons that millennial have values such as flexibility in the working environment and they also choose such schedules in their lifestyles that show flexibility. Millennial are motivated to work quickly by using smart means (Downing, 2006). Millennial are inclined towards working with higher motivation if there is a strong future within the company (Setiyani et al., 2020). The study conducted by Barbosa (2021) found that millennial are motivated by collaborative team-based environment as well as challenging work above pay. In addition to this, millennial like to work in environments with a collaborative culture, agile management, and structures with full access to company information, and flexible work arrangements.

H2: Millennial motivation plays a significant role in influencing HR engagement practices

Millennial value knowledge more than earning a degree and half of this generation do not feel like they need to be in a classroom to learn (DeVaney, 2015). Millennials value the ability to personalise their learning experience and this means that their development programs must be available on multiple devices which can allow them to have online access to learning so they can learn how, where and whenever they want. Cultural values influence the beliefs of millennial generation which is significant for organisational development and workforce (Ismail & Lu, 2014). Ismail & Lu (2014) stated that values of millennial are shaped by the changes in the working environment. Millennial mind-set is shaped by the values they have in their lives (Shikhare, 2019)

H3: Values that shape millennial mind-set impact the engagement practices of the firm

In addition to the need to address the Millennials themselves, many companies still have out-dated training (Wailand, 2015). The content and methods are not relevant to any employee; moving to the new technology-based way of engaging employees is necessary. It can be a time consuming and tedious task, especially if the management does not even know where to start. Millennial are inclined towards more intrinsic motivational practices for influencing higher

engagement of the employees (Ismail & Lu, 2014). HR engagement practices amongst millennial are associated with the job positions that are best suited their skills in the firm (Ismail and Lu, 2014). Millennial are more focused on the use of technology for incorporating employee engagement practices (Meng, Reber & Rogers, 2017). Motivation of millennial influence how they incorporate HR engagement practices in the firm (Canedo et al., 2017).

H4: Millennial mind-set has a significant relationship with the HR management practices

The research also shows that there is a big difference between the expectations of young people and the reality they are confronted with in the workplace when it comes to technological tools (Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós & Juhász, 2016). They tend to see the smartphone as an essential tool to carry out their work. It does not matter, because when they start working, they will automatically notice that some tasks require other online tools (Ayres, Mechling & Sansosti, 2013). Getting used to technology actually works both ways; Millennials will also have to learn other skills in order to function optimally. Technology is transforming the way the information travel amid and within the networks of individuals (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014) Adoption of internet technologies by millennial depends on their confidence regarding evaluation, navigation and comprehension of internet resources (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014). Millennial have affinity with digital world as they have grown with smartphones, laptops, broadband and social media (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011).

H5: Use of technology plays a mediating role between HR management practices and millennial mind-set

Theoretical Framework – Roger's Diffusion of Technology Theory

Rogers has provided the theory of diffusion of innovation and stated that the use of innovation can be regarded as an appropriate course of action that is available for the people who are inclined towards diffusing innovation on various levels (Kapoor, Dwivedi & Williams, 2014). There are five levels that are explained by Roger when it comes to diffusion of innovation and these include innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. Innovators are the people who are open to try out new ideas and to take risks whereas early adopters are the one

