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“My Manager is Emotionally Intelligent, so what? – Influence of EI on Job Satisfaction”

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Abstract

The concept of emotional intelligence has gained importance over the past years. Within the hospitality industry, this concept is often related to effective leadership, in a way that emotionally intelligent managers create more positive work environments, thus affecting employee job satisfaction. The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation of perceived emotional intelligence and millennial job satisfaction. Through a questionnaire based method and 56 participants, the results revealed a positive connection between the perceived level of manager's emotional intelligence and their overall job satisfaction. Within the scope of this research, millennial generation requires emotionally intelligent managers in order to experience higher job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Millennial, Leadership Style*

INTRODUCTION

The theory of emotional intelligence has been around for many years. Established as a psychological theory and researched in more depth by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1997, it is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to u use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey, Mayer, 1997). In other terms, emotional intelligence is a construct of social intelligence that explains a person's ability to understand, grasp and manage his or her own emotions, as well as those of others. EI as a theory was introduced to the world of business in 1995, when Daniel Goleman published his book describing why and how organizational leadership is affected by individual emotional intelligence.

Moreover, emotional intelligence can be understood as a social skill necessary in today's fast evolving world; a skill that is considered of greater impact than IQ in terms of employee performance. (Johnson, Indvik, 1999). Tests on emotional intelligence are invented to assist individuals understand their level of EI as well as help companies in the hiring processes to use that information to train employee emotional intelligence.

In the hospitality world, day to day operations became automated, almost mechanical processes. Duties and obligations of supervisors and department managers to satisfy hotel guests often leave consequences on their subordinates, those being mostly millennials. Every department within a hotel works together as a team to offer the best experiences, meaning that most of those difficult decisions are sometimes left to bottom line employees; many of which experience animosity from their supervisors during work experience for the simple reason of

their lack of empathy, leadership style and overall emotional intelligence (Personal communication, November 2018).

In the research conducted, in the hospitality industry, the most common style of leadership is autocratic (Al Ababneh, M., Dr., 2013). This style is also known as the authoritarian leadership, where the leader typically makes decisions with little or no input from the team. It is considered to be beneficial when fast decisions ought to be made and the organization is experiencing constant change. Autocratic leadership style also creates difficulties in such industry, where teamwork is crucial.

Different leadership style also greatly depends on the perceptions of a given leader on their followers or subordinates. In the hospitality industry, managerial leadership is prevalent due to the effectiveness on the employee performance and contribution. (Al Ababneh, M., Dr., 2013). It creates a 'hands-on' approach to everyday operations which in turn leads to higher motivation in employees.

The type of leadership managers prefer also depends on the outcome they desire to achieve. Traditional leadership is no longer effective in hospitality, where employees are meant to be engaged and empowered. (Kuznin M., Walker. K,2017). The purpose of using the right leadership style will benefit the employee in feeling more motivated, hence, more satisfied at the workplace; this also reflects positively on the company's bottom line. This is why there is a need for more compassionate leadership in every industry, especially hospitality.

In the end, the goal of leadership is to inspire employees to achieve organizational goals. Managers in hospitality are working closely with their employees, getting to understand any

concerns they might have, hence, managerial leadership style can increase their job satisfaction. (Al Ababneh, M., Dr. , 2013).

When speaking of leadership style, it is crucial to take into account the skills of leaders which require them to perform everyday tasks as well as interacting with their subordinates. More importantly, their technical, conceptual and human skills which serve as a tool to successfully measure the performance of their employees, their engagement in the workplace and the quality of the work being done. According to Katz's theory, as the managers shift their focus from simple supervisory duties to a more operational level management, less technical, but more human and conceptual skills will be needed. (Leadership blog, September 20, 2012).

Technical skills refer to being knowledgeable about the type of work and are deemed as less important in higher levels of management, when human skills are necessary. The ability to work well with others and accept different opinions, while being adaptable and trustworthy is the core of human and conceptual skills. Also, it is what makes a great leader and separates him from the rest. By possessing the necessary skills required to positively influence employees, managers of today can form a leadership style which will benefit both the organization and well being of employees.

It has already been concluded that leadership style influences job performance, in both positive and negative aspect. Thus, it is crucial that leadership style of managers reflects the overall company culture. The right style of leadership is still considered the most effective way to boost employee job satisfaction and achieve desired objectives as an organization. (Babalola, S. S, 2016).

