

Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement of Millennial Employees of the BPO Industry

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Abstract: This study was conducted to determine the significant influence of job satisfaction to employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region, Philippines. The study used a quantitative non-experimental descriptive-correlation methodology with a simple random sample technique among 405 BPO millennial employees as respondents. Mean was used to measure the level of job satisfaction and employee work engagement while linear regression analysis was used in determining what domain of job satisfaction significantly influence employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region. As a result, job satisfaction was in moderate level while employee work engagement is in high level. It was also discovered that job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in BPO organizations in the Davao Region have a low positive significant relationship. Furthermore, only the nature of work, promotion, communication, coworker, working conditions, and pay were found to be significant predictors of employee work engagement, whereas the others were not. Thus, to obtain a high degree of employee work engagement, it is recommended that job satisfaction be enhanced.

Keywords: job satisfaction, employee work engagement, BPO, millennials

I. The Background of the Problem

Nowadays, organizations from different industries face stiff competition brought about by globalization and advancement in information technology. Globalization opened the world to everybody making us more interdependent with one another. Advancement in information technology, on the other hand, brought us nearer to each other giving us a more convenient life. Everything, particularly doing business has become much easier that it can be done in just one click. One of the industries that is the offshoot of this advancement is the Business Processing Outsourcing or popularly known as BPO.

Ikerionwu, Gray and Foley (2013) defined BPO as a delegation of functions to another company to perform the job processes. Natividad (2015) particularly said that business process outsourcing is an industry that is growing rapidly and is one of the most lucrative industries in the Philippines that is now being dominated by the millennial workers (Pearl, 2014). Galang (2017) further said that in the past few years this generation has been a key that shaped the business operations and actually jumpstart their careers in the BPO industry.

In an article distributed by TIME Magazine, it stated that millennials are those conceived from 1980 to 2000 (Valeriano, 2016). Sicam (2016) asserted that they are also known as the Generation Y. However, the creation of the word "millennials" was attributed to authors William Strauss and Neil Howe (Valeriano, 2016). Further, Oakley (2016) established that in 20 years the millennial workers who are the largest generational population since the baby boomers will dominate the working force. Cullimore (2017) further found that by 2020, millennials will make up half of the workforce and that by 2030, they will form 75% of the workforce. In only a couple of years, the population of the millennials will be the only statistics that matter. Consequently, managers should make developments in dealing with the millennial working force to have a productive workers not only now but in the future (Oakley, 2016).

In the report of Nelson and Regoni (2016) from a survey of Gallup, it showed that work engagement of millennials is 29%, while 71% are either not engaged or actively engaged. In comparison to the lowest quartile of business units, only 7% of top quartile employees are more productive, 70% have fewer safety incidents, 41% have less absenteeism, 10% have better customer evaluations, and 21% are more profitable, according to the report.

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In 2014, US workers are only 31.5% engaged at work, the not engaged are 51% while the actively disengaged are 17.5%. What is more disturbing is the percentage of disengagement of the millennial workers. Data showed that they are the least engaged workforce at only 28.9% (Adkins, 2015). If you will look at the record of the composition of the working force in the United States you will find out that millennials comprised the largest era in the labour force. As indicated in the U.S. Census Bureau data thru its Pew Research Centre Analysis, more than 3 in 1 American workers are millennials (Fry, 2015).

Looking out in Asia, employee work engagement levels in Malaysia and Singapore is at 59%, each shows that their employees are among the least engaged among their Asian neighbours as reported in Aon's 2017 latest Trends in Global Employee Engagement. According to Lim (2016) millennials make up the largest generation in the Singaporean working force as taken from human resource consultancy Aon Hewitt report. While in Malaysian workforce, 40%-50% are millennials as stated in the 2012 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Malaysia ("The Millennials of Malaysia," 2017).

In the Philippines, a survey conducted by Gallup showed that Filipino employees who are engaged at work are only 29% (Teehankee, 2016). While, Harter and Mann (2016) said that only 13% of employees working for an organization worldwide are engaged. This only means that the Philippines is not excused with this crisis.

