Segmentation and Profiling of Infrastructure Millennial Workers in Shopping Goods Market in Region 12, Philippines

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Abstract

Millennials are branded as the most powerful consumer segment. They can even spend their entire income to purchase goods or experiences. This changed when COVID-19 hammered the world. The enthusiastic shoppers became indifferent due to uncertainties. As consumers, including the most powerful consumer segment stopped behaving the way they used to, industries around the world continue to struggle, most especially non-essential retail sectors. This study aimed to provide retailers of shopping goods information about Millennials, their spending practices, the values they have, their attitude towards pandemic protocols, and their current lifestyle. Furthermore, as this group is highly heterogeneous, this study also provided retailers newly formed segments because of COVID-19. This study is a descriptive-correlational study. The data were gathered using a hybrid survey questionnaire distributed to infrastructure Millennial workers in Region 12. The main statistical tool used was hierarchical cluster analysis. The study concluded that there are three segments: The Balanced Workers, The Independent and Efficient Workers, and The Confident Workers. These segments have different characteristics in terms of spending, values, attitude, and lifestyles. It is recommended that shopping good retailers and marketing practitioners should adjust their marketing plans and strategies to address such changes in the buying behavior.

Keywords: millennials, shopping goods, market segmentation, work behavior, COVID-19

1. Introduction

People who buy goods and avail services for their consumption are members of the consumer market. The consumers worldwide spent $63.8 trillion in 2018 (Final Consumption Expenditure, n.d), making the United States the single largest consumer market representing 26% of the entire global consumer market. In this country, consumer expenditure reached $12.5 trillion and $16. 9 trillion in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Final Consumption Expenditure, n.d.). In the Philippines, the total consumer spending reached $323 billion in 2019 (Final Consumption Expenditure, n.d.). Out of the $16. 5 trillion consumer spending in the US last 2018, $5.3 trillion or 32% were spent on the retail industry, with automotive as the largest category with $1.3 trillion sales, followed by food and beverage at $746 billion and merchandise stores at $706 billion (Amadeo, 2020). The same study emphasized the retail industry's importance to the US economy as 4.8 million jobs were created. In the Philippines, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that the retail trade contributed 18% of the national output in 2015 and grocery retailers had the most impact on the economy since it satisfies the bulk of consumption needs of most of the Filipino consumers (Economic growth in the Philippines creating retail opportunities, n.d.). By 2018, the retail industry expanded by 5.9%, and its total gross value added (GVA) amounted to Php 1.22 trillion (Philippine retail sector set to grow in 2019, n.d.).

The retail industry was expected to continue its growth worldwide, not until the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic. The global economy experienced a decline in 2020 because of the pandemic (Retail, n.d.). COVID-19 pandemic hit the retail industry very hard (Amadeo, 2020). It was estimated that the retail industry's growth rate in 2020 would be halved from pre-COVID-19 forecasts. The Global Consumer Insight Survey conducted by PwC this year reported that consumers are spending less in most nonfood categories. Spending on clothing and footwear went down by 51%; sports equipment and outdoor went down by 46%; 41% decreased their spending on restaurant food pickup delivery; 36% decreased their purchases of office equipment by 36%; and spending on health and beauty products went down by 35% (PwC, 2020).

Millennials have the strongest intent to shop for non-essential categories (The great consumer shift: Ten charts that show how US shopping behavior is changing, 2020). This generation is becoming the most powerful consumer segment in history (Weber, J., 2015) and has a very complex construct (Bucuta, 2015). Costin (2019) and Ordun (2015) described Millenials as the US's biggest spenders This peculiarity in spending changes the buying models (Moreno, Lafuente, Carreon, & Moreno, 2017). True to their tendency to consume and spend, it was reported that Millennials spend around $200 billion a year (Karr, 2014) and $500 billion indirect spending (Millennials Confident. Connected. Open to Change., 2009). However, Millennials or Generation Y are the most challenging segment a company could attract and maintain due to being fickle in brand loyalty (Lazarevic, 2012).

The pandemic disrupted all activities globally, resulting in a decline in the economy, affecting many industries (Amadeo, 2020; PwC, 2020). Furthermore, this event changed how consumers spend their resources, directly impacting the retail sector with essential shopping having a winning streak while non-essential shopping, on the other hand, is in a sulky mood (Coronavirus: impact on the retail industry worldwide, n.d.). Millennials may be able to save the retail industry's decline, most specifically shopping goods, as their intent to buy these goods is strongest among other generations (The great consumer shift: Ten charts that show how US shopping behavior is changing, 2020). However, as this generation's characteristics are highly heterogeneous (McGregor, 2016), it is imperative to examine this cohort, create segments within, and describe the profile of this generation. But only a specific Millennial group shall be examined. This group would consist of Millennial workers who execute functions imperative in enforcing public health, security, and community well-being during the pandemic. These workers are called infrastructure workers. They were chosen as the study's subject as their work behavior may have been altered due to the stress that they are exposed to as they perform their job even during the pandemic. The level of stress may have changed how they spend their resources as well. The result of this study will be crucial for the retail sector, specifically retailers of shopping goods.