Often defined as lazy and most nurtured generation, the millennials, born between 1980s to mid-2000s are the majority of today's workforce. (Hughes, 2015). This generation is "*predicted to comprise 75% of the United States workforce by the year 2025*." (Tackett-Newburg, 2018).The millennial generation is the complete opposite of their parents, the Baby Boomers and Generation X when speaking of ways they do business. Rather than taking the traditional approach to things, millennials like to actively participate in companies and enjoy teamwork. They value training and want to contribute in meaningful tasks. (Robertson, 2016); which is unlike any other generation that precedes them.

It is of great importance for this generation to expect everything done on the spot, as millennial are very technologically savvy and team oriented. (D. Hughes, 2015) They want to feel appreciated in the workplace, making it more of a emotional and people oriented environment, as opposed to mechanically punching in and punching out; typical 9-5 working hours.

Furthermore, millennials are "changing the face of business" (M. Robertson, 2016), want to have flexible schedules and freedom to foster their creativity during working hours. This generation is the leaders of the future, which is why it is important to find ways to attract and retain such talent. Here is where emotional intelligence becomes an important asset of managers and supervisors in millennial workforce job satisfaction.

Millennial generation is typically associated with no respect for authority, bad work habits, unrealistic expectations and other stereotypes.(Ferri-Reed, J. , 2014) Managers nowadays have to think deeper when it comes to retaining a millennial employee and catering to their

needs. According to research, millennial employees are challenging their managers to 'think outside the box' when it comes to assigning them to organizations. (Ferri-Reed, J., 2014).

Millennials want the interaction in the workplace; they want leaders to guide them on a more individualistic level. (Ng, E. S., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. T. (2010) Since leadership style of managers plays an important part in retaining employees, specifically, millennial generation, employers must tailor their supervision style to adapt to the new generation.(Ferri-Reed, J., 2014). When looking past the negative stereotypes of millennials in work environments, those assumed traits or characteristics can indeed assist mangers to cater to their individual desires.

In addition, by having a better understanding of millennial career expectations, managers can use a more individual approach to create jobs and environments where this generation will thrive. (Ng, E. S., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. T., 2010). Also, this will be successful for both the company that manages to retain talent and the employee that feels engaged, and ultimately, satisfied at work.

Millennials can often times have unrealistic expectations, however, to this generation, this might just be a step outside mangers' comfort zone. A millennial worker needs transparency, honesty and connection; hence, they require a more holistic leader. Much like the millennial employee wants to feel engaged at work; the leader must also understand all the aspects of such engagement. By having a holistic leader in an organization, one that looks beyond the typical skills or personality traits and incorporates its own values in the work, helps the employee to develop emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. (Karakas, F., Manisaligil, A., & Sarigollu, E., 2015).

There is no universally accepted definition; however there are universal aspects of job satisfaction or factors that influence individual satisfaction at work. Some of the independent variables are employee development, reward in terms of higher compensation and work-life balance. (Tan Yee Went, C., & Ai Ping, T., 2018) The culture of an organization also greatly affects these variables. There are other factors associated with job satisfaction, namely, pay, benefits, job security, supervision and so forth. (Al Ababneh, M., Dr., 2013)

This paper focuses solely on the supervision aspect and how that relates to employee job satisfaction. Moreover, it takes emotional intelligence of the manger as the independent variable to measure millennial job satisfaction, regardless of other tangibles of the job.

According to (Kafetsios, K., & Zampetakis, L. A., 2008) emotional intelligence influences job satisfaction in many aspects. Emotional awareness, interpersonal skills all fall under EI umbrella, and are therefore associated with people's relationships – specifically how employees experience stress and emotion in the workplace. Knowing how to display and control emotions is the most important aspect of emotional intelligence, from which can be concluded that EI is in charge of both negative and positive attitudes at the workplace.

From the companies' perspective, job satisfaction is a combination of personal characteristics of employees and specific job environment. (Al Ababneh, M., Dr., 2013) It is a combination of both positive and negative and positive emotions that affect how an individual performs and behaves at work. (Sila, E., & Širok, K., 2018). There are several ways companies measure job satisfaction and that reflects how well the employees respond within those organizations.

Companies attribute employee job satisfaction to their long term performance and willingness to learn something new. (Sila, E., & Širok, K., 2018) Hence, this is why many organizations nowadays focus on creating an environment in which employees will be satisfied. This again relates to the type of leadership mangers have to promote different behaviors of employees. Effective leadership is crucial in influencing employees to achieve higher performance levels, organizational goals and job satisfaction (Babalola, S. S., 2016) and "emotional intelligence was identified as the most important element that leads to effective leadership." (Ngirande, H., & Timothy, H. T., 2014)

When examining the hospitality industry, emotional intelligence is crucial in managers who are working with a new generation that is comprised of millennials. It is considered a social skill that can be learned, practiced and measured. For this reason, the purpose of this paper is to aid hospitality professionals when creating a leadership style to cater the new generational workforce. The author tries to find the correlation between perceived emotional intelligence of managers from millennial students of RIT Croatia working in hospitality companies and their overall job satisfaction based on those perceptions.