Clearly, millennials comprise the largest part of the working force worldwide including the Philippines. This generation will dominate the working force in the nearest future. It is paramount that organizations understand this generation in the workplace to better handle them. One of the most important aspects to understand is their workplace engagement because given the data of the employee engagement percentages of the millennials around the world, there is a surprisingly low engagement rates when in fact, research shows that employee work engagement contributes to organizational success (Pidor, 2016)

Consequently, it is essential to comprehend the engagement of this generation to the work they have. Similarly, companies must investigate the effects of job satisfaction to employee work engagement. Although there have been studies that examine into the relationship between employee work engagement and job satisfaction, the researcher has yet to find one that looks into the relationship between these variables in BPO companies in the Davao Region.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the relationship between job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region. Specifically, this sought:

1. To determine the level of job satisfaction of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region in terms of:
 - 1.1 Pay;
 - 1.2 Promotion;
 - 1.3 Supervision;
 - 1.4 Fringe benefits;
 - 1.5 Contingent rewards;
 - 1.6 Operating conditions;
 - 1.7 Co-workers;
 - 1.8 Nature of work; and
 - 1.9 Communication?
2. To determine the level of employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region in terms of:
 - 2.1 Vigor;
 - 2.2 Dedication; and
 - 2.3 Absorption?
3. To determine the significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.
4. To determine the significant influence of job satisfaction to employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.
5. To determine what domain in the job satisfaction significantly influence employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.
2. Job satisfaction does not influence the employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.
3. None of the domains in the job satisfaction significantly influence employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.

II. Theoretical Framework

Drawing on Homans' (1958) Social Exchange Theory, it is proposed that employee satisfaction will build a sense of justice and value, leading to favourable attitudinal and behavioral results, such as a high level of engagement (Salleh, & Memon, 2015). Iqbal, Shabbir, Zameer, Khan & Sandhu (2017) further suggest that Social Exchange Theory provides a theoretical basis to understand the reasons about the level of employees' engagement in their job. In relation to job satisfaction and employee work engagement, Basit, & Arshad (2016) argued that job satisfaction is a form of reward as perceived by the employees that give them well-being and happiness in return, employees feel that they need to pay it back with their investment of cognitive, emotional and physical energies in job. Hence, an employee who feel rewarded in the form of satisfaction will reciprocate such feeling. Thus, job satisfaction can be reciprocated with employee work engagement. The study that support this proposition is the study of Thompkins (2015) which states that employee work engagement is influenced by the performance of the employee, commitment of the employee, identification of the employee, loyalty of the employee and satisfaction of the employee. Ali and Farooqi (2014) also said job satisfaction and employee work engagement have a positive relationship. Additionally, Garg and Kumar (2012) stated that job satisfaction is a driver of employee work engagement. Thus, an engaged employee is a result of a satisfied employee.