The COVID-19 pandemic proved that things might drastically change in just a blink of an eye. People stopped going outside; planes were not leaving the runway, businesses stopped operating; malls were like ghost towns; no learner were inside classrooms; most workers stopped going to their offices, and a great number lost their source of living, and a whole lot more. The economic downturn affected the working sector. Lucky for those who were able to keep their job. But some members of this sector, referred to as essential infrastructure workers, are experiencing psychosocial challenges on their health and well-being brought about by new working arrangements, job demands, and limited resources they have. Different levels of stress, anxiety, and other mental disorders were observed from the essential critical infrastructure workers. As the biggest source of the workforce, working Millennials were hit the hardest by this pandemic. The psychosocial environment that includes (1) environment and equipment, (2) workload, work-pace and work-schedule, (3) work-life balance, and (4) job security may have altered the work behavior of this generation. The different segments of Millennials presented by various authors focused on demographic and psychographic variables. These segments described the buying behavior of Millennials. Based on some studies, the spending behavior of Millennials varies according to the shopping goods they buy, payment method preference, retail outlet preference, and sources of information. Millennials' values, attitudes, and lifestyles are anchored on the List of Values and VALS framework.

Cluster analysis was used to create segments according to the work behavior of Millennials. The work behavior, spending behavior, values, attitudes, and lifestyles of essential critical infrastructure millennial workers in the shopping goods market in Region 12 may differ in other cities or countries.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The following theories were the basis of creating the conceptual framework utilized in the study.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model. Consumer behavior changes because of natural disasters or financial crises (Loxton, Truskett, Scarf, Sindone, Baldry, & Zhao, 2020), which in today's case, is a global pandemic. COVID-19 has disrupted the world's economy. Many have become jobless while others are more fortunate for retaining their jobs, although cuts in compensation were also experienced. With the increasing number of COVID-19 cases, more people are experiencing anxiety and stress due to fear of the unknown. The limitations in finances force people to make priorities when it comes to spending. This theory is useful in understanding consumers' behavior during a crisis, wherein their survival instinct kicks. Maslow's theory outlines in a pyramidal hierarchy the classifications of needs that are most vital for survival. These five classifications, starting from the base of the pyramid are: (1) physiological necessities, (2) safety, consumer protection and well-being, (3) love and belonging, (4) self-esteem, and (5) self-actualization or personal growth (Lester, 2013). This theory has become even more relevant in the era of COVID-19 and can be observed in the four levels of needs (Singh, 2020).

Media Framing Theory. Consumer behavior can also be influenced by what they hear or read from any media platform.

Media framing theory refers to how media can impact or spin the perspective of public attitudes on an issue (Eze & Elegbe, 2018). According to Bai et al. (2004), "mass media plays a vital role in forming, remodeling, and leading public opinion." This power is manifested dramatically during a crisis (Ghassabi & Zare- Farashbandi, 2015) as the media can inform, dissipate wrong information, or inject fear through headlines. In the report of Kilgo et al. (2019), the media significantly contributes to the amount of anxiety by emphasizing news stories that provoke fear. Poirier, Ouellet, Rancourt, Bechard, and Dufresne (2020) said that “audience perception of crisis is often to be shaped, or altered, by journalists.” This is possible in many ways: the level of attention devoted to the issue, the tone in which the issue is discussed, and how the issue is presented or being framed (Damstra & Vliegenthart, 2018).

Integrated Consumer Behavior. It studies how consumers spend their resources. Several factors affect consumer buying decisions, such as motive, perception, levels, attention, passion, social class, reference group, culture, and need. The study of Moreno, Carreon, and Moreno (2017) presented another consumer behavior model that includes three variables: influence variable, processing variable, and result variable. The influence variable includes biological, social, economic, and commercial indicators. On the other hand, psychological aspects are classified as processing variables and buying behavior as the resulting variable.

