Influence of Supervisors' Perception on Employee Tenure of Generation Y Employees in Selected Hotels in Kenya

Brendah Uluma[1], Noah Sitati[2], Beatrice Imbaya[3]

[1]Ph.D student, Moi University, P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

[2]Professor, Wildlife Species expert World Wildlife Fund Tanzania, P.O. Box 63117| Plot 252, Kiko Street, Mikocheni, Off Mwai Kibaki Rd, Tanzania

[3]Senior lecturer, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management, P.O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

Abstract: *Millennials have a reputation of fickleness for their jobs but few studies have directly examined the effect of supervisors' perceptions on Millennials and latters' tenure in hotel establishments. Most studies focus on the employees' perception of their supervisors rather than the supervisors' perception. Also, most studies focus on employees in general with few looking at specific age category of employees. The aim of this study was to ascertain the relationship between supervisors' perception of Generation Y employees and the Millennials' tenure in selected rated hotels inKenya. An explanatory research design was used. The target population was 33 departmental supervisors drawn from five hotels in Nairobi City and five hotels from the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). The study found a significant relationship (χ^2 =5.00, df=1, p=0.017) between supervisors' perceptions and Generation Y's employment tenure. An increase in negative perceptions by supervisors of their millennial employees increases the odds of highly educated Generation X managers held negative opinions about Millennials. The study recommends that hotel establishments should improve the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationship dyad, especially with respect to Generation X supervisor versus Generation Y subordinate relationship.*

Keywords: Generation Y (Millennials), supervisor perceptions, employment tenure

1. Introduction

In recent past there has been a lot of interest in employee tenure primarily because employee retention is one of the major challenges facing businesses today [1]. The hospitality industry particularly, is susceptible to these challenges owing to a combination of factors, including, high growth rate, high employee turnover and a vast range of unskilled through to highly skilled job roles [2] [3].Employee tenure has been defined as the amount of time that an employed person has spent working for the same employer, even if the person's job within the firm has changed [4]. Short employee tenure has been found to hinder learning, obstruct team effectiveness, upend established routines, and cause a loss of critical business knowledge [5] [6] [7]. In addition, short tenure denotes a high turnover rate which depletes a firm of valuable talent, and reduces the ability of an organisation to achieve its objectives [8]. It has been estimated that the average turnover costs ranges from 33% - 300% of an employee's annual salary [9]. Thus high employee turnover can be expensive, as firm loses money and time, through recruiting, training and retraining new workers.On the other hand,studies have shown that employees with long tenure are an asset and fundamental to achieving competitive advantage among organizations[10]. Long tenure is essential as it enhances effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of goods and services by organizations, be it in public or Private sector [11].

A growing trend in the Hospitality literature explores how organizational factors among different generations affect tenure. Factors such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions and withdrawal behavior affect tenure [12] [13][14]. The modern workforce is dominated by three major generations: Millennials: born between 1980 and 2000,Generation X: born between 1964 and 1979 and Baby Boomers who were born between 1946 and 1963). A fourth, the Silent Generation (born between 1925 and 1942) constitute only a minority. Whereas today's workforce consists of 30.6% Baby Boomers, 31.2% Generation X, and 32% Millennials, it is predicted that the latter cohort will form 50% of the global work personnel by 2020 [15], henceorganisations should prepare themselves to understand the new generational workforce.

The tourism industry is one of Kenya's crucial economic drivers, generating formal employment[16].In 2014, for instance, the tourism industry employed about 9.2% of Kenyan workers [16] [17]. Kenyans in formal employment and aged below 30 constitute two thirds and are not satisfied with their jobs [18]. A large number of them are willing to stay in the same job for a few years.For instance, [19] showed that Generation Y leave their corporations at the two year mark compared to Gen X's five years and Baby Boomers's seven years while [20] contended that although the average worker lasts in their job for 4.4 years, 91% of Millennials only lasts for about two years [19] [21].