Conceptual Framework

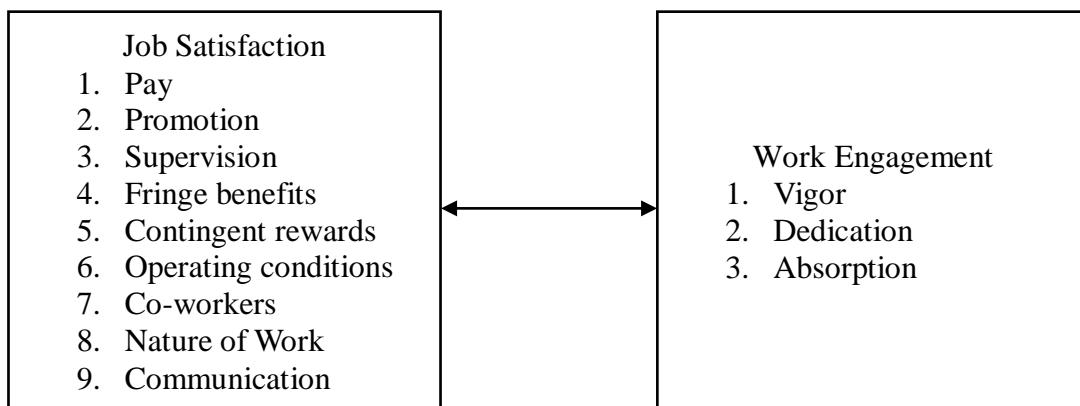


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The figure shows the relationship of Job Satisfaction and Employee Work Engagement. The independent variable is job satisfaction which according to Spector (1994) has the following indicators: Pay refers to satisfaction with pay and pay raises; promotion refers to satisfaction with promotion opportunities; supervision refers to satisfaction with the immediate supervisor; fringe benefit refers to satisfaction with the monetary and nonmonetary fringe benefits; contingent rewards refers to satisfaction with appreciation, recognition and rewards for good work; operating procedures refers to satisfaction with operating policies and procedures; coworkers refers to satisfaction with people you work with; nature of work refers to satisfaction with job tasks themselves; and communication refers to satisfaction with communication within the organization.

While the dependent variable is employee work engagement which according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) has the following indicators: vigor refers to being resilient, energetic, persistent and willing to give extra effort in doing once work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); dedication refers to when one feels inspired and proud of his/her work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); and absorption refers to being engrossed or immersed in anything that a person is doing and will have a hard time letting go from it (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Research Design

A quantitative non-experimental correlational design was used in this research. When it was necessary to determine the existence, strength, and direction of relationships between two variables, this method was applied (Holton and Burnett, 2005). In this study, it is used to determine job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region through survey questionnaires and appropriate statistical treatment.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Davao Region where the BPO companies are located, particularly, Davao City, Tagum City, and Digos City. Davao Region, as shown in Figure 2, is designated as Region XI is also popularly known as Southern Mindanao. The region is particularly located in Mindanao's southeastern portion. The provinces that compose the region are Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur and Compostela Valley ("Region 11 Davao Region," n.d.). Davao City, and Digos City are all part of Davao del Sur while Tagum City is part of Davao del Norte.

Davao City, with 224,000 hectares, is one of the world's largest cities in terms of land area. The city is renowned as Mindanao's "Crown Jewel" (n.d., "About Davao City, Davao del Sur, Philippines"). Furthermore, the city is a modern metropolis that, true to its tagline "Davao, life is here," is full of life and color where you may enjoy life thanks to its people's vivid personalities, fun nightlife, and gorgeous scenery.

The city of Digos, a second-class city and the capital of Davao del Sur, is located on the western shores of the Davao Gulf and the southern foothills of Mount Apo, the Philippines' tallest mountain. Digos is situated between Davao City and General Santos City, two major cities in the Philippines. It is famed for its sweet, juicy 'carabao variety mango,' which is marketed locally and exported internationally, earning it the moniker of the Philippines' Mango Capital City. It is also known as The South's Gate City ("Digos," n.d.).



Tagum City is a 1st class city and capital of the province of Davao del Norte. It has a population of 259,444 people, according to the 2015 census. It is Mindanao's most populous component city. It is one of the Philippines' most livable cities, and it was a finalist for the title of Most Child Friendly City in the Philippines. The City of Tagum ranked third on the Overall Competitive Component Cities in the Philippines, second on Infrastructure, fourth on Resiliency, seventeenth on Economic Dynamism, and twenty-fourth on Government Efficiency in the recently released 2017 Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI) ("Tagum," n.d.).

Population and Sample

The respondents of the study were Millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region (Region XI) particularly in Davao City, Tagum City, and Digos City. Millennial employees were chosen as target respondents because according to Cullimore (2017) by 2020, millennials will make up half of the workforce and that by 2030, they

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will form 75% of the workforce. In only a couple of years, the population of the millennials will be the only statistics that matter.

