

Is Public Sector More Attractive than Private Sector for Albanian Millennial Employees?

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Abstract

Millennials generation is very discussed today as they seem to be different from elder generations. They have been judged about the way they think, act, and expect things from others, but despite that, it is very important to know their characteristics and expectations, in order to get in with them in every relation. Millennials as employees are the challenge for every employer today, as they have to react according to millennials' expectations, while managing the three current generations simultaneously in the workplace. This paper presents discussion of some of the most important activities that public sector in Albania is engaged to get in with millennials' expectations and attract them. Internship programs, participation in work fairs, specific meetings with students, financing studies, trainings, use of social networks are some of the activities that public sector is mostly using to help on this, but are they attractive enough to Albanian millennials?

Keywords: millennials, public sector, banking sector, expectations, Albania

Introduction

Millennials are today one of the most discussed generations in different areas of life. Although there is no precise timeframes of each generation, demographers and market researchers refer more or less to the same years. Millennial is the generation born between years 1982 to roughly 2005 (Strauss & Howe, 2007). Elder generations are discussing how to treat them in families, schools, society, institutions and in every relation they might have with this new generation. In order to know how to do this, it is of great importance to know at first their characteristics. Different researches have been conducted for this purpose, to find out their characteristics, expectations, motivators, and differences from the previous generations. In the Table 1 below, there are shown some of the characteristics, potential conflicts and motivators of millennials, according to Allan Schwyer, 2015.

Table1. Characteristics, potential conflicts and prime motivators of Millennials

Characteristics (stereotypes)	Potential Conflicts	Prime Motivators
Raised by "helicopter parents"	Strong sense of entitlement	Competitive pay
Told can be whatever they want	Where, how, when work is done is unimportant, results count	Coaching
Continuous (mostly) positive feedback and recognition	Equality should trump hierarchy	Regular, detailed feedback & recognition (public)
Formed by 9/11, digital & connected world, tecnology, 24/7	Why? Why? Why? Want explanations, don't want to be told what to do without reasons	Personal Development
Formed by student debt, Great Recession	Impatience (open to and may even prefer constant change	Purposeful work
Career oriented, hard work, achivement, but with balance	Where leaders are unfair, condescending and/or inconsistent	Giving back to community
Seeks recognition, detailed feedback		Experiences (travel, assignments)

Community orientation (global & local)		Fun
Work/life blending		Free flowing, digital & mobile information
		Egalitarianism

Sometimes they are judged, as lazy, individualistic, non-loyal, but anyone needs to know that millennials are now an important part of the society and workforce, and must be treated with all the pros and cons that elder generation might think of them. According to Fry (2018), referring to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, millennials are the largest generation in USA labor force. It is challenging for every employer to make profitable the diversity created by the three different generations that are currently part of the workforce. Millennials put the greatest importance on individualistic aspects of a job, as Eddy S. W. Ng. et al (2010) found out, millennials have realistic expectations of their first job and salary but they look for rapid advancement and the development of new skills, while ensuring also a meaningful and satisfying life outside of work. In the study conducted by Deloitte in 2018, diversity and flexibility were found to be key factors to loyalty. Good pay and positive cultures were most likely to attract millennials but diversity/inclusion and flexibility were important keys to keep them happy. All the current literature and findings must be taken in consideration when deciding to welcome them in the organization.

Despite the fact that millennials are a part of the working power now, the great part of research comes from the USA. In Albanian, it was hard to find any publication with "native" characteristics of this generation. Although most of foreign knowledge might be valid for millennials in other countries, there are some differences coming from culture, history and economic development that have to be understood. A slight difference in the interval of years when Albanian millennials were born is presumed here, and the focus of this paper will be mostly in students, who have just entered or will be soon part of the workforce. One of the big choices they make is between employing sectors a.c.a. public and private. Broadly based on literature Curry C. (2017) and Snowden A. (2016), where it comes out that millennials are (a) digital natives and evolve with technology over time, and (b) have demand for competitive salaries, Mitllari & Kasimati (2018a) found out for sample of 71 young graduates and undergraduates from Tirana University in Albania, that they are of the belief that their expectations can be better met within the private sector. The most evaluated factors (in a Likert scale of 5) that are used by them in making the decision about the sector to be employed, are in a decreasing line: promotion, financial rewards, latest technology, trainings, recognition from supervisor, flexible working hours, and teamwork. When asked to choose among a list of reasons for which they would leave an organization, they reported that they would move for unmet expectations in salary rise 35% of them, in work and life balance 29% of them, in lack of promotion 25% of them, inappropriate or lack of training 9% of them; 84% of the respondents believe the private sector allows them meet these expectations better than the public one. These findings go against the general belief that finding a job in public administration is the dream of everyone in this country