In[22]) and [23] studies, supervisors who show supportfor employees and have quality relationships with them, improve the latters' job satisfaction, improves performance and increases tenure. It therefore follows that perceptions of employees on how their supervisors treated them or the latters' feelings about the workers' abilities, motivation and industry could determine employee tenure. It has been argued that Millennials prefer bosses who are open, positive,

and who empowers them [24], want managerial support, clear directions and give them freedom and flexibility, [25]. These values might be in opposition to those of their supervisors, who belong to other generations. For example, [26] reports that many supervisors who are mostly Baby Boomers,find Millennials a "headache" since they do not subscribe to a "do as you are told" management style. A study of 240 managers in Australia, [27] found that 70% of managers were dissatisfied with Generation Y (particularly their inferior spelling and grammar), 40% found them awkward to deal with, while many found Millennials as having less respect for authority than previous generations. These are generalized results across all sectors of employment. Since few studies have directly examined the effect of supervisors' perceptions on Millennials and latters' tenure in the hospitality industry. The objective of this study was to assess the influence of supervisors' perception of Generation Y employees and the latter's tenure in selected hotels in Kenya.

2. Literature Survey

The theory of generations hold that a generational cohort include individuals born during the same period in time, and therefore are around the same ages sharing significant events in society, for instance, wars, and momentous technological advances. Similarly, they undergo key milestones, such as start school, enter the workforce, and retire at the same time[28]. A generational cohort usually have their own set of beliefs, language, memories, history and experiences because of the shared political, social, cultural, environmental, technological and economic forces [26]. Academic and anecdotal evidence suggests differences exist between generations. Table 1 summarises the key influencing events that shaped the four generations and the ensuing personality traits.

Table 1: Summary of generations' key influencers and consequent traits

	Silent generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Key influencing events	• WWI & II • Great Depression • Grew up in traditional families, where authority was respected	• High birth rates • Economic boom • Traditional schools • Cherished as children/taught 'American dream'	• Dual income families & single parents • "Latch-key kids" • Financial, family & societal insecurity • Age of tolerance & diversity	• Digital world • Child-centric parenting & world • Better health care access & economic times
Consequent traits	• Conformers & respecters of authority • Duty before pleasure • Hardworking • Committed to family • Company first	• Ambitious • Loyal to careers & employers • Spend now, worry later • Workaholics/value status symbols • Loyal to children • Mom stayed home	• Self-reliant • Sceptics/cynics • Dislike authority /rules • Work-life balance • Entrepreneurial • Lack commitment to their organisations	• Self-confidence • Techno-savvy • Fun, flexible and want continuous feedback • Prefer mentoring and non-authoritarian managers • Self-absorbed • Global/networked

Adapted from [29]

The silent (Traditionals, Matures, Veterans, or Elders) Generation, growing up in traditional families and shaped by the two World Wars and the Great Depression, became hard workers, great savers, conformers, respecters of authority and believers of authority in early marriage and social institutions [29]. Traditional schools and the 'American dream' are thought to have engendered in Baby Boomers traits of workaholism, ambitiousness, and loyalty to employers and careers [30][29]. Generation X are thought to be self-reliant, skeptics, non-conformers, and entrepreneurs because of growing up in a milieu of economic meltdown, tolerance and working mothers [29]. Compared to other generations, Millennials tend to be more flexible, learn faster, and are communication savvy, networking with others through social media [31] because of growing up in a digital world. Their perpetual belief in technology and what it can achieve makes them more optimistic. Brought up by doting and highly participative parents, Millennials, are more confident than Generation X, who often came home from school to empty houses[30]. It has been suggested that Generation Y are innovative, independent, and self-absorbed [32], earning themselves the sobriquet, "Look at Me" generation. According to [33], Generation Y look for careers that they can be passionate about, want flexibility at workplace, areresult oriented and have a sense of belonging.

3. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in star rated hotels in Nairobi city and lodges in Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). Nairobi, Kenya's capital, leads the country in attracting workers, including Millennials because of many job opportunities, cultural, social and convenient amenities. The city, located between latitude: -1° 16' 59.99" S and longitude: 36° 49' 0.01" E, covers an area of about 684 sq. km and has a population of about 3 million people. The MMNR (Centre at 01 30' S,35 00' E; Altitude 4,921 – 7,119, Ft. (1500 to 2170 m) has an area of 181,200 ha, located 224 km west of Nairobi. The reserve, home to the Seventh Wonder of the World, has an abundance of varieties of large wildlife, such as the Big Five, a flow of tourist, lodges and hotels in the parks and surrounding areas.

This study employed an explanatory research design, which allowed for a deeper explanation of observed phenomena [33]. The study investigated immediate supervisors of Millennials drawn from five hotels in Nairobi: Crowne Plaza, Silver Springs, Intercontinental, Villa Rosa

Kempinski and Dusit hotels and five hotels in the MMNR: Mara Serena Safari, Sarova Mara, Mara Sopa, KichwaTembo and Mara Simba lodges. The target population for the study was 33 departmental supervisors in the hotels and lodges. The entire population (census) of managers was used in the study, since the total population was small and could therefore, be studied at minimal cost and in the absence of sampling error. Seventeen managers were drawn from the city establishments whereas 16 came from hotels in the MMNR.

Field study was conducted in August of 2015. The study employed questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The instrument was adjudged to be reliable as Cronbach Alpha value for supervisors' perceptions items was 0.78. Data was described, summarized, and organized using Descriptive statistics. The independent variable (IV) was supervisors' perceptions of Generation Y. It was conceptualized as a latent variable, measured using 11 Likert scale questions, whose responses ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The dependent variable was employees' tenure, measured by the longest time that 'Generation Y' employees had worked for the particular supervisor. The period consisted of less than a year, 1 – 5 years, and over 5 years.

Factor analysis, using principal components analysis (PCA) was used to decompose the IV, having many manifest sub variables into a few latent factors (Field, 2005). To improve interpretability of the factors, rotation was conducted using both promax (an oblique) and varimax (an orthogonal) methods. Correlations were analyzed using a non-parametric method, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), after the IV was banded into three discrete units on a scale of 1 – 5: Positive perception (1.0 – 2.39); Neutral (2.40 – 3.79); and Negative perception (3.80 – 5). The method transforms observed data in a nonlinear way in order to obtain transformed objects, which are as much homogeneous as possible. The degree of correlation in the technique is measured by the closeness of the variables on the graph; the closer the variables the higher the correlation [34].

A multinomial logistic (the dependent variable consisted of three categories) regression was carried out to determine the relationship between supervisors' perceptions of Millennials and the latters' employment tenure. The model tested was as follows:

$$Z = \alpha + b_n X_n + \epsilon \qquad (1)$$

Where,
Z = log odds (logit) of longest time a Millenial had worked for a particular supervisor
α = constant or intercept
b_n = logistic regression coefficient for a composite variable representing supervisors' perceptions
X_n = Supervisors' perceptions composite variable
ε = error term, whose variance is normally and randomly distributed

The statistical tests were analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21 and STATA, version 12. All the tests were two-tailed. Significant levels were measured at 95% level of confidence with significant differences recorded at p<0.05.

4. Results and Discussion

Sample Characteristics
The sample population was male dominated (six out of every 10 supervisors were male) and generally well educated (had either undergraduate or masters' degrees). However, a significant proportion of managers (30%) had O-levels, as their highest education level (Table 2). Most supervisors were married (73%) and old, with 39% and 33% aged between 36 to 45 years and 46 to 55 years, respectively.