At 5% level of significance, the maximum number of estimated samples is 400, based on the Slovins' Formula. However, the researcher was able to exceed the estimated sample and surveyed 405 respondents. In particular, the respondents are those employees who are born from 1980 to 2000 or who are 18 to 37 years old. In an article by Time magazine, it indicated that those conceived from 1980 to 2000 are considered as millennials (Valeriano, 2016). Sicam (2016) asserted that they are by and large known as the Generation Y. Additionally, the respondents must be working in the company for at least 1 year.

Furthermore, the study will employ purposive sampling to make sure that the selected sample is based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2017). With this sampling technique, it is probable that recruitment of targeted respondents' characteristics is similar which is related to the objectives of the study (Yang & Banamah, 2014). Hence, the study will only survey respondents who are working in the BPO companies stated in the research locale.

Research Instrument

The study used two sets of survey questionnaires to gather data for job satisfaction and employee work engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region. The first questionnaire used was the Job Satisfaction Survey of Paul E. Spector which is a 36-item, nine facet scale. The instrument was piloted and has an average value of 0.70 for internal consistency. The second questionnaire used was the 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement questionnaire (UWES-17) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) to measure work engagement. The UWES was used to measure the three related aspects of work engagement: vigor (six questions), dedication (five questions), and absorption (six questions). This questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha with a value of 0.81.

The following scales were used to determine the job satisfaction:

Scale	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	This means that the job satisfaction is outstanding.
3.41-4.20	High	This means that the job satisfaction is very satisfactory.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	This means that the job satisfaction is satisfactory.
1.81 - 2.60	Low	This means that the job satisfaction is poor.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	This means that the job satisfaction is very poor.

The following scales were used to determine the employee work engagement.

Scale	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	This means that the employee work engagement is outstanding.
3.41-4.20	High	This means that the employee work engagement is very satisfactory.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	This means that the employee work engagement is satisfactory.

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1.81 - 2.60	Low	This means that the employee work engagement is poor.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	This means that the employee work engagement is very poor.

III. Data Collection

In collecting data, the researchers first took permission to conduct the survey question and a letter was sent to the BPO Companies in Davao Region. After the researchers gained the permission, they started collecting the data by leaving to the human resource personnel the questionnaires to allow their millennial employees respond to the survey. Then retrieving all the questionnaires after all the respondents have answered the questionnaires was taken after the management communicated the researchers that all questionnaires were done rated. And lastly, the researchers checked, tabulated, and statistically processed the data that they collected.

IV. Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools were used to analyze the data:

Weighted mean. This was used to determine the level of job satisfaction in term of pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work and communication. This was also used to determine the level of employee work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Pearson-r. This was used to determine the significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee work engagement.

Stepwise Method of Multiple Regression. This was used to determine which domain in the job satisfaction significantly influence employee work engagement.

V. Results and Discussion

The following were the results of this study:

The Level of Job Satisfaction

Off all the nine indicators, four are in high level which are pay ($x=3.54$; $S.D.=0.60$); promotion ($x=3.50$; $S.D.=0.62$); co-workers ($x=3.60$; $S.D.=0.66$); and nature of work ($x=3.60$; $S.D.=0.60$). While all the other five indicators are in moderate level which are supervision ($x=3.27$; $S.D.=0.64$); fringe benefits ($x=3.13$; $S.D.=0.65$); contingent rewards ($x=3.20$; $S.D.=0.69$); operating conditions ($x=2.92$; $S.D.=0.89$); and communication ($x=3.10$; $S.D.=0.80$). These results lead to a moderate level of job satisfaction ($x=3.32$; $S.D.=0.49$) of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.