who are inclined towards trying new technologies while establishing their utility in the community (Girardi & Chiagouris, 2018). The early majority are the ones who pave the way for the use of innovation in the mainstream society and are also the part of general population. Late majority are the people who are a part of general population but also follow early majority when adapting to innovation. The laggards are the ones who lag behind general population when adapting to innovative new ideas products. These are the people who are inclined towards reversing the risk and setting their own ways of doing things (Dutta & Omolayole, 2016). With regard to early adopters, the millennial are the most connected generation and they are regarded as early adopters because of their nature of using new technologies and also maintain their utility in the society. Millennials like to work in environments with a collaborative culture, agile management, and structures with full access to company information, and flexible work arrangements (Chopra & Bhilare, 2020). Hence, Roger's diffusion of technology helps in explaining the use of technology by millennial and where they stand amongst the adopters of technology.
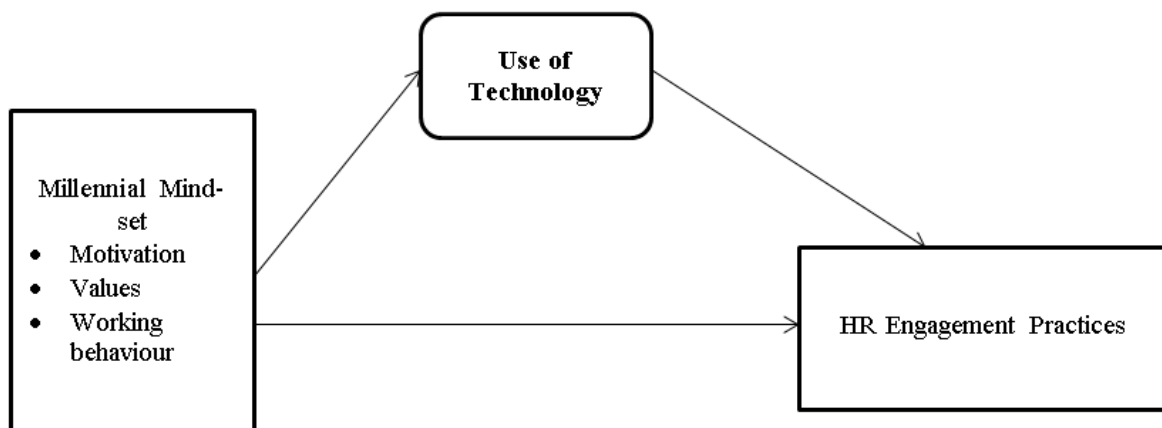
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2022)

The aforementioned conceptual framework shows that the millennial mind-set has been measured with the number of factors such as motivation, values and working behaviour. These are

therefore the independent variables of the study. The HR management practice is the dependent variable of the study whereas the use of technology plays the role of mediating factor.

Methodology

As per the purpose of the study, the current research has used the quantitative method. This method is associated with the statistical analysis where hypotheses are formed and are tested by using statistical tools (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Hence, in this study the variables have been quantified and measured by using specific scales for the purpose of setting the data. In this way, quantitative method has been the most essential method which allowed the researcher for achieving the research objectives. The choice of quantitative method has led towards choosing the deductive approach that allowed the data to be generalised from general to specific. It has been the most suitable method because the study required objective understanding of the phenomenon whereas the large amount of data was required for analysing the information more accurately. Hence, general information from various researches have been taken to form a questionnaire which later allowed using the information in the specific context of millennial mind-set, use of technology and HR engagement practices. In this way, deductive approach has allowed deducing the information from general to specific (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016). Furthermore, the data in this research has been collected from primary sources. The primary data is the one which is collected by directly approaching the respondents and it is regarded as first-hand information which is collected in the form of raw data. With regard to this, survey questionnaire has been used for collecting information in this research. One of the major reasons behind using primary method of data collection was that the research required understanding of the experiences of millennial generation with regard to how their use of technology and their mind-sets can influence HR engagement practices. Hence, the use of primary data allowed obtaining first-hand information from the respondents of the study and also to collect a large amount of data on the variables of the research.

Questionnaire has included a number of variables such as independent variables, dependent variables and mediating variables within which specific statements taken from different researches have been included. The 5 point Likert scale has been used for providing the options to the respondents and it included strongly agree (0), agree (1), neutral (2), disagree (3) and strongly disagree (4). The questionnaire was sent to the respondents by using online means and they sent back it to the researcher through an email. The sample size for the study has been 250 respondents who were chosen on the basis of convenience of the researcher and the respondents. The non-probability convenience sampling technique has been used by the researcher which Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz (2016) stated is the one which allows choosing the respondents who are conveniently available for data collection. After collecting the information, the researcher has made an excel sheet in which data was generated and average for each variable was found. Afterwards, the data was generated in SPSS tool in which the researcher conducted tests such as descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is oriented at exploring the statistical mean of the responses of participants as well as their standard deviation from the mean. It helped the researcher in gaining an initial perspective on the kind of responses obtained from the established questionnaire. As shown in the table below, the mean value of working behaviour is 1.516, similarly, mean values of motivation values, use of technology, and the dependent variable of HR engagement practices has been found to be 1.516, 1.705, 1.631, and 1.374 respectively. With standard deviation less than 1.0, it is indicative that participant's responses are statistically closer to the average response of the sample group. In turn, it indicates high consensus upon questions presented in the survey.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max

Working behaviour	250	1.516933	0.865875	0	3.866667
Motivation	250	1.516	0.917485	0	4
Values	250	1.705333	0.984855	0	4
Use of Technology	250	1.631667	0.992004	0	4
HR engagement practices	250	1.374	0.944825	0	3.75

Correlation Analysis

Statistical correlation analysis is conducted to test the association among the variables. Within this analysis, the value range is 0 to 1, which might be positive or negative.

