

Potential Hire's Expectations from Life & Corporate

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This study aims to understand the millennium generation of potential hires (students) who are faced by a different lifestyle that has resulted in changing their expectations from life and corporate recruiters. Employee aspirations have gradually evolved, thus inducing employers to devise new ways of managing their demands. The study was conducted in 2012 among 500 undergraduate and post-graduate students who will be facing life on their own within a period of 12-24 months in one of the reputed colleges in Tamil Nadu. This study has resulted in understanding the voice of students who will be the potential hires with reference to their expectations relating to various dimensions namely attitude towards higher education, money, work etc.

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Background

Students are faced by a millennial generation lifestyle. Expectations exert powerful influences upon student behaviour whether they come from external sources or are held internally as a belief or self-expectations (Rose, 2001). Students face a wide spectrum of opportunities and avenues to explore once they complete their graduation or post graduation. This has resulted in increasing their level of expectations from what it was earlier.

Expectations are double-edged swords, raising or lowering student outcomes according to their positive or negative nature. (Rose, 2001).

Employees form the crux of every organisation. Employee aspirations have gradually evolved, thus inducing employers to devise new ways of managing their demands. A hefty pay packet is not sufficient to lure an employee (Nair, 2011). Today factors such as convenient work location, vacation or paid time off and flexible schedule are some of the main reasons for which employees join a company. The change in expectations could be attributed to several reasons. The millennial generation has a different set

of priorities while managing their lives. Also, there is a substantial amount of peer pressure to make it big. The rise in expectations could be attributed to the increase in employment opportunities, which in turn could be attributed to our growing economy.

The millennial generation has a different set of priorities while managing their lives.

Over the past few decades, several studies note a shift in students' work values and expectations compared to the generations before them (Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Ng & Burke, 2006; Smola & Sutton, 2002). For example, in the 1950's, graduates focused on promotional opportunities, high salaries, and job security, while students in the 1960's focused on the meaning of life, and students of the 1970's and 1980's directed their careers towards individual achievement and reward. In the 1980's, students indicated their primary concerns for choosing a career path as future earning potential, promotional opportunities and employer location (Parmley, Parmley & Wooton, 1987). In the 1990's, students' primary concerns for choosing a particular career path focused on promotion, challenge and responsibility, working conditions and the type of work (Devlin & Petersen, 1994). With the changing global landscape, as well as changes in the traditional family norms in Western culture, future research is necessary to understand the career expectations of current students and the implications these student expectations have on organiza-

tions, recruiters and managers (Jarlstrom, 2000; Kirrane & Ryan, 2000; Rose, 2001; Ng & Burke, 2006). Recruiters seek the best 'match' for their company in terms of individual attributes in relation to company needs and culture. However, given the changing perceptions of today's students, the need for recruiters to modify their recruiting strategies exists (Jarlstrom, 2000). Researchers have assisted recruiters in this matter. For example, with the 'employer knowledge framework', applicants evaluate a firm based on the employer information regarding physical attributes of the employer (e.g. firm size, geographical location), job information (e.g. pay, benefits, promotional opportunities) and people information (that is, potential coworker information) (Cable & Turban, 2001). Students are more interested in working for firms with products or services that they can associate with than firms whose products or services they know little about, which can frame recruiter outreach strategies. Similarly, in the hospitality industry, hospitality students valued direct contact with the potential employer first and foremost in their career search (Sciarini & Woods, 1997). Other important factors to recruitment include references from faculty members, alumni, and other students; the company representative's personality and appearance, class guest lecturers; company participation in job fairs; and internships or co-ops (Sciarini & Woods, 1997). Based upon the Canadian study previously cited, current students will be selecting career paths based upon the working conditions, opportunities, and flexibility that employers can offer, and firms will need to re-evaluate

their recruitment procedures to mirror these expectations (Ng & Burke, 2006).