H1: There is a positive correlation between managers' emotional intelligence and students' job satisfaction

H2: If the perceived emotional intelligence of manager is high, the overall job satisfaction of student will increase

METHODOLOGY

This research will include hypotheses and detailed testing in the form of a questionnaire. For this particular study the unit of analysis are millennial hospitality students that completed

their cooperative education in said industry. The participants of the study are all RIT Croatia students with hospitality concentration.

Since this research focuses on those millennial students that have worked in any hospitality company as part of their co-op, the questionnaire will not be given to first year students. Also, the underlining goal of this study is to examine the perceived emotional intelligence of managers, those students that worked in family businesses will not be taken into account, to avoid bias and gain reliable results. The method of choosing this specific population is based on peer evaluation, their insight into the work environment based on perceptions.

The participants were 56 RIT Croatia students who completed at least one co-operative education within the hospitality industry. This sample included 43 female and 13 male students who participated in the study. The questionnaire was divided in two sections; the perceived emotional intelligence of manager and overall job satisfaction. This was based on a 5 point Likert scale and took approximately five minutes to complete. It included 20 questions overall, with one open ended comment. The participants were voluntarily filling in the questionnaire and completely anonymously.

RESULTS

Of the chosen population, 56 participants; sophomore students (n=21), junior students (n=17) and senior students (n=18) completed the questionnaires fully answered. Questions were divided by the perceived emotional intelligence of manager and overall job satisfaction of the individual. The first section of the questionnaire was answered based on the student's perceptions of their direct manager's emotional intelligence. Within these results, most students (86%) working for different hospitality companies, thought that their manager was emotionally

intelligent. Based on those perceptions, their job satisfaction was high. Over (55%) of students reported high job satisfaction based on their manager's EI. This explains that the initial hypothesis was proven; the higher the emotional intelligence of the manager, the higher the student's job satisfaction. (Appendix, Graph 1)

Furthermore, in the first section of the questionnaire, students responded that their manager seemed confident while performing daily tasks (aver. 4, 78; st.dev 0, 78). Confidence among many other traits of emotional intelligence and leadership had the highest result, meaning that it is one of the traits millennials want their managers to convey. In addition, managers who were perceived as emotionally intelligent had responsibility as another important characteristic (aver. 4,3; st.dev 0,91), followed by great communication (aver. 4,25; st.dev. 0,77).

Moreover, 25% of students reported high job satisfaction regardless of the manager's emotional intelligence rating. This can be identified as students looking past the manager, but the overall co-op experience as such. Those students experienced a great co-op due to other factors of job satisfaction, such as high commission, good relationships with co-workers and other.

As for the open ended question, students were asked to name one characteristic they would associate with the 'ideal' manager. Less than half of the students (35%) wrote empathy. Based on their co-op experiences, this shows that millennials who are entering the workforce require empathetic managers. Continuing on, leadership was the next desirable trait (11%) as well as kindness (9%) and responsibility (7%).

DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to measure the effect to which emotional intelligence of manager has on the overall millennial worker job satisfaction. The results demonstrated that the

two conditions are interrelated, meaning that both hypotheses were proven. In hospitality companies where RIT Croatia students chose to complete their co-operative education, managers who displayed high level of emotional intelligence; based on student perceptions; students had a higher overall job satisfaction. This paper was focused solely on the aspect of direct supervision on a millennial worker, and based on the area of study that caters more to the female gender, the results did not display and equal balance between the two genders.

The results of this research can also be understood in a way that young workers require more compassion and need managers who are confident in their jobs and display authority, but also be empathetic, In today's hospitality world, that is fast pace and almost mechanical, it lacks that emotion, because after all, it is an industry where people cater to people. The root of this issue is that working professionals have become so consumed with daily operations where they cannot completely show their personalities or emotions. It goes further than self-management and those professionals become the bosses of young aspiring individuals who are the complete opposites.