Job-Demands Resources Model. Job-Demands Resources Model is a common model that studies job stress. It suggests that stress may come from the mismatch between job demand and resources that employees must meet those demands (Janse, 2019). This theory proposes that high job demands lead to employees' physical and mental health problems, and increased resources lead to increased motivation and higher productivity (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Conversely, employee demotivation occurs when resources are low. In this model, job demands refer to the physical, social, or emotional characteristics of the job and the work environment (e.g., time pressure, work pressure, relationships, stressful environments, and leadership). Meanwhile, job resources help an employee achieve goals with a lower level of stress (e.g., coaching, good relationships, and others.)

Psychographics. Psychographics is the study of consumer personality traits to understand and predict consumer behavior patterns. It captures consumer attitudes/values, lifestyle, buying habits, and opinions/interests to form a holistic view (Fuhr, 2015). Using the Values, Attitudes, and Lifestyles (VALs) Study Model, there are eight (8) groups of consumers: (1) innovators, (2) thinkers, (3) believers, (4) achievers, (5) strivers, (6) experiencers, (7) makers, and (8) survivors (Mallik, 2018). VALS is used to perform detailed market research based on lifestyle and demographics. A validated framework is used to explain the psychological drivers of consumer behavior (Conrad, 2015). Another one common approach for segmentation is the use of List of Values (LOV). List of Values is based on Social Adaptation Theory by Lynn R. Kahle (1988). LOV was created to measure cultural values as determinants of consumer behavior. Thompson (2009) conducted a qualitative exploration of the following core values, as follows: self- respect, security, warm relationships with others, self-fulfillment, a sense of accomplishment, being respected, a sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment, and excitement.

From the above theories, the conceptual framework of this research was composed of three sections. The three sections are interconnected to each other forming a triangle shape. The first section has only one variable, which is work behavior. This variable is anchored to the Job -Resources Model. The second section has three variables: (1) spending behavior, (2) values, attitudes, and lifestyles, and (3) socio-demographic data. As the work behavior of Millennials changes, so as their behavior as consumers. Consumer behavior theory investigates how consumer spends. The third section is the result of segmenting the infrastructure Millennials workers according to their work behavior. Profiling of the segments according to its spending behavior, values, attitudes, and lifestyles, and socio-demographic data was done after the segmentation.

Lau, R. (2015) explored the segments that exist within the Millennial generation. Five (5) segments emerged from the research and analysis of Millennials in the U.S. based on demographic and purchase behaviors: (1) up and comers, (2) mavens, (3) eclectics, (4) trendsetters, and (5) skeptics. In an almost similar way, Marte and Te (2017) conducted a study on psychographic segmentation of Millennials in Davao City, Region XI, Mindanao. Their study focused on values and four (4) segments were created: (1) utilitarian millennials, (2) humble millennials, (3) proud millennials, and (4) contented millennials. These two studies used purchasing behavior and VALS in creating segments of the cohort being studied. Both studies were conducted before the pandemic. The behavior of Millennials during this pandemic has seen significant changes as compared to other generations. According to Greg Petro, CEO of First Insight, Millennials will cut their spending, as cited in Hoffower (2020). Millennials seem to be feeling the hit of financial instability harder as brought by the pandemic than other generations (Salfino, n.d.). Hence, possible changes in the spending behavior of this cohort are not reflected. This study captured how millennials adjusted to the changes brought by the pandemic on their work due to stress, anxiety, and other psychological disorders due to fear. In addition, this study was able to create new segments based on the psychosocial work environment of the essential infrastructure millennial workers in the locale. This could be used by human resource experts in understanding the work behavior of Millennials. Lastly, consumer behavior changes as it can be dictated by the environment, and currency of information is critical to marketing. The study provided new insights on the preferences of Millennials in terms of shopping goods; mode of payment preferences as several online paying schemes were introduced to avoid face-to-face transactions; store preferences as online shops are becoming more aggressive to attract to widen their reach across the globe.

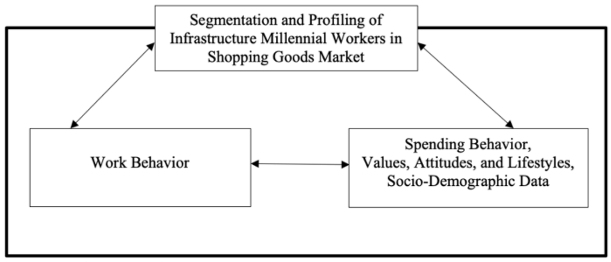

Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework

3. Objectives of the Study

The study aimed

1. To describe the profile of the infrastructure millennial workers in terms of socio-demographic data in the shopping goods market.
2. To describe the level of the psychosocial work environment of the infrastructure millennial workers during the pandemic.
3. To describe the spending practices of the infrastructure millennial workers as a whole.
4. To describe the level of the personal values perceived to be possessed by infrastructure millennial workers, their attitude, and lifestyle as one cohort.
5. To describe the spending practices of infrastructure millennial workers and their various market segments in the shopping goods market in Region 12.
6. To describe the values, attitudes, and lifestyles of infrastructure millennial workers and their various market segments in the shopping goods market in Region 12.
7. To form segments of infrastructure millennial workers based on their working behavior.