The result is congruent with the survey of Society of Human Resource Management (2016) which states that one of the two top factors that would contribute to the job satisfaction among millennial employees is pay. However, this is inconsistent with the findings of the study of DeLung (2015) which stated that millennials view compensation as a factor only next to personal and professional advancement potential and free time. Pfau (2016) stated that millennials of about 76% of the respondents studied were satisfied with their promotion opportunities. Gordi (2006) made mention that employees in a call center are satisfied with the promotion of the company. Additionally, Pagan (2012) said that how a millennial perceived his or her supervisor can affect his or her job satisfaction. Moreover, a study of Gordi (2006) found out that rewards make call center agents satisfied. Maier, and Chi (2008) stated that to thrive and fully utilize millennials rules and regulations must be designed to fit their unique characteristic. Also, in terms of co-worker, the study of Giang (2013) found out that millennials love their job because they perceived that the people they work with are the best people. Tews, Michel, Xu, and Drost (2015) stated that millennials would prefer fun working environment overcompensation. Furthermore, the respondents are moderately satisfied in terms of organizational communication. Gordi (2006) also said that call center agents are satisfied with the communication in the organization.

Meanwhile, the overall mean of job satisfaction shows a moderate mean of 3.32. This indicates that the satisfaction of the respondents to their job is seldom evident as perceived by millennial employees of bpo companies in

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Davao Region. This is in parallel with study of McCafferty which found out that millennials are satisfied at their work and the job that they do.

Table 1. The Level of Job Satisfaction of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region

Indicators	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
Pay	3.5407	.59692	High
Promotion	3.4975	.62115	High
Supervision	3.2710	.63509	Moderate
Fringe Benefits	3.1309	.65214	Moderate
Contingent Rewards	3.1969	.68665	Moderate
Operating Conditions	2.9185	.88886	Moderate
Co-Workers	3.6019	.65719	High
Nature of Work	3.5796	.59545	High
Communication	3.1012	.80045	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.3154	.48932	Moderate

The Level of Employee Work Engagement

All the three indicators employee work engagement are in high levels. Vigor ($x=3.62$; $S.D.=0.77$); Dedication ($x=3.81$; $S.D.=0.85$); and Absorption ($x=3.57$; $S.D.=0.82$). These results lead to high level of employee work engagement ($x=3.67$; $S.D.=0.75$) of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region.

This result corresponds with the study of Hlongwane, and Ledimo, (2015) where they found out that there is high level of vigor among millennial employees. This further indicates that the drivers make a millennial employee want to go to job, energetic and vigorous are favorable. The result is also consistent with the study of Shah (2017) where dedication subscale scored higher compared to vigor and absorption among millennials. Consequently, based on the result of this study, dedication scored the highest category mean which is 3.81 compared to 3.57 for absorption and 3.62 for vigor. This result is aligned with the study of Shah (2017) which showed that millennials are absorbed with their job.

In general, the overall mean of employee engagement shows a high mean of 3.67. This indicates that engagement at work is oftentimes evident among millennial employees of BPO companies in Davao Region. The score was computed from mean scores of all the indicators which are 3.62 or high for vigor, 3.81 or high for dedication and 3.57 or high for absorption. The result is consistent with the study of Shah (2017) which showed high level of employee engagement among millennial employees. However, this result negates the survey conducted by Gallup reported by Rigoni and Nelson (2016) who found out that there are only few millennials who are engaged at work. Statistically, the report revealed that there is only 29% engagement among millennials. Hence, the result of the study substantiates the unique characteristics of millennial employees in terms of work engagement (Shah, 2017).

Table 2. The Level of Employee Work Engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region

Indicators	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
Vigor	3.6239	.76561	High
Dedication	3.8140	.85260	High
Absorption	3.5741	.82170	High
Overall Mean	3.6706	.75144	High

The Significant Relationship Between

Job Satisfaction and Employee Work Engagement

As shown in the table above, job satisfaction has a significant low positive correlation ($r\text{-value}=0.370$; $p<0.000$) to employee work engagement based on the rejection of the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance

This finding is consistent with Ali and Farooqi's (2014) study, which discovered a positive link between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Thompkins (2015) also discovered that employee engagement is influenced by employee identification, employee commitment, employee loyalty, employee performance and employee satisfaction. Similarly, Abraham (2012) found out that enhancement of employee engagement can be possible with satisfied employees and stressed that only satisfied employees are engaged employees.