Table 2: Supervisors' characteristics

Bio-graphic information	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Respondent's gender	Male	22	59.8
	Female	11	40.2
	Total	**33**	**100**
Respondent's highest education level	Primary	0	0
	O – level	10	30.3
	Undergraduate	17	51.5
	Masters	6	18.2
	PhD	0	0
	Total	**33**	**100**
Respondent's age	25 years or less	2	6.1
	26-35 years	7	21.2
	36-45 years	13	39.4
	46-55 years	11	33.3
	Total	**33**	**100**
Respondent's marital status	Single	4	12.1
	Married	24	72.7
	Divorced	0	0
	Separated	3	9.1
	Widowed	2	6.1
	Total	**33**	**100**

Length of time Millennials have worked in the Hotel
The managers were asked about the length of time that Generation Y employees had worked in the hotel (employment tenure). Most of the employees had worked for either between 1 – 5 years or for over five years (both, n=12, 38%). Only 25% of the workers (n=8) had worked for less than one year.

Type of mentors that Millennials prefer
Supervisors were asked on the type of mentor preferred by 'Generation Y' employees [the scale ranged from 1 (least important) to 3 (very important)]. The results showed that, according to supervisors, Milleninals' mostly preferred supportive mentors, followed by mentors who gave them a lot of freedom, and achievement-oriented mentors. However, they disliked directive mentors (Table 3).

Table 3: Types of mentors preferred by Millennials

Type of mentor (n=33)	Mean	Std. Deviation
A mentor who gives all the instructions and rules	1.82	0.88
An achievement-oriented mentor who provides ongoing feedback	2.39	0.86
A mentor who gives them much freedom at work place	2.42	0.90
A supportive mentor who offers help when needed	2.55	0.79

Supervisors' perception of Millennials' work habits
The managers were asked how they felt about Millennials work habits. These weremeasured on a scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The results showed that 'Generation Y' employees' most favoured work habit was the preference for flexible and open-minded bosses, followed by wanting to participate in decision making at work, preference for instant response during communication,

and wanting more opportunities for advancement at the work place. They also preferred prestigious job titles, were more adaptable to working in different environments, and favoured choosing their working hours flexibly. However, fewer preferred working from home or could not balance life/school and work commitments, according to the managers (Figure 1).
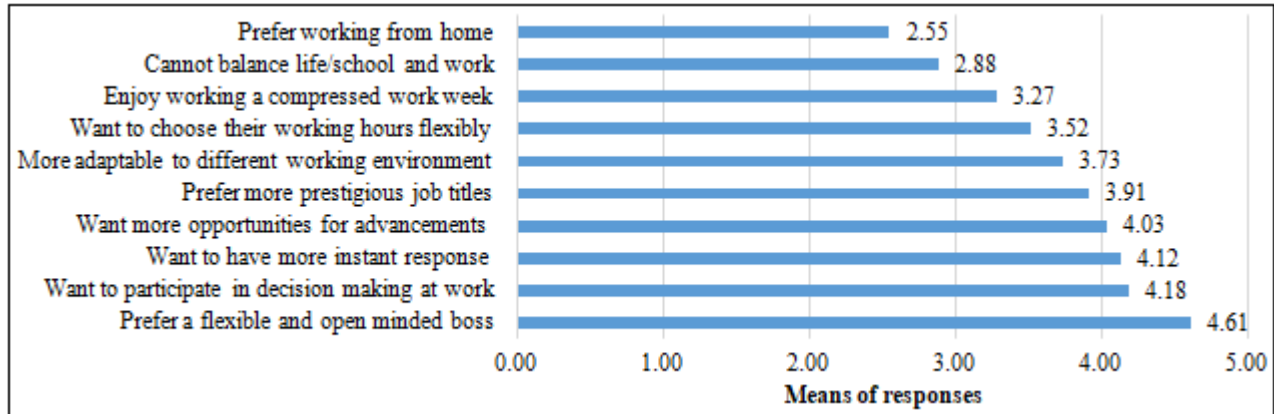