4. Methodology

This is a descriptive-correlational study designed to explore and examine the different segments within essential critical infrastructure Millennial workers based on their work behavior and describe the segments in terms of their spending behavior, values, attitudes, and lifestyles, and socio-demographic data. The researcher utilized three sampling designs: purposive sampling, stratified sampling, and random sampling. Based on the data provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority, the employed Millennials in Region 12 is 534,000. Slovin's formula was used to compute the sample size with 0.05 error tolerance. The sample size derived was 400. A 20% margin was added to consider non-response. The total sample of respondents was 500. The study focused on Millennials classified as essential critical infrastructure workers. The instrument that was used in the survey is a hybrid survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire has four (4) parts. Hierarchical cluster analysis was utilized for segmentation.

Table 1 Summary of Statistical Treatment

Statement of the Problems	Statistical Treatment
1 What is the profile of the infrastructure millennial workers in terms of socio-demographic data in the shopping goods market?	Frequency and Percentage
2 What is the level of the psychosocial work environment of the infrastructure millennial workers during the pandemic?	Mean
3 What are the spending practices of the infrastructure millennial workers as a whole?	Frequency and Percentage
4 What is the level of the personal values perceived to be possessed by infrastructure Millennials worker, their attitude, and lifestyle as one cohort?	Mean, Frequency and Percentage
5 What are the spending practices of various segments of infrastructure millennial workers in shopping goods market?	Frequency and Percentage
6 What are the values, attitudes, and lifestyles of various segments of infrastructure millennial workers in shopping goods market?	Frequency and Percentage
7 What are the different segments of infrastructure millennial workers based on their working behavior, spending behavior, values, attitudes, and lifestyles in shopping goods market?	Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

5. Results and Discussions

The empirical results on the segmentation and profiling of infrastructure millennial workers in the shopping goods market in Region 12.

Profile of Millennials. Most of the Millennials are female. Same result was noted in the study Kumudha and Thilaga (2016) where the proportion of female Millennials is greater than male Millennials. Young Millennials dominate this cohort, mostly single, and college graduates. In the study of Muralidharan and Xue (2016), the collective mean age of Millennials is 22.57 years. This result holds true in this study. However, in the study of Singal (2017), Millennials who were born around 1989 or later dominate this cohort. Today, they are 31 and younger. They are tagged as “young Millennials”. Since the largest sector in Region 12 is wholesale and retail, the largest portion of this cohort are service and sales workers. In the study conducted by U.S. Census Bureau in 2014, as seen in the article of Allison and Mugglestone (n.d.), retail and wholesale industry employ the greatest number of Millennials across many states since this industry is also the largest sector in the U.S. Similarly, in Region 12, wholesale and retail industry is the largest sector according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2015). Majority of the Millennials receive Php 15,000 and below average monthly salary. In the national level, 60% of Millennials receive a monthly income of less than Php 20,000 (It’s More Than the Brand! What Filipino Millennial/Gen Y Talents Really Look For in a Job, n.d.).

Work Behavior of Millennials. Despite the pandemic, most of the Millennials are working within their normal work schedule. They considered their current work environment, work pace, work schedule, workload, and work-life balance as good. On the other hand, job control and job security are midly good. Overall, they feel that their current psychosocial work environment is good.

The result denies the findings of COVID-19 and essential workers: A narrative review of health outcomes and moral injury (2021), which showed that essential workers not employed in the health sectors are at risk of moral injury due to unsafe working environment. The respondents who are working mostly from wholesale and retail and manufacturing find their work environment good. This result is again opposite with the findings of Eurofound (2020) wherein, according to them, the industry sector has less safe physical environment.

Similarly, the following variables were also rated as good: (1) work pace (mean=5.67), (2) work schedule (mean=5.63) (3) workload (mean=5.60), and (4) work-life balance (mean=5.47). The result negates several literatures. Despite the pandemic, work intensity of infrastructure millennial workers is not as high as what Eurofound (2020) found out. In terms of work schedule, infrastructure millennial workers found their workload not stressful and that they had enough rest unlike what Eurofound (2020) found out in their study. They mentioned that adverse effects may happen to employees experiencing irregular work schedules due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, job control (mean=5.18) and job security (mean=4.16,) are rated as midly good. On the whole, the psychosocial work environment of the respondents is good (mean=5.38). This result validates the study of Eurofound (2020) and Negative emotions and emotional exhaustion: Might job autonomy have played a strategic role in workers with responsibility during the covid-19 crisis lockdown? (2020), wherein they mentioned that many are facing job insecurity due to lack of access of training and lower employability, and that the degree of worker’s autonomy was also compromised due to serious restrictions.