As explicated in the table below, working behaviour was found to have a significant positive association with HR engagement practices with coefficient of 0.970. Coefficients of motivation, values, use of technology were also found to be highly associated HR engagement practices, with coefficients of 9.9380, 0.8260, and 9895 respectively.

Table 2. Correlation analysis

	Working behaviour	Motivation	Values	Use of technology	HR engagement practices
Working behaviour	1				
Motivation	0.979* 0	1			
Values	0.907* 0	0.957* 0	1		
Use of technology	0.969* 0	0.935* 0	0.832* 0	1	
HR engagement practices	0.970* 0	0.938* 0	0.826* 0	0.989* 0	1

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is conducted to decipher causal link between the independent and dependent variables. As shown in following table, all the four variables have been found to have a p-value of <0.05, indicative that working behaviour, motivation, values, and use of technology has a high significant relationship with HR engagement practices with negligible probability of such an association occurring at random.

Table 3. Regression analysis

HR engagement	Coefficient	Std.	Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Working Behaviour	0.20435	0.063	394	3.24	0.001	0.08018	0.328523
Motivation	0.40727	0.0678	996	6.00	0.000	0.2735329	0.541016
Values	-0.27159	0.032	739	-8.30	0.000	-0.336081	-0.20711
Use of Technology	0.64158	0.0341	396	18.79	0.000	0.5743377	0.708827
constant	-0.1371	0.0165	611	-8.28	0	-0.1697281	-0.10449

Number of obs = 250; R-square = 0.9855; Adj R-squared = 0.9853

Mediating Effect Models

Working Behaviour

Afterwards, regression model through maximum likelihood scenario was run to decipher the mediating impact of use of technology between the relationship of independent variables and

the HR engagement practices. The tables below depict statistical associations of use of technology with respect to its association with the set of independent variables and then with the dependent variable. It was found that use of technology is highly impactful with all the independent variables except for working behaviour.

Table 4. Mediating effect model with respect to working behaviour

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Use of Technology						
Working Behaviour	1.110804	0.017739	62.62	0.000	1.0760	1.145
Constant	-0.053	0.030	-1.72	0.085	-0.114	0.007
HR engagement Practices						
Use of Technology	0.765	0.033	22.8	0.000	0.699	0.831
Working Behaviour	0.209	0.038	5.44	0.000	0.133	0.284
Constant	-0.192	0.016	-11.63	0.000	-0.224	-0.159
Use of Technology	0.058	0.005			0.049	0.070
HR engagement Practices	0.016	0.001			0.013	0.019

*Significant at 10%; **Significant at 5%; ***Significant at 1%

Figure 2. Mediation effect with respect to working behavior
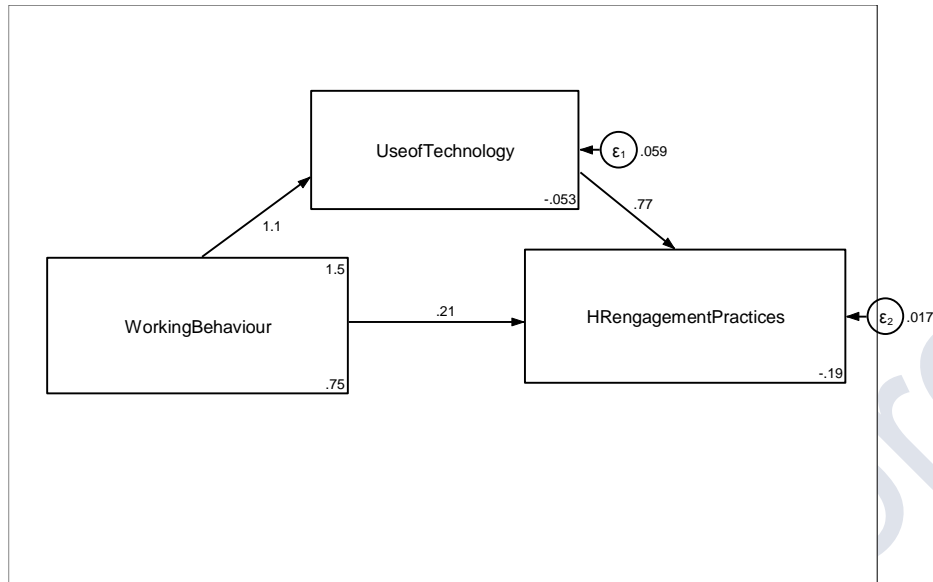
The figure above depicts the significance of mediating effect of use of technology between the relationship of working behaviour and HR management practices.