Public sector in Albania consists in independent institutions, Central Government and Local Government institutions. The total number of public sector employees, according INSTAT (Institute of Statistics in Albania), in 2017 was 164'339. In the last 18 years, the number has decreased by 14% (it was 191,166 in year 2000), but has slightly increased from 2014 to 2017. Recruitment processes for the institutions of the Central Government institutions are organized by Department of Public Administration (DoPA), which covers this function of HR in a centralized way. The other two categories of institutions cover this function individually. Every new administration focuses on newcomers as a way of materializing their reforms in Albania. More and more millennials find themselves welcomed in the public administration in terms of work places. But is this administration considering the millennials expectations, other than offering placement? Some activities of the public administration and the intention to attract millennials are discussed in the following paragraph. .

Methodology

A literature review was conducted to understand some of the characteristics of millennials, their work expectations and challenges that employers are facing with the newest generation in the workforce. Primary information was gathered through a structured search in the official website and social media of DoPA in autumn 2018. Information was then compared with that for the private sector (considering banking sector as one of the most consolidated employment sectors in Albania) that was previously gathered and discussed by the authors in another paper. Discussion focuses on understanding which sector seem to be more attractive for young employees.

Discussion of findings

Internship programs

Many internship programs for Public administration are publicly advertised recently. In the official website of DoPA, there is a "National Program of Work Internship", aiming to train young people interested to enter in the civil service, and keep the bests of them. In a specific website for this program, all the needed information about age (21-26 years old), education (bachelor's degree), duration time (3 months), application forms, and a list of all public institutions involved in the program are published. Some private institutions collaborate in this program, too. This is an unpaid program, but it counts as work experience in future employment applications in the sector. The last announcement for internship program in the website was at the beginning of the year 2017, but the application link was not valid at the moment of visiting. Meanwhile, the private banking sector in Albania offers internship programs too. In a sample of 63% of private banks operating in Albania, 80% of them offer internship programs and this is made known through their web page (Mittlari&Kasimati 2018b). It is not possible to make comparisons of number of people enrolled in these internship programs in both sectors, as neither has published reliable statistics on this. As in the DoPA's Monthly Bulletin of July 2018 "from 600 young people participating in the program, one year employment contract was given to the best 200 of them". The period of the participation was not specified. The number though, is encouraging for young people, but the lack of reliable statistics makes not possible a chances' evaluation. It comes out from information made public that the private banking system is more attracting working students while the public administration attracts young people only after graduation.

Participation in work and study fairs

With the Government's initiative, some working fairs are organized. DoPA has participated in all of them. But the most used practice is to go to public universities to promote job opportunities in civil service and invite students to apply for them after graduation. Meanwhile, most of the banks participating almost every year in work fairs and work & study fairs organized by the Government, municipalities and Tirana Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and mostly in fairs organized by the Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana or other private universities (Mittlari&Kasimati 2018b). DoPA keeps the recruiting activities separated by not participating in the same activities with the private sector. The one to one relation with universities, especially the public ones, seems to be an easier organized kind of activity for DoPa than for private organizations. No information about participating in virtual fairs was found in public sector; meantime for some of the banks it is a new trend.

Announcing a job vacancy in social network

It is obvious that with the massive usage of it, social media is a way of getting more information than years before. In year 2013, 62% of HR professionals reported to use job boards and corporate websites to recruit millennials, 9% LinkedIn, 3% Facebook, and 1% Twitter (Schawbel 2013). DoPA is currently using Facebook and Twitter to promote and announce its activities. Comparing to banks' profile, that have a specific menu for announcing job vacancies and activities related to employment, DoPA's profile is dedicated to human resources field, with a lot of information and video tutorial published to attract young people. From a structured search in DoPA's Facebook, there were found a lot of different announcements for job vacancies, trainings, activities organized by DoPA, and videos to promote and attract young people. Comparing to banking sector where all the banks in the sample were using LinkedIn and Facebook for their job announcement, DoPA is not using LinkedIn. In the official website and Facebook profile of DoPA are also announced rotation and promotion places. This doesn't happen in banking sector; rotation or promotion possibilities are not published in their website, they usually are placed in intranet for internal employees. This difference can be explained by the fact that DoPA serves as a page where employees of different public institutions can be informed about promotion, rotation or training possibilities in the Public Administration.