Spending Practices of Millennials. This cohort mostly buy clothing, perfume and cosmetics, footwear, accessories such as bags, wallets, hats, caps, and others, and mobile phones. They seldom buy entertainment equipment. They buy clothing once a month; perfume and cosmetics every quarter; footwear twice in a year; accessories once a year; and mobile phones once every two years. In the study of Paulin (2018), Millennials' second biggest expenditure is transportation because some purchased vehicles. However, this finding is not evident in the result of this study as vehicle related expenditures only ranked 13 in the list of the most bought shopping goods. On the other hand, apparel and services eat 3.6% of their average expenditure. Millennials purchase apparels for them to adopt new styles (Seckler, 2010).

Despite this cohort being tech-savvy, they still prefer purchasing shopping goods in department stores. They still prefer paying in cash and would ask recommendations from their family and friends when making a purchase. Although considered as digital natives, Millennials in Region 12 still prefer cash as a payment method contrary to the report entitled Millennials to shape future payments (2019) by Gulf News that Millennials find digital payments more satisfying than cash. This result is also true based on the article published entitled Three Interesting Findings About What Influences Millennials' Purchases (2019). The article mentioned that the top three biggest influencers of Millennial's Purchases include family and friends (rank 1).

Personal Values of Millennials, Attitudes, and Lifestyle. Millennials have a very high level of sense of accomplishment, warm relationship with others, and self-fulfillment. Meanwhile, they value highly fun and enjoyment in life, self-respect, excitement, sense of belonging, security, and being respected. Looking into the segments provided by the study of Marte and Te (2017), Millennials in Region 12 may be classified as Contented Millennials or Utilitarian Millennials. These segments value sense of accomplishment, warm relationship with others, and self- fulfillment than any other personal values enumerated above.

In terms of general attitude towards COVID-19 protocols, Millennials want to be informed on matters related to the pandemic and think that everyone should adhere to the rules. They constantly worry on the uncertainty brought by this pandemic most especially on finances and health and seek the government better strategies to mitigate risks brought by COVID-19. Kantar Barometer created 6 Coronavirus consumer segments (COVID-19 Barometer, n.d.). Looking into the results presented on Table 4.34, only 27.43% agree with that of the "ostrich" segment; 54.11% agree with "que seras"; 39.65% agree with the "hibernators"; 92.77% agree with the "good citizens"; 97.26% agree with the "distressed dreamers"; and 82.79% agree with the "precarious worriers".

Although more than half of the Millennials did not change any aspect of their lifestyle, most are in compliant with the minimum health standard, and make extra precautionary measures to lessen their exposure to the public and the virus itself. Infrastructure millennial workers in Region 12 can be viewed as better followers of minimum health protocols unlike people in Germany, United Kingdom, and United States. In the study of Kunst (2020), less than 85% of the respondents from these countries applied minimum health protocols in their undertakings.

Spending Practices of the Different Segments. The Balanced Workers prioritize clothing when it comes to buying shopping goods. They usually buy clothing on a monthly basis to catch up with the latest trend in fashion. They buy expensive items such as mobile phones, computer/laptops, and household furniture once every two years. They prefer buying these items in department stores and pay using cash and sometimes using debit card. They ask for recommendations from their family and friends, check price tags, and inquire on sales and promotions before making a purchase.

The Independent and Efficient Workers also prioritize the purchase of clothing every month. They also buy expensive items such as mobile phones, computer/laptops, and cameras once every two years. They pay in cash most frequently but also use debit cards. They also seek recommendations from their family and friends, check price tags, and ask if there are any sales or promotions offered by retailers in the department stores.

The Confident Workers also prioritize the purchase of clothing every month. Aside from mobile phones and computers/laptops, they also buy entertainment equipment once every two years. Majority buy these items in department stores but a little over half of them also buy from online platforms. They use cash and credit card in shopping. They have similar sources of information with the Balanced Workers and Independent and Efficient Workers.

Values, Attitudes, and Lifestyles of Millennials. In terms of values, the Balanced Workers strongly agree that they have self-respect, security, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, a sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. The Balanced Workers are a bit not that confident when it comes to being respected. The Independent and Efficient Workers strongly agree that they have self-respect, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. On the other hand, Confident Workers strongly agree that they have the following personal values: security, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement.