Figure 1: Perceptions of supervisors about millennial employees' work habits

Supervisors' perceptions of Millennials
The supervisors were asked about their perception of 'Generation Y' employees, measured on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
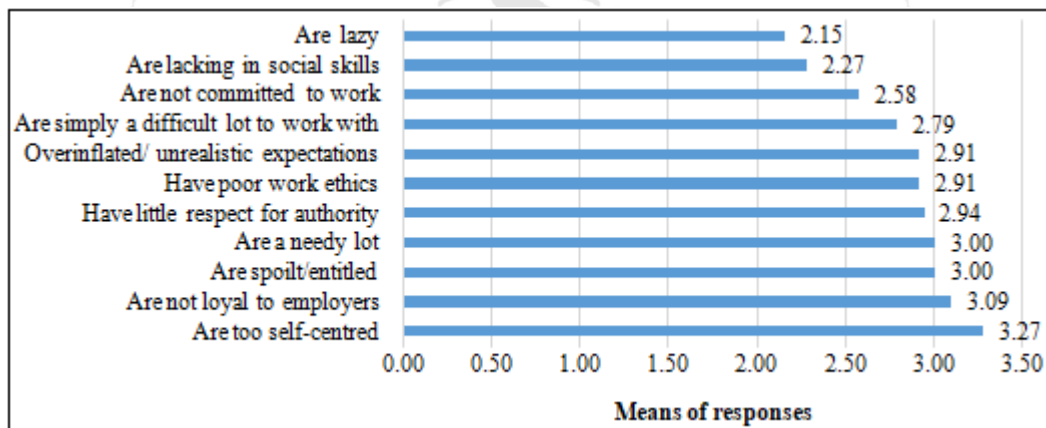

Figure 2 Supervisors'' perception of Generation Y employees

The mid-point of the scale was 2.5. The results showed that fewer managers considered Millennials as lazy and lacking social skills. However, most supervisors regarded Millennials as being: too self-centered, non-loyal to employers, spoilt/entitled, needy, having little respect for authority, possessing poor work ethics and generally being difficult to work with. However, managers were split, roughly equally, about Millennials commitment to their work.

Relationship between supervisors' perception of Generation Y employees and the latter's tenure in selected star rated hotels in Kenya
A principal component analysis was conducted initially on responses to 11 Likert scale questions measuring supervisors' perceptions of 'Generation Y' employees gathered from 33 managers in the study (see above section). Various criteria employed showed that the 11 items were

factorable. The determinant of 0.001 suggested that multicollinearity might not have been a problem among the variables manifested. Factorability of R was 0.81 while the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (χ^2 = 188.131, df=55, p<0.001), was significant, which indicated that the correlation matrix of the original variables was not an identity matrix, and thus, suggesting that a factor model was appropriate. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above 0.5, which showed latent structure among the observed variables. Lastly, bivariate correlations for the 11 variables were all at least 0.3 and there was none which was above 0.9, indicating no singularity in the data.

Initially, when all the 11 variables were used, three components with Eigen values explaining 70.59% of the variance were obtained. However, three items: 'lacking in social skills', 'have poor work ethics', and 'are lazy' had cross loadings of over 0.4 on more than one component and

were removed from the analysis. This produced a one-component factor solution that had Eigen values which accounted for 53.796% of the variance. Varimax (rather than promax) rotation provided the best-defined component structure and was adopted (Table 4).