Students' perceptions with respect to promotion, length of employment, students' job search processes, ideal jobs, and professor involvement reveal different views into today's students. In the 21st century, students feel that promotional paths will typically involve lateral moves with rotation through several different jobs and geographic locations rather than the stereo-typical vertical promotions with long tenure at a particular firm (Gratton & Hope-Hailey, 1999). As for the length of expected employment in the first career position, the Canadian study of business students revealed a change in expectations from the 1950's traditional long-employment expectation (Ng & Burke, 2006). As for students' job search processes, a shift away from traditional recruitment processes, such as career services and company brochures, to more contemporary processes such as the internet by today's students has occurred, and an understanding of how current students seek information, investigate and decide among job alternatives is needed (Ng & Burke, 2006). As for accepting a non-ideal job as a starting position, most Canadian business students indicated that they would be willing to accept less than their ideal job in order to start their careers (Ng & Burke, 2006). Only one study considered the college faculty and their perceptions of critical career factors for their students—the US and New Zealand study (Devlin & Peterson, 1994). Unfortunately, in the study U.S. professors appeared to be 'out-of-touch' with

career expectations, particularly in comparison to their New Zealand counterparts.

Review of literature found that there are considerable researches in to understanding the corporate expectations from students. But, the times are changing, that organizations are desirous of knowing what students expect from them as we find a large number of fresh college graduates stepping into the corporate arena right after their graduation days. It is therefore important to understand their expectations as well in order to design a cohesive work environment to match the company's expectations and the students' expectations. Properly aligned expectations are believed to aid in building a long term relationship with the workforce. Universities and employers play an important role in shaping realistic career expectations for current students.

The current study was conducted among 500 college graduates who belonged to their final years and were ready to enter the corporate space through campus placements. The data was collected through primary sources viz., structured questionnaires aimed at receiving direct responses. This study has been extensive in covering both undergraduate and postgraduate students pursuing their final and pre-final years of their respective courses in a reputed engineering college in Tamil Nadu. The study covered two specific dimensions viz. "Student Expectations from Life" and "Student Expectations from Corporate". Student Expectations from Life

were studied in order to understand the student perception of higher education, work, considerations in choosing a career, etc. These aspects were particularly analyzed as the changing lifestyle has a clear impact on students' decisions with regard to these aspects. Student expectations from corporate were studied in order to understand their perceptions with respect to factors such as considerations in choosing a job, importance of the company's brand image and job title to the work environment that they prefer to work in. Though these factors might seem trivial, researchers have proved that these factors do impact the employees' interest in joining or retaining themselves in an organization.

Research Methodology

The study aims to understand the millennium generation of students (potential hires) who are faced by a different lifestyle that has resulted in changing their expectations from life and recruiters. This study was conducted among college graduates who belonged to their final years and were ready to enter the corporate space through campus placements. The data was collected through primary sources viz., structured questionnaires aimed at receiving direct responses. The questionnaire was so designed as to grade the responses of the students based on the degree of their agreement. In designing the questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) was used to reduce the statistical problems of extreme skewness (Fornell, 1992).

The scaling techniques used were dichotomous scale, ordinal scale and Likert's scale. The dichotomous scales were used to ascertain certain demographic data as well as to understand the student's preference for higher education. The ordinal scale was used as a measure to ascertain the importance that students attach to considerations while choosing a career and a job. The Likert's scale was used to ascertain the students' agreeableness to the need for money and working conditions. Thus, a total agreement to the response of a question was indexed with 5 points while a total disagreement was indexed as 1. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the Cronbach's alpha test. The Cronbach alpha value was found as .812(>.5), which shows that the instrument is reliable. Statistical tools like Factor Analysis and ANOVA were used to analyse the data.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Through factor analysis, the 11 elements that play a vital role in the career choice of a student have been reduced to 3 major factors viz., job attributes, career advancement opportunities and salary.

The study was equally distributed among male and female, postgraduate and undergraduate students. The study initially focussed on the students' perception of higher education where the research results indicate that almost one half of the respondents wished to pursue their higher education out of which 30% wished to pursue abroad. There can be various reasons cited for this phenom-

enon some of which are non-availability of certain courses, better exposure, enhanced employment opportunities etc.