All the clusters displayed good attitude towards COVID-19 protocols as they want to be informed and ask the government to do more in mitigating the risk of COVID-19. In terms of lifestyle, all clusters did not change their lifestyle due to the pandemic.

Segments of Millennials. The market segment of infrastructure Millennial workers in Region 12 are the following: The Balanced Workers, The Independent and Efficient Workers, and the Confident Workers. The Balanced Workers are the masters of balancing their work and private life. They shop basic shopping goods, and one of their long-term purchases are household furniture. Their values such as self-respect, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. reflect how they prioritize work-life balance. On the other hand, Independent and Efficient Workers ensure that they have control over their job and work schedule. Unlike balanced workers, one of their long-term purchases is a camera and they are the most price-conscious segment. Their sense of accomplishment is very high which reflects their work characteristic. Lastly, the Confident Worker segment is the most flexible among the three segments. They worry less about their employment status despite the threat posed by COVID-19 pandemic. This group is inclined to buy entertainment equipment. Among the three, next to cash, this segment prefers using credit card than debit card. According to them, they did not make any changes to their lifestyle.

The three segments follow minimum health protocols and lessen activities that would increase exposure to the virus. However, they do not want to be constantly updated with the situation as it only makes them more anxious.

6. Conclusions

The Balanced Workers. This cluster prioritizes work-life balance. Members of this cluster make sure that they have enough time to cater to their personal activities and find that their work and private life are not in conflict with each other. They can balance these two aspects because their work assignments are evenly distributed and that they receive appropriate amount of work from their employers.

This group allocates a portion of their income in buying clothing, perfume and cosmetics, footwear, accessories, and kitchen utensils more often than other goods. Their long-term purchases include mobile phones, computer/laptops, and household furniture. They usually buy these goods from department store, shopping malls, and online platforms. This group prefers paying in cash but also uses debit card in some of their purchases. Before purchasing goods, they would ask for recommendations from their family and friends. This group is somehow price conscious as they check price tags prior to making a purchase decision. It is also noted that this group can be persuaded by any sales and promotions. However, recommendations from family and friends have more impact to the purchase decisions of this cluster. This segment value self-respect, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. These values reflect their behavior in terms of prioritizing work-life balance.

This group is fully aware of the COVID-19 situation; however, they do not want to be constantly updated about it as the situation is already scary for them and receiving news about it makes them more anxious. It is more than enough that they are fully aware and concerned about their health and financial conditions. They adhere to rules, but half of the members find these rules a bit excessive. Although rules are in place, this group wishes that the government needs to implement more stringent actions to lessen the impact of the pandemic.

The Balanced Workers are good followers of the minimum health protocols established to lessen the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, they did some changes in terms of how they shop. Since almost all members stayed at home, they do more online shopping than going to physical stores. They also changed their shopping times to avoid large crowds and maximized their free time to visit shops during lean period. Although they prefer cash as a payment method, they are now paying using cards, eCash, and online banking. Half of this group made some changes in their lifestyle because of COVID-19.

The Independent and Efficient Workers. The Independent and Efficient Workers can work under minimal level of supervision. They have high influence over what they do at work, how they carry on the job, and who they work with. They work efficiently because they are aware of their tasks and responsibilities as well as the results expected from them. These Millennials are somehow strict about deadline, and they want to be updated of any possible changes in the workload and schedule. They work efficiently to make sure that they have ample time for breaks and day-offs, thus work schedule must be arranged beforehand. They think that their work environment is adequate.

Some of their short-term purchases are clothing, perfume and accessories, kitchen utensils, footwear, and accessories; meanwhile, their long-term purchases include mobile phones, computers/laptops, and cameras. They buy these goods either in department stores or shopping malls. They also buy shopping goods online and pay using cash. The biggest influencer in their purchase decision is recommendation from their family and friends. They are more price conscious than The Balanced Workers, hence, they can be easily enticed by sales and promotions such as discounts, bundles, and others.

This group values self-respect, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, and fun and enjoyment in life. They have the same attitude with The Balanced Workers towards the COVID-19 protocol. They strongly agree that they do not want to be constantly updated about the situation because it increases the fear of uncertainty and concern towards their health and financial condition. Hence, they implore the government to do better in fighting this pandemic. In terms of lifestyle and practices, they share the same traits with the Balanced Workers.

The Confident Workers. The Confident Workers are not worried about becoming unemployed as long they are protected by the law and will be able to receive financial aids from the government when this happens due to the pandemic. They are confident that they can find other jobs in case of retrenchment. They believe that they can easily adjust to other work environment if ever they will be transferred to other branches or departments because of the pandemic.