Table 4 Factor Loadings and Communalities Based on a Principal Components Analysis for eight Items Measuring supervisors' perception of employees (N = 33)

Supervisors' perceptions	Component 1	Communality
Have overinflated/ unrealistic expectations	.829	.687
Are not committed to work	.804	.646
Are not loyal to employers	.780	.608
Are simply a difficult lot to work with	.768	.590
They have little respect for authority	.746	.556
They are spoilt/entitled	.743	.552
They are a needy lot	.677	.458
They are too self-centred Cronbach Alpha (Composite .889)	.455 .889	.207

The operative variable, "supervisors' perception of employees" was computed by adding the sub variables with component loadings of greater than 0.7, and then taking an average. A MCA was analyzed to assess the relationship between the supervisors' perceptions and their gender, highest education level, location of the hotel, and their age. The model could explain about 51% of the variance in the original variables (inertia=0.50.55), with dimension one and two accounting for 52% and 49% of the variability, respectively while mean Cronbach's Alpha was 0.52. This showed that the model fit for the data. The results indicated that supervisors with negative perceptions of Millennials were likely to be Generation X (36-45 years old), male, and with masters' education (Figure 3). Supervisors with positive opinions of Generation Y were likely to be Baby Boomers (46-55 years old) and have poor education (O-levels). On the other hand, female Millennials (26-35 years old), with undergraduate education and working in urban establishments were likely to have a neutral perception of

their fellow Millennial employees. Managers in rural lodges were split between those with positive and negative perceptions about Millennials.
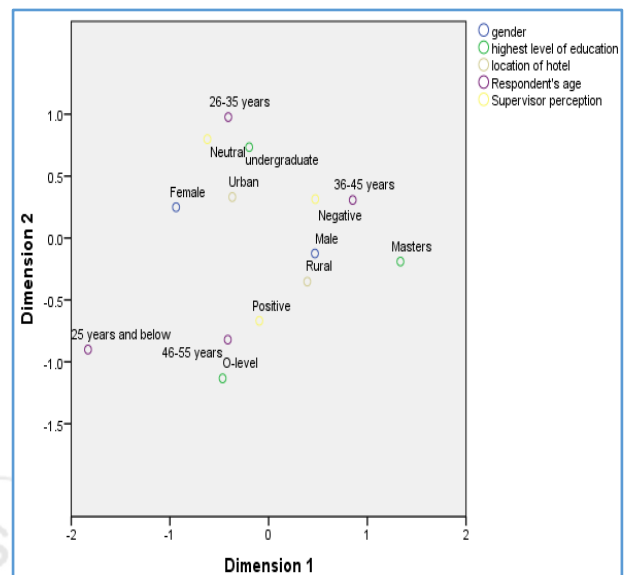

Figure 3: Joint plot of categories for supervisors' perceptions and demographical characteristics

A multinomial logistic regression analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis: there is no relationship between supervisors' perceptions of Generation Y and Generation Y employees' tenure in selected hotels Kenya. The independent latent variable was perception of employees while the dependent variable was employees' tenure, measured by the longest time that 'Generation Y' employees had worked for the particular supervisor. The period consisted of less than a year, 1 – 5 years, and over 5 years. A test of the whole model against a constant model was statistically significant (χ^2 = 24.01, df = 2, p < .0001), meaning that the predictors as a set indicate respondents who were likely to leave the hotel, stay, or who were undecided.

Table 5: Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis of 33 supervisors' perception of 'Generation Y' employees

Employee Predictor Tenure		B	SE B	Wald's χ^2	*df*	*p*	E^B (Odds ratio)
Less than a year	Intercept	-14.77	6.606	5.001	1	.025	
	Perception of employees	3.644	1.531	5.666	1	.017	38.258
1-5 years	Intercept	-.435	1.076	.164	1	.686	
	Perception of employees	.212	.411	.265	1	.607	1.236
Test				χ^2	*df*		*P*
Overall model evaluation Likelihood ratio test Cox and Snell R^2 = .599, Nagelkerke R^2 (Max rescaled R^2) = .690				24.01	2		p<0.0001

Reference category: Over 5 years

Compared to employees who stay for over five years, increased negative perception of employees led them to exit the hotel after less than a year (χ^2 =5.00, df=1, p=0.017) but not between 1 – 5 years (χ^2 =0.265, df=1, p=.607). An increase in negative perception by supervisors of their employees by one unit increases the odds of leaving the hotel after just one year by a factor of 38.26. The results suggest that when managers perceive their Millennial

charges negatively, the latter are likely to quit sooner (within a year) rather than later (after a year).