Table 5. Mediation effect with respect to motivation

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Structural						
Use of Technology						
Motivation	1.011	0.024	41.83	0.000	0.963	1.058
Constant	0.098	0.0423	2.3	0.022	0.014	0.182
HR engagement Practices						
Use of Technology	0.854	0.023	35.83	0.000	0.807	0.901
Motivation	0.101	0.025	3.95	0.000	0.051	0.152
Constant	-0.174	0.016	-10.69	0.000	-0.206	-0.142
Use of Technology	0.122	0.010			0.102	0.146
HR engagement Practices)	0.017	0.001			0.014	0.020

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]

Use of Technology						
Values	0.838	0.035	23.73	0	0.769	0.907
Constant	0.202	0.069	2.91	0.004	0.065	0.338
HR engagement Practices						
Use of Technology	0.936	0.015	59.75	0	0.905	0.966 -0.0231
Values	0.007	0.0159	0.5	0.62	1	0.038
Constant	-0.166	0.0179	-9.52	0	-0.200	-0.132
Use of Technology)	0.301	0.026			0.252	0.359
HR engagement Practices)	0.018	0.001			0.015	0.022

Motivation

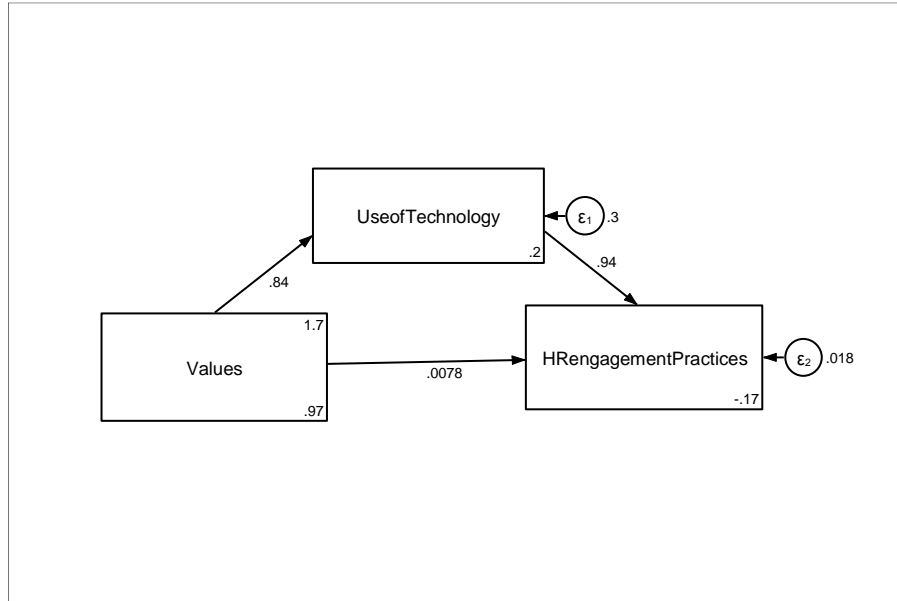The following schematic shows relation mediating effect of use of technology on HR practices.