Millennials that were questioned during this research proved that for the new generation of hospitality professionals, managers must be inspiring, emotionally intelligent individuals who lead with vision and are able to adapt to this change.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this research was the sample size of only 56 participants that were RIT Croatia students majoring in hospitality, hence, further research is required using other millennial employees. Another limitation was the fact that the chosen participants were meant to remember their previous co-op in order to complete the questionnaire, which happened several

months in the past. This may have caused bias with certain questions as specific measures cannot be performed. The method used for this research was completely anonymous, yet some participants chose not to specify the companies they worked for.

This was purely for the use of comparison, yet the reasons why they chose to conceal this information is unknown. Further, the participants were biased when answering certain questions in the sense that they remembered specific managers for each question, as opposed to using one manager to measure his or her emotional intelligence level. This caused some results to deviate from the averages.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the correlation between emotional intelligence of hospitality managers and the effect on millennial employee. Within the context of this research, millennial employees in hospitality require emotionally intelligent managers to be more satisfied in the workplace. The concept of emotional intelligence was explored and was concluded to be crucial in developing the right skill set to positively influence millennial employee. Moreover, it will assist the manager to create a leadership style which will reflect positively in employee overall job satisfaction. Finally, by having emotionally intelligent managers, millennials in hospitality will be more satisfied, more motivated and thrive.

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Appendices

March 30th, 2019

Dear Survey Participant:

My name is Arijana Čemeljić and I am a senior student at RIT Croatia Dubrovnik, a global campus of Rochester Institute of Technology, based in Rochester, New York.

For my final research project in International Hospitality and Service Management, I am examining the effects of direct supervision on individual job satisfaction.

Because you are a hospitality student who has completed at least one year of co-operative education, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey. It will require approximately 5 minutes to complete. The survey questions are based on your most recent co-op experience.

Your participation is completely voluntary. The information you provide on this survey will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. There is no risk to you. For research purposes, please include the name of the company you last worked for.

If you choose to participate, please answer all questions as honestly and accurately as possible .

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

If you would like additional information about this survey or my research project, please contact me at axc8545@rit.edu or my mentor, Professor Milena Kuznin at mxkisr@g.rit.edu.

Sincerely,

ARIJANA CEMELJIC

Female Male

HTM IT

Year of Study _____ Last co-op (company name)_____

Based on your perceptions, circle the number in accordance with your agreement with the statement.

1 – completely disagree 2 – disagree 3 - neutral 4 – agree 5 – completely agree

1. My manager seemed patient when under pressure. 1 2 3 4 5

2. My manger seemed caring and kind. 1 2 3 4 5

3. My manager had great relationship with other managers/supervisors. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I could openly discuss matters with my manager regarding how I feel at my job.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. My manager seemed open to learn more about new information and experiences.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. My manager had a good sense of humor. 1 2 3 4 5
7. My manger seemed confident. 1 2 3 4 5
8. My manager took responsibility for his/her own actions. 1 2 3 4 5
9. My manager was disciplined and good at managing conflicts. 1 2 3 4 5

10. My manger showed good communication skills and interactions with others.
    1 2 3 4 5

11. My manager seemed good at managing stress/anxiety. 1 2 3 4 5

12. My manager accepted other people's perspectives. 1 2 3 4 5
13. My manager was optimistic most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
14. My manger approached to tasks in an inspiring manner. 1 2 3 4 5

15. It made a difference when my manger approached me as an individual. (as opposed to 'just another staff member')

1 2 3 4 5

16. My manger had a clear vision that was communicated within the company.

1 2 3 4 5

17. My manager could put himself/herself in "the other person's shoes" when in a situation with a sad or stressed employee.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Overall, I was satisfied with this co-op experience. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I would recommend this co-op to others. 1 2 3 4 5