They love to shop clothing, perfume and cosmetics, footwear, accessories, and kitchen utensils from departments store, shopping malls, and online platforms. This group is inclined to buy entertainment equipment than household equipment or camera unlike the first two segments. They pay in cash or with credit card. Their purchase decision can be influenced by recommendations from their friends and family, price tags, and sales and promotions.

Confident Workers value sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. Their attitude towards COVID-19 protocols is the same with that of the Balanced Workers and Independent and Efficient Workers. They strongly agree that everyone should be informed and that everyone should adhere to the rules. They follow the minimum health protocols, changed some of their shopping practices, stayed at home more often, and avoided public places. However, unlike, the first two segments, this group did not make any changes to their lifestyle.

Implication to Theory. The result of this can fill in the research gap pertaining to the knowledge and information about the socio-demographic profile, work behavior, spending practices, values, attitudes, and lifestyles of infrastructure Millennials in Region 12. Furthermore, this paper provides insight to retailers of shopping goods on the preferences of the different clusters of infrastructure Millennial workers in terms of goods frequently purchased, the time basis of purchasing such items, preferred retail format, payment methods, and sources of information.

There are very few studies published about Millennials in the Philippines. Most are articles provided by news outlet, and magazines, but very few research and journal articles are available for review and citation, most especially on spending practices of this cohort. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, infrastructure Millennial workers changed some of their spending practices such as the increase frequency of online buying and changing their shopping time preference to avoid the crowd, among others. This can be viewed as a change in their consumer behavior to attain the second level of need, safety, and security need, in the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Model. Millennials have a high level of sense of belongingness; however, they also chose to cancel plans with their family and friends for safety and security, sacrificing the need for belonginess and love to attain the former need. In addition, the socio-demographic profile, values, attitudes, and lifestyle of the infrastructure millennial workers drive their motivation in purchasing shopping goods, which holds true under the Integrated Consumer Behavior Model. For example, recommendations from their family and friends influence their purchase decision. Family and friends fall under “social” category of the Integrated Consumer Behavior Model. Furthermore, the economic situation also has an impact on their behavior as consumers. Infrastructure millennial workers buy shopping goods as described by Kotler and Keller (2012) in their Consumer Goods Classification Model. The frequency of buying these goods depends on the need and other variables as identified by both Maslow’s Theory and Integrated Consumer Behavior Model.

Media can impact or spin the perspective of the public towards an issue. Although many infrastructure millennial workers wanted to be informed about the COVID-19 pandemic, their fear grows whenever news media organizations post updates about the situation such as number of cases, change in the level of community quarantine, and other related discussions that are framed to inject more fear to the public. That is why infrastructure millennial workers do not want to be constantly updated about the situation. This behavior proves the Media Framing Theory.

Although a study on psychographic segmentation of Millennials was published by Marte and Te in 2017, it is limited to the Millennials in Region 11. There may be differences in the geographical, cultural, social, and demographic aspects between Region 12 and 11. Hence, this study provides a clearer view of the Millennials in Region 12. Furthermore, a different clustering variable was used in this study, thus, the clusters in Davao City may not be true to Region 12. Infrastructure Millennials in Region 12 have a high level of self-respect, security, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, a sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. These values are listed in the Social Adaptation Theory by Kahle (1988).

The result of the cluster analysis can validate the theories in psychosocial work environment mentioned in the Job Resources Model and Karasek's Job Demands-Control Model. Variables in psychosocial work environment were used to cluster the Millennials and was chosen because work behavior of employees may have been altered by the current situation, which is the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implication to Practice. By looking into the different segments of Millennials as consumers of shopping goods, manufacturers, sellers, and retailers of shopping goods will be able to include the findings of this study in coming up with marketing strategies and marketing plan. The marketing plan may include the essential aspects of marketing such as the products, prices, promotion, and place. Companies must consider what shopping goods are frequently bought by the different segments, preferences on the retail format, payment methods, and sources of information. This would help the company in creating appropriate promotional strategies and distribution plan.

The result of the work behavior aspect may be used by the different government agencies related to labor force. They may use it to come up with risk mitigating tools to answer the changing psychosocial work environment of the millennial workers, most especially because of the changes brought by the pandemic. Although the Millennials are satisfied with their current work environment, it is better to come up with an institutionalized risk management plan when another pandemic occurs or any event that may again stir this sector.