Financing studies

Albanian Government supports education by financing different categories of students based on merit or need. This comes indistinctive of the future employment of the graduates. A lot of information can be found in different sources for those interested. Private sector is entering the financing process only for those students that considers potential employees. Only 13% of them (two banks) report to support employees' education (one for bachelor's, the other for master's degree level), and only one of them has been doing this for almost 11 years now in joint efforts with one university in Albania. It can be the only case, or one of the few cases in the country if there are others in other industries, when one business and one

university offer integrated theoretical and practical studies in business' profile, with employment opportunity at the end (Mitllari, Kasimati 2018b).

Transparency in recruitment, opportunity to develop and other benefits

Recruitment process. Every job vacancy in Administration of State is announced in DoPA official website and Facebook, and there is full information about the procedures and phases, information needed for tests and interviews, and some advices for people to follow. These are shown in written forms and lately in video tutorials. Comparing to banking sector, DoPA announces even the lists of applicants and appointments, which can be seen in two perspectives, as transparency in one side but in the other side as lack of privacy for the applicant. Applications for job vacancies in DoPA for almost 4 years now can be done only online, and all documents are submitted there, no need to mail documents as before. This is an attractive way for millennials who find it easy to use technology and online services for everything in life. DoPA is promoting this new way of application and is sharing it with other countries civil service in the Balkan region. For private banks this is not new, as some of them have been using online application or/and application by email for years now. In the DoPA's Annual Report for year 2017, it is shown a raise in the number of applicants per job vacancies published; from 13 applicants for one position in year 2016 to 18 in the year 2017. This not only shows a great interest for this sector, but is a good advertisement at the same time. Compared to banking sector, where only 25% of them give information about phases of the recruitment process, DoPA seems to be more transparent and the information given is more complete.

Career development and trainings. As mentioned above, DoPA promotes vacancies within institutions by inviting the inside employees to apply and be the first to be considered. Vacancies and from inside promotion procedures in both written and video tutorial forms are published and are very similar with the advertising for the new entries.

Trainings possibilities and statistics about previous training are published in website and Facebook profile of DoPA, inviting civil employees to apply for. Most of the trainings are organized by the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), a public institution, responsible to train professionally civil employees and other individuals who are not part of civil service but meet the required criteria; and Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), an international organization entrusted with the mission of boosting regional cooperation in the field of public administration in the Western Balkans. Public sector has been offering even some specific internship programs for its civil servants in European countries, financed by the European Union.

Private sector is not so explicit about career and training possibilities and respective statistics. Only 30% of them all (50% of the sample) have published information about promotion and training, and related statistics in their web pages; in some cases information is very generic. Number of training hours could be found in public as well as in some of the banks, but number of people promoted within each sector could not be deducted. These statistics could help millennials pre-calculate their possibilities for development in each sector.

Rewards/ benefits.

There cannot be found information on rewards and benefits published in DoPA's website. Information about wages for each category of civil service can be accessed in internet, but it takes some careful exploration, and we can say that in general, information about remuneration in public service is not shown in an attractive and informative form as millennial would like to have it. In banking sector, the situation is quite the same; only one bank has listed some of the rewards/benefits employee can have while working there. In a few cases, some scarce information about monetary reward and bonuses, and general criteria for gaining them could be found. Although the information is scarce, it seems that banks are more aware of promoting them as a way to attract millennials. Referring only to financial rewards, ranked the first factor for which young undergraduates/graduates would leave their employer in case of unmet expectations, private sector is way better positioned. According to INSTAT, average pay in financial and insurance industry for year 2017 was 103,641 ALL, and for public sector 59,921 ALL.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Public sector is an important sector of employment in Albania, but it is exposed today to changes in the expectations of the workforce, especially from the Millennials generation. Through a review conducted in the official website and Facebook of DoPA, it can be found that public sector is engaged in some activities that help it attract millennials. In the perspective of a millennial, it was a bit difficult to find some information in a fast and structured manner in DoPA's official website. In

recruitment process, information about places and criteria in public sector is more transparent and abundant than in private banking sector. As the banking sector, it is offering also financing studies, internship programs, and trainings, but why do many young people in Albania see private sector as the one which can better meet their needs? There is possible for the authors to make some speculation between myth and reality, but deeper research is needed in order to give an answer to that question.

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