5. Discussion

Millennials were found to be prefer supportive mentors, those who gave them a lot of freedom, and achievement-oriented mentors but disliked directive mentors. This is in line with [24], who suggested that Generation Y preferred

bosses who are open, positive, and who empowers them and [26] who reported that the generation resents the "do as you are told" management style.

Most supervisors regarded Millenials as being: too self-centred, non-loyal to employers, spoilt/entitled, needy, having little respect for authority, possessing poor work ethics and generally being difficult to work with. This was in line with the finding by [26][27] [35]. For instance, [26] reported that many supervisors find Millennials a "headache" as they do not follow instructions as given whereas [35] argued that the generation often have unrealistic expectations when it comes to promotions and remuneration. Interestingly, the study found that managers with the most noxious opinions about Millennials were Generation X, whereas Baby Boomers and fellow millennial managers had positive and neutral perceptions, respectively. This was unlike [26] who found that Baby Boomers had the most negative perception of Generation Y. The study also found that highly educated males had negative opinions about Millennials whereas poorly educated managers had positive opinions. Older cohort supervisors are usually perceived to be more trustworthy, less likely to be in competition with young workers, and more likely to accept and succeed in the mentor role [36]. Given the proximity of Generation X and Y, the two are likely to be in competition with each other at work while the latter generation is less likely to consider the former as honest mentors. In addition, the traits of self-reliance, scepticism, non-confidence, and independence of Generation X are likely to clash with the self-confidence, self-absorbedness, flexibility, and the need for mentoring exhibited by Millennials [30] [32] [37] hence the negative opinions between the generations.

The study found an empirical relationship between supervisor perception and employee short tenure, with negative perceptions increasing the odds of leaving the hotel job within just a year. This finding could be a first demonstration in the Kenya's tourism industry of this relationship and is in line with the findings by [22] [23], who reported that the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship is germane in determining the latters' job satisfaction and turnover.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the relationship between supervisors' perception of Generation Y employees and Generation Y employees' tenure in selected star rated hotels in Kenya.Most supervisors considered Generation Y as being self-centred, non-loyal to employers, spoilt/entitled, needy, having little respect for authority, possessing poor work ethics and generally being difficult to work with. Generation X managers had the most negative perceptions about Millennials whereas Baby Boomers and fellow Millennial managers had positive and neutral perceptions, respectively. Supervisor negative perceptions about Millennials increases the odds of the latter leaving the hotel job within just a year. The study recommends that hotel establishments should be cognizant to generational differences in the workplace and work to improve the supervisor-subordinate relationship dyad, especially with

respect to Generation X supervisor versus Generation Y subordinate relationship.

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Author Profile

Brendah Nawekulo Uluma is a Ph.D. Student in Tourism management in the school of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management, Moi University, Kenya. She is currently working as a lecturer in the said institution and has ten years of teaching experience in Human resource management.

Prof. Noah Sitati from Kenya, Completed his PhD in Biodiversity Management in 2003 from Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent, UK. He is working with WWF Tanzania as a Wildlife Species Expert having worked as a university lecturer in Kenya.

Dr. Beatrice OhutsoImbaya is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management, Moi University, Kenya. She holds a Ph.D in Tourism Management from the same university and researches in Tourism Entrepreneurship, Community Based and Rural Tourism, Tourism Education and Development. She has published numerous articles in these areas and presented several papers at various academic fora. Her teaching career, both at tertiary and university level spans a period of 30 years. She has held several administrative responsibilities including serving as the Head of Tourism Management Department, Moi University for 6 years; Head of Department of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management at The Eldoret Polytechnic for 7 years and Deputy Principal of Friends College Kaimosi and Kisumu National Polytechnic in Kenya for 3 years.