Table 1 Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component		
	1	2	3
Desire to use abilities to fullest	.817		
Desire for creative satisfaction	.718		
Desire to contribute to society	.690		
Challenge of difficult work	.665		
Desire to work with people	.567	.369	
Belief of doing work well	.412	.356	
Prospects of Employment		.838	
Prospects for career advancement		.807	
Belief of enjoying work		.652	
Desire to earn high salary			.799
Availability of funding for graduate study			.644

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Apart from pursuing higher education, students are faced with multiple career opportunities but they seem to evince keen interest in being employed in corporate organizations. The reasons cited were steady levels of income when compared to other career options, assured career advancement etc. But on a comparison with other options, retirement opportunities exist in a corporate. Despite retirement opportunities, people choose to be employed in a corporate due to its additional benefits.

Most of our respondents chose to pursue a career to be employed in a corporate.

Students today have clarity on what career to pursue after their college. But

most often, they are unaware on how to reach the destination. Most of our respondents chose to pursue a career to be employed in a corporate. 54% of them required placement assistance and 49% of them also required training to help them achieve their goal. Initial placement assistance is of paramount importance to the students followed by effective training to hone their skills in order to assure growth.

The desire to grow lies in everyone leading to finding out new ladders to growth and exhausting older ones. Students seem to prefer to take control of their professional future and make sure that they are progressing wisely down the right career path. Therefore students seem to attach a lot of importance to opportunities for career advancement in a particular career option before choosing it.

Students prefer to fund their graduate studies out of the money they earn from the career they choose. Undergraduate students especially prefer to take up an employment after their college and fund their higher education by means of the income earned from that employment. This indicates the rise in students' preference to choose a career that will enable them to fund their education.

There seems to be a galore of opportunities available to nurture the creative talent among students. Every career should aim to nurture the individual

talents. Students choose their career on the basis of the ability to improve their creative quotient. But creative satisfaction alone does not act as a key indicator of career choice. It is evident from the survey that creative satisfaction alone does not pave way to a career choice as respondents attach only moderate importance to it.

Technology has come a long way and the work culture has changed a lot since then. People prefer to work more with machines rather than human beings. Our study reiterates the general interest among individuals to work with things other than people. It is the monetary benefits that one derives is what makes the difference. Money plays an important role in every one's life. The need for money differs among individuals. According to our survey, students attach paramount importance to the need for money to maintain a good lifestyle. Also, they want money to satisfy their present needs initially, following which they are ready to use the surplus money for investment initiatives.

Student Expectations from Corporate

Review of literature states that a hefty pay packet is not the only expectation of a student before entering a corporate. Therefore student expectations were analyzed from various dimensions

viz., the important considerations in selecting a job, importance of the company's brand image, job title, workplace entertainment facilities, flexibility relating to work as well as the additional benefits they would like to receive.

Through factor analysis, the 13 elements that play a vital role in the expectations of a student from a corporate, have been reduced to 4 major factors viz., job dimensions, working environment and opportunities, benefits and working relationships.

There may be various considerations apart from salary while choosing a job. Students seem to attach primary importance to the content of the job. Job content refers to the activities on the job or what employees actually do on the job. According to our survey more than 30% of the respondents found it to be a very important consideration while choosing a

Table 2 Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Satisfying job content	.805			
Good working environment	.801			
Authority	.700			
Chance to advance		.675		.306
Steady Employment	-.320	.637	.387	
Competent coworkers		.612		
Fair pay		.604		.526
Accomplishment	.451	.581		
Benefits that meet needs			.775	
Individual differences			.680	
Attractive pay			.652	
Supervisor				.780
Working Hours			.356	.566

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

job. Though many students may not be aware of the level of satisfaction of their job content, they tend to expect it to be intrinsically satisfying before taking up a job. Thus it is the responsibility of an employer to design job content such that it seems intrinsically satisfying for the employee to take it up.