Figure 3.Mediation effect in terms of motivation
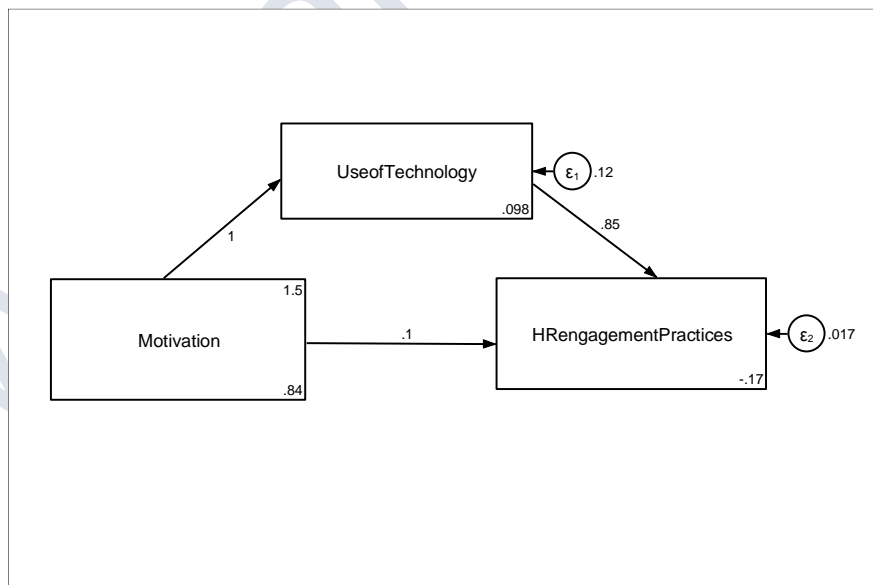
Values

The following schematic indicates the statistical significance of values on HR management and practices with mediating role of use of technology.

Figure 4. Mediation effect in terms of values

Discussion and Hypothesis Assessment Summary

S.No.	Hypotheses	Status
1.	*H1: Working behaviour of millennial influence the HR engagement practices*	Accepted
2.	*H2: Millennial motivation plays a significant role in influencing HR engagement practices*	Accepted
3.	*H3: Values that shape millennial mind-set impact the engagement practices of the firm*	Accepted
4.	*H4: Millennial mind-set has a significant relationship with the HR management practices*	Accepted

5.	*H5: Use of technology plays a mediating role between HR management practices and millennial mind-set*	Partially Accepted

Since the tests were run after extensive analysis of contemporary literature, the results obtained are mostly in line with the hypothesis proposed. Correlational analysis found high association of motivation, values, and working behaviour on HR engagement practices. However, in addition, it was also found that use of technology is a significantly impactful variable in mediating this relationship. Information moves faster than ever and millennial are particularly capable of consuming a lot quickly. However, the only drawback is that this information has to be packaged appropriately (Hernández, 2018). In addition to bite-sized chunks of information, millennial also want on-going training & development. While Johnson (2011) had propounded for a widespread encompassing approach towards inclusion of technology in HR practices, the current research indicates that purposeful and directed policy should be concomitant with the technology usage, in order to obtain desired effectiveness from the HR practices. This also includes motivation of employees through technology provision, technology-oriented training and development and through on-going training and coaching.

Millennial require intrinsic motivators more than the extrinsic ones (Winograd & Hais, 2014). For instance, training and development allows them to grow within the role they already have and prevents them from feeling like they are wasting their time and need to move on (Winograd & Hais, 2014). These skills also benefit the company, as Millennials are more than willing to put their new knowledge to use in their current business. With regard to the factor of technology used by millennial, compensation was one of the first aspects of HR to be automated, and nearly all firms now employ technology to automate payroll operations (Campione, 2014). The benefit of today's e-compensation systems extends far beyond the basic automation of payroll operations. In just two decades, the workforce has evolved from fax machines to sending files from their smartphones to the cloud. Millennials are not just familiar with digital innovation, they are also suspicious of older technologies and actively trying to identify where the next wave of disruption is coming from. In their spare time, they think about how to seamlessly pay for the delivery of their meals via their smartphone, and how to integrate digital interfaces more into their

favourite apps (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). This flexible and iterative approach is a major advantage in HR engagement practices incorporated by the millennial.