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Table 3. The Significant Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Work Engagement of millennial

Employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Job Satisfaction	.370	.000	Reject the Hypothesis
Work Engagement			

$\alpha = 0.05$

The Significant Influence of the domains of

Job Satisfaction to Employee Work Engagement

The result below shows that 42.8% ($R^2 = .428$) of the variability of employee work engagement is influenced by the predictors that were included in the model thru the employment of stepwise method of multiple regression. Of all the predictors, the highest influence to the dependent variable is nature of work which is 3.89% ($Beta = .389$). Moreover, all the predictor variables significantly influence ($p-value < 0.05$) employee work engagement.

Thus, the following working model is generated based on the statistical results:

$$\text{Employee Work Engagement} = .353 + .490(\text{nature of work}) + .236(\text{promotion}) - .159(\text{communication}) + .261(\text{co-worker}) - .146(\text{operating conditions}) + .201(\text{pay})$$

This indicates that a unit increase in nature of work will also increase the level of employee work engagement by .490. A unit increase in promotion will increase the level of employee work engagement by .236. A unit increase in communication will decrease the level of employee work engagement by .159. A unit increase in co-worker will increase the level of employee work engagement by .261. A unit increase in operating conditions will decrease the level of employee work engagement by .146. And a unit increase in pay will increase the level of employee work engagement by .201.

As can be seen, job satisfaction has significant influence to employee work engagement. The regression model produced ($R^2 = .137$), $t = 7.99$, $p < 0.05$. This is in rejection of the hypothesis that job satisfaction does not significantly influence how employees are engaged to their work. This consistent with the study of Garg and Kumar (2012) which found out that job satisfaction is an important factor of employee engagement.

Table 4. The Significant Influence of the domains of Job Satisfaction to Employee Work Engagement of millennial employees in the BPO companies in Davao Region

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.353	.216		1.636	.103
Nature of Work	.490	.060	.389	8.176	.000
Promotion	.236	.062	.195	3.837	.000
Communication	-.159	.047	-.169	-3.378	.001
Co-Worker	.261	.055	.228	4.724	.000
Operating Conditions	-.146	.042	-.172	-3.498	.001
Pay	.201	.063	.160	3.218	.001
Job Satisfaction					.000

Dependent Variable Work Engagement

$R^2 = .428$

$\alpha = 0.05$

VI. Conclusion

The millennial employees of BPO companies in Davao Region shows a moderate level of job satisfaction. However, in terms of level of employee engagement, millennial employees of BPO companies in Davao Region show a high work engagement resulting from the high ratings in vigor, dedication, and absorption. Moreover, job satisfaction is statistically significant and positively correlated to employee engagement. It is also shown that there five domains of job satisfaction can significantly influence employee work engagement which are nature of work, promotion,

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communication, co-worker, operating conditions, pay and job satisfaction. Generally, the result also shows that job satisfaction significantly influences employee work engagement.

The working model is **Employee Work Engagement** = $.353 + .490(\text{nature of work}) + .236(\text{promotion}) - .159(\text{communication}) + .261(\text{co-worker}) - .146(\text{operating conditions}) + .201(\text{pay})$

VII. Recommendation

BPO companies in Davao Region are recommended, to craft policies that would advance the welfare of the millennial employees, hence, making them productive throughout their stay with the organization. Job satisfaction only garnered a moderate level rating which implies that BPO companies may do more to make their millennial employees' satisfaction very high. With this, BPO companies can improve how they give fringe benefits, rethink their contingent rewards such as constant appreciation events for the employees, improve operating conditions by giving employees freedom to participate and minimize rigid work process. Additionally, BPO companies must improve organizational communication to keep their employees well-informed. Considering job satisfaction and employee work engagement have a significant relationship, this implies that the two variables are linked. Finally, job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee work engagement, indicating that job satisfaction can accurately predict employee work engagement. Consequently, BPO companies in Davao Region must improve the working conditions and communications in their organization since the results show that it can decrease the level of employee work engagement.

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