Students seem to attach primary importance to the content of the job.

Co-workers play a vital role in the work life of every individual. The study reveals that competent co-workers can help to improve the employee's level of motivation. Friendly co-workers can help students who are mostly fresh to a corporate to familiarize themselves with the processes and procedures. Also in an era of frequent job cuts, students prefer to take up a job that provides them with a steady and continuous employment. This can be ensured by means of contract.

The role of the supervisor is equally important as that of the co-workers. An efficient supervisor will help an employee to better understand the job and the ways of carrying out the tasks assigned. Also, the supervisor should be considerate and fair in his/her dealings with their subordinates. In other words, respondents expect their supervisors to be mentors to help them. Individuals expect that their pay should match with that of his peer in the same cadre of employment either within the company or outside of it. If a gap exists the employee will tend to switch jobs. Frequent occurrences of employ-

ees switching their jobs can result in high employee turnover. This can be tackled by ensuring an equal pay package.

It is important to ensure that each employee's individual differences and identities are respected and protected.

Students attach importance to the fact that their individual differences should be respected. The present work culture is diverse with people from various parts of the country and the world working together. Thus it is important to ensure that each employee's individual differences and identities are respected and protected. This in turn will ensure a cohesive workforce without any conflict between them.

The use of statistical tests such as ANOVA enables us to identify if there is any significant difference between career considerations and characteristics such as educational qualifications and gender.

It has therefore been identified that only career attributes and salary have a significant difference with educational qualifications viz., post graduates and undergraduates.

It has therefore been identified that only career attributes have a significant difference with gender of the respondents. Being placed in one of the top ten companies in the world is a dream among most students. Our study reiterates this belief. Students desire of being placed in

Table 3 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job_Attributes	Between Groups	1.487	1	1.487	1.488	.223
	Within Groups	866.513	867	.999		
	Total	868.000	868			
Career_Attributes	Between Groups	5.625	1	5.625	5.655	.018
	Within Groups	862.375	867	.995		
	Total	868.000	868			
Salary	Between Groups	5.247	1	5.247	5.273	.022
	Within Groups	862.753	867	.995		
	Total	868.000	868			

a company with a good brand image. A company that enjoys a good brand image will never have to take immense effort to find people. Brand image here refers to the goodwill that the company has built over the years.

Being placed in one of the top ten companies in the world is a dream among most students.

Work place entertainment refers to the facilities available to the employees to relax themselves. Most female respondents have exhibited a strong preference for relaxation areas in an office which they feel is necessary to cater to the physical and mental fatigue caused by work. Similarly, most male respondents prefer to have indoor sports facilities and fitness centers which will help to keep themselves fit and healthy. Almost 53% of the respondents prefer an activity club within their team or department to help them entertain themselves amidst their busy schedule.

The growth of internet and technology has enabled employees to complete their assignment from anywhere and

anytime. This has led to almost 45% of our respondents preferring to work from home. 34% of our respondents also prefer to work in a compressed work week form which might consist of a 4 day work week in contrast to a 6 day week.

Employees expect additional benefits apart from the basic salary. These additional benefits can be monetary or non-monetary in nature. According to our survey 58% of our respondents required a preferred location of work. This may be because some employees might prefer to work in their own town or city or may fear to move to a bigger city. Some students also cited personal and health reasons for the same.

Also, students enter an organization with certain basic expectations. There is always a chance of mismatch between the expected and actual environment. In such cases students may prefer to adapt to the existing situation as per the results of our survey. Reasons that were cited for this option are:

- Difficulty of implementing individual expectations into a whole mass
- Preference to be on par with corporate expectations

Conclusion

Students have a wide range of expectations, both towards life as well as career. These expectations should be understood ideally by organizations in order to create an atmosphere that mutually satisfies the organizations expectations from students and the vice versa. With respect to this study, recruiters, professors and advisors need to educate themselves on current graduate career expectation. This study has paved way for various future studies where the behavioral pattern among potential hires entering organization can be studied.

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