Technology is changing the way millennials communicate with their executives and colleagues. As millennials make up the majority of their workplaces, information will begin to spread incrementally within companies, such as in a network, rather than ideas flowing only from the top down (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Millennials see the tools they use for work as constantly evolving and have learned to adapt quickly once the pattern is broken. With this high degree of adaptability, they begin to reshape industries and create new market opportunities (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). This new generation of professionals is autonomous and eager to have an impact on the company's results. Since freedom and independence are keys to millennials' satisfaction, it is important to incorporate working environment that can influence their working behaviour effectively (Setiyani et al., 2020). It is therefore important to avoid micro management and instead look for tasks for which they can give take full responsibility. By empowering millennials to make their own decisions, they learn to assess risks, consider the importance of different options, and think about the consequences their decisions might have, gradually preparing them for leadership roles. In line the assertion of Kurniullah et al. (2020) and Arrowsmith and Parker (2013), hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 were also found to be correct, as motivation and values were found to have significant impact on HR engagement practices.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of motivation, values, and working behaviour of millennials on HR engagement practices along with the mediation effect of usage of technology. Through statistical analysis, it was found that all the three variables have significant impact on HR practices; hence the entire formed hypotheses were found to be correct. Conclusively, growing up in a world full of technology, millennials are probably more adaptable at using it in the HR engagement practices. They are also inclined towards taking advantage of their expertise by encouraging other employees to help and mentor more senior professionals in technology.

Millennial are able to take it to the next level and harness the full potential of new technology and feel comfortable with the change while communicate with their peers for better engagement in the firm. It has been recommended that the use of technology should be the main focus of the organisations today due to the nature of millennial of being tech-savvy. Hence, they should be further motivated to put their efforts into proposing more advanced HR engagement practices in the firm.

Future Implications

For future researchers, it has been recommended that future research should be focused on the qualitative side of the study where interviews should be conducted with the respondents. These interviews would allow gathering more in-depth information regarding the issue of use of technology and how it can influence HR engagement practices. Furthermore, the future researchers should focus on larger sample size for conducting surveys for obtaining more comprehensive information on the area of the study. It has also been recommended that future research should be based on different variables that can measure the variable of millennial mind-set. It would help in finding what other factors can influence millennial mind-set and how their use of technology being mediating factor can influence the HR engagement practices. Lastly, the researchers in future should conduct the study on other cohorts other than millennial. It would allow focusing on different group of people or employees whose use of technology can influence HR engagement practices.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Demographic Variables

Gender:

- 0 = Female
- 1 = Male
- 2 = Prefer not to say

Age:

- 0 = 25-30
- 1 = 31-35
- 2 = 36-40
- 3 = 41 and above

Employment status

- 0 = Full time
- 1 = Part time
- 2 - Casual

Variables of the Study

Variable/ Codes	0	1	2	3	4
Millennial Mind-set (Independent Variable)	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Working Behaviour					
Working behaviour of millennial is characterised by their desire and ambition to move upward quickly and					

to keep learning in the organisation (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011)					
Millennial have working aspirations and attitudes define the culture of workplace in 21st century (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011)					
Motivation					
Millennial are motivated to work quickly by using smart means (Downing, 2006)					
Millennial are inclined towards working with higher motivation if there is a strong future within the company (Setiyani et al., 2020)					
Millennial are motivated by collaborative team-based environment as well as challenging work above pay (Barbosa, 2021)					
Values					
Cultural values influence the beliefs of millennial generation which is significant for organisational development and workforce (Ismail and Lu, 2014)					
Values of millennial are shaped by the changes in the working environment (Ismail and Lu, 2014)					
Millennial mind-set is shaped by the values they have in their lives (Shikhare, 2019)					

HR engagement Practices (Dependent Variable)					
Millennial are inclined towards more intrinsic motivational practices for influencing higher engagement of the employees (Ismail and Lu, 2014)					
HR engagement practices amongst millennial are associated with the job positions that are best suited their skills in the firm (Ismail and Lu, 2014)					
Millennial are more focused on the use of technology for incorporating employee engagement practices (Meng, Reber and Rogers, 2017)					
Motivation of millennial influence how they incorporate HR engagement practices in the firm (Canedo et al., 2017)					
Use of Technology (Mediating Variable)					
The use of technology has been influencing the mind-set of the millennial (Serazio, 2015)					
Technology is transforming the way the information travel amid and within the networks of individuals (Gangadharbatla, Bright and Logan, 2014)					

Adoption of internet technologies by millennial depends on their confidence regarding evaluation, navigation and comprehension of internet resources (Gangadharbatla, Bright and Logan, 2014)					
Millennial have affinity with digital world as they have grown with smartphones, laptops, broadband and social media (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011)					