Implication to Research. The study on the profile, spending practices, values, attitudes, and lifestyles of Millennials enriches the information about this cohort. Since Millennials are considered as the biggest group of consumers, it is important that establishments need to understand their spending practices and preferences. With its growing population, it is evident that the behavior of this cohort may change from time to time, most especially if there are events that may significantly impact their behavior. Thus, research about Millennials will continue to flourish. Businesses, the academe, and the public sector will see the findings in this study relevant to strategic management, curriculum review, and policy making, respectively.

7. Recommendations

With the information about the profile of the Millennials and the different market segments identified together with their spending practices, values, attitudes, and lifestyles, the researcher recommends the following:

Shopping good retailers should modify their marketing strategies to reach their target markets, most especially during this time of pandemic:

a. Make their products relevant and meet the current need of the customers. During this time of economic upheaval, consumers prioritize the purchase of essential goods. This is bad news for retailers of shopping goods. Retailers should create advertisements that would emphasize the relevance of their products and persuade the consumers' purchases. Retailers should also evaluate their current product offerings. There might be goods that consumers no longer need or products that need enhancement to make them relevant. For example, sellers of household equipment may also add disinfecting features to their products.

b. Engage in online selling and intensify digital marketing efforts. Since Millennials are considered as the tech-savvy generation and most are exposed to the internet, shopping good retailers should engage in e-commerce by: (1) selling their good in the different online platforms, (2) creating their own brand website, (3) creating mobile applications, (4) partnering with logistics company, and (5) linking with banks and institutions for easier payment methods, but always have an option for COD (Cash on Delivery) or COP (Cash on Pick-up) because Millennials still prefer paying in cash. For those who are already into e-commerce, digital marketing should be intensified, most especially online visibility. Online visibility may be achieved through: search engine optimization, keeping website and mobile applications updated, hiring social media influencers, and paid ads in some websites and social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok.

c. Corporate Social Responsibility. Millennials value warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, and self-fulfillment. Shopping goods retailers may use these values in creating CSR activities during the pandemic to increase brand awareness, community support, and goodwill.

d. Avoid advertisements that may inject more fear to your target market. Create advertisements that promote hope that things will get better. Millennials want to avoid updates about COVID-19 because that increase their anxiety.

Maintain cleanliness of the store. With the situation, customers are much more willing to enter stores that are clean and regularly disinfected.

e. Offer delivery of goods. Shopping good retailers should offer delivery of goods or other ways of picking up the goods wherein customers will no longer have to enter the shop. This may include curb side delivery or drive thru.

Specific marketing strategies are also recommended per cluster.

Balanced Workers Segment. Retailers that want to target this segment may implement the following strategies: (1) include in their product line household furniture and other goods that promote work-life balance, (2) ensure that their products are also available in department stores with heavy customer traffic, (3) create advertisements that are family-oriented, (4) adopt pricing strategies to entice purchase of goods such as psychological pricing, and (5) create advertisements that show fun, enjoyment, and excitement.

Independent and Efficient Workers. Retailers that intend to target this segment may implement the following strategies: (1) inclusion of cameras and their accessories in their product line, (2) design store display strategies that could easily attract this segment such as greater visibility of price tags and any sales discounts since this segment has lesser time to roam around the department store, and (3) create advertisements that promote self-accomplishment.

Confident Workers. For this segment, retailers may: (1) include entertainment equipment in their product line, (2) intensify presence in department stores and online platforms, and (3) allow credit card payment.

This study recommends the following to the marketing practitioners: (1) study the characteristics of the three segments and create specific marketing plans for each cluster; (2) project future position for each of the clusters and determine the possible change in market attractiveness of each segment over the next three to five years as suggested by Mullins and Walker (2010) in targeting attractive market segments; (3) recommend what segment should retailers target based on market attractiveness and competitive position.

The Government plays one of the biggest roles in fighting the pandemic. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the Government should: (1) create a policy or law about pandemic response and risk management, (2) keep the people informed on the status of the vaccination and encourage people to get vaccinated to attain herd immunity; this can be achieved by maximizing the role of media in bringing positive news to the public, and (3) impose stringent guidelines to lessen the number of COVID-19 cases and stricter sanctions for violators without sacrificing the need for the economy to recover. The policies should strike a balance between health and economy.

Future researchers may do consider the following recommendations in writing marketing and segmentation studies in the future: (1) consider poisson distribution in identifying respondents because random sampling can be very time consuming and costly; (2) perform demographic segmentation or geographic segmentation since there are many segmentation studies that use psychographic or behavior variables; (3) conduct researches that focus on other types of goods such as specialty goods and unsought goods; and (4) perform segmentation for the newest cohort, the generation Z, another promising market.

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