20. When you think about the IDEAL manager, in your opinion, what would be their ONE important characteristic:

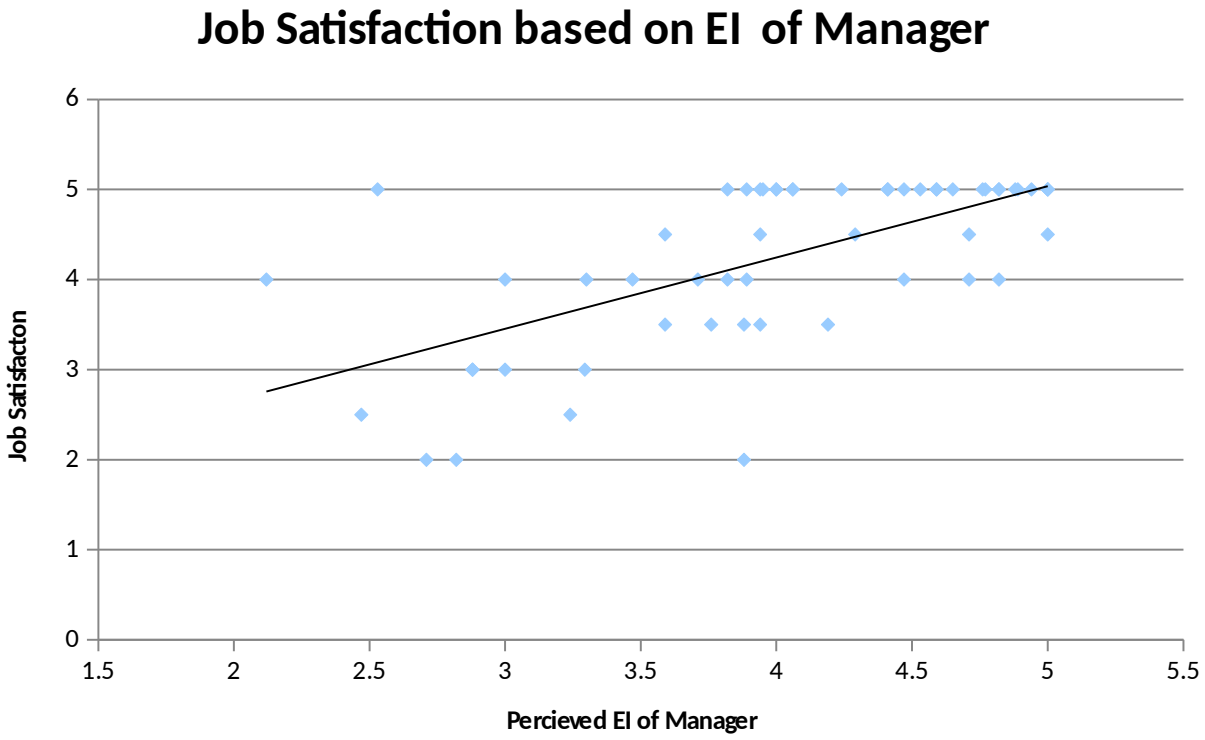
_____

Table 1. Perceived Emotional Intelligence of Manager

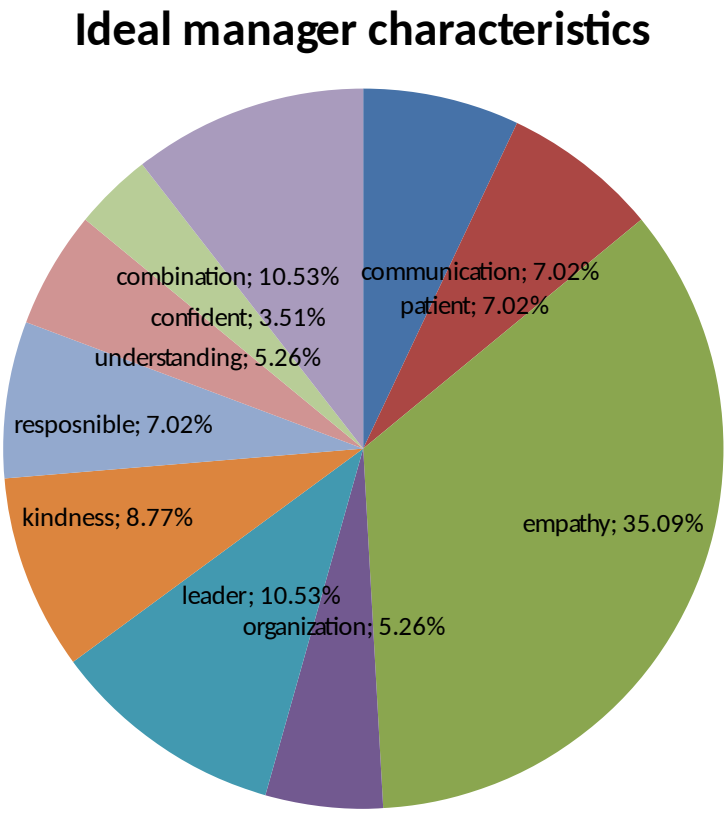
	Confidence	**Responsibility**	**Communication**	**Adaptability**
Mean	4,38	4,3	4,25	4,18
St. Dev.	0,78	0,91	0,77	0,95

Table 2. Overall Job satisfaction

Job Satisfaction (independent variable)	5	4,89	5	4,82	5	4,76	5	4,65	4,82
EI of Manager (dependent variable)	5	5	5	5	5	5	4,5	5	5



Graph 1. Correlation between the JS and EI



Graph 2. Ideal characteristics