

How to Satisfy Generation Y? The Roles of Personality and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating effect of Generation Y employees' emotional intelligence levels on the relationships between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction. Participants were 477 engineers, who completed the Big Five Model of personality, Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale. The results show a significant relationship between Generation Y employees' emotional intelligence and their job satisfaction. Hierarchical regression analyses reveal that personality characteristics and job satisfaction of Generation Y employees are mediated by their emotional intelligence. The negative relationships between Generation Y employees' neuroticism and their job satisfaction are fully mediated, whereas the relationships between their being extraverted, conscientious, agreeable and open to experiences and job satisfaction are partially mediated by their emotional intelligence. The findings indicate that organizations should focus more on giving importance to the emotional intelligence of Generation Y employees, which is the underlying effect between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Key Words: *Generation Y, Personality, Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction.*

Introduction

Today organizations need to focus more on transforming their work environments in order to satisfy their employees to engage in behavior, which is consistent with their aim of specifically competing in global surrounding. In this sense, organizations should realize the differences in preferences of job satisfaction between employees' generations. A generation is an identifiable group, which shares similar age and significant life events at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Managers, researchers and human resource specialists increasingly become interested in how to manage, retain and satisfy their employees from different generations. Generation Y (Gen Y) is the newest generation of employees to enter the labor force. With the emergence of Gen Y into the workforce, differences that exist between Gen Y and other Generations arise as a legitimate issue, which organizations need to consider (Twenge, 2010). Gen Y employees, who born between 1980 and 2000, also known as the Internet Generation, the Nexters, the Millennials, and the Echo Boomers, are different from the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and Generation X (1965-1979) in terms of work related values and attitudes (Cogin, 2012; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Macky, Gardner & Forsyth, 2008; McGuire, Todnem By & Hutchings, 2007). They expect involvement in the workplace (Gursoy, Maier & Chi, 2008), want fairness, equity and tolerance (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007), concern for opportunities for development, training and work variety (Terjesen, Vinnicombe & Freeman, 2007). The key differences in the work values and beliefs of Gen Y employees can lead to

misunderstanding, miscommunication, conflict in the work, lower employee productivity and reduced job satisfaction (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Macky et al., 2008). Hence, organizations need to understand the factors that influence the job satisfaction of this newest generation of employees in order to engage and retain them (Salahuddin, 2010).

Research on the dispositional sources of job satisfaction has long been recognized (Furnham & Zacherl, 1986; Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000; O'Reilly & Roberts, 1975). The dispositional approach is based on the assumption that some individual personality characteristics have an influence on employee job satisfaction (Illies & Judge, 2003, O'Reilly & Roberts, 1975). The social context in which a generational group develops influences their personality, their values and beliefs about organizations, their feelings towards authority and their goals (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Each generation develops distinct characteristics, which lead to distinguish their feelings toward work (Kupperschmidt, 2000). However, the empirical evidence is scant (Twenge, 2010) and there has been limited research about examining generational preferences in personality and motivational drives.

There are certainly some other factors, which influence job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be defined as complex emotional reactions to the job (Locke, 1969) and it is positively associated with the construct of emotional intelligence (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969; Wong & Law, 2002). The literature regarding emotional intelligence displays that employees' emotional intelligence levels have direct relationships to their job satisfaction such that employees who have higher levels of emotional intelligence, are more satisfied with their work environment (Carmeli, 2003; Sy, Tram & O'Hara, 2006). Thereby, the present study aims to propose and test an integrative model, which considers both personality characteristics and emotional intelligence as predictors of Gen Y employees' job satisfaction. Such inquiry is important as it examines a mediated relationship, which reflects a process of associating Gen Y employees' personalities with their work attitudes.

In the present study, Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence is examined as the specific mediator for the reason that Gen Y employees' several personality characteristics may enhance their emotional intelligence, and thus facilitate their satisfaction at work.

Generation Y Characteristics

Gen Y employees have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and they want an open and tolerant society. They were born with technology; they are information and media savvy. They have self-confidence and optimism about the future (Angeline, 2011). They combine collaboration with networking and interdependence and show a high favor in teamwork. Additionally, this generation has a high capability in multitasking (Dougan, Thomas & Christina, 2008). On the other hand, Gen Y employees like to be allowed the freedom and flexibility while completing their tasks in their own style (Martin, 2005). They have a tendency to think in the short-term and they expect immediate feedback and rewards for their efforts in the organization (Lowe, Levitt & Wilson, 2011).

Research on Gen Y employees agree that this generation value skill development and enjoy the challenge of new opportunities (Huntley, 2006; Szamosi, 2006; Terjesen et al., 2007). However, Gen Y is comfortable with change; high levels of turnover and job dissatisfaction are often accepted as normal for this generation (DiPietro & Pizam, 2008). Gen Y employees are willing to work hard, but they are not loyal to the organization in which they work. They can go from one organization to another very easily due to their increase of their self-esteem (Twenge, 2010). As a result of this being raised self-esteem movement, when they enter a job, they see themselves as a desirable commodity worthy for special treatment (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010). Gen Y employees believe that they do not have to put in as much work as their older generations to obtain a promotion, which they think they deserve (Kelly & McGowen, 2011). The factors, which influence the job satisfaction of Gen Y employees, are different from other generations

and thus, organizations should consider these factors in order to manage and retain this generation (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010).

Personality and Job Satisfaction

The impact of employees' personalities on both affective and behavioral responses to their job has been reported in many studies (Agho, Mueller & Price, 1994; Judge et al., 2000; Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002; Johns, Xie & Fang, 1992; Renn & Vandenberg, 1995; Roberts, & Foti, 1998). For over the past half century, researchers have integrated the notion of individual differences into their theories regarding the determinants of employee job satisfaction (Argyris, 1973; Dubin, 1956; Schneider, Goldstein & Smith, 1995). Consensus has been emerged that Big Five model of personality (Goldberg, 1990) involving conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and neuroticism, can be used to describe the most salient aspects of personality. Of these Big Five traits, conscientiousness has been found positively correlated with employee job satisfaction in many studies (Furnham, Eracleous & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009; Judge et al., 2002; Salgado, 1997). As conscientious employees are achievement oriented, careful, persevering and hard-working (Barrick & Mount, 1991), they are likely to receive higher intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, thus consequently increasing their job satisfaction.

Extraversion, which is related to experience of positive emotions, being sociable, assertive, talkative and active (Costa & McCrae, 1992), has been found also positively correlated with employee job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002; Furnham, 2002) as positive emotionality likely generalizes to higher satisfaction at work (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000).

Agreeableness describes altruism, caring, nurturance and emotional support and it is associated with being trustful, cooperative, tolerant and forgiving (Digman, 1990). As agreeable employees have greater motivation to achieve interpersonal intimacy that leads to higher levels of well-being, agreeableness has been found positively correlated with job satisfaction in several studies (Acuna, Gomez & Juristo, 2009; Aydogmus, Ergeneli & Camgoz, 2015; Judge et al., 2002).

Openness to experience is related to divergent thinking, being imaginative, original, intelligent and broad minded (McCrae, 1996). Employees, who have higher scores of this characteristic, have a need for variety and unconventional values (McCrae & John, 1992). It has been reported that none of these psychological states of openness to experience seem to be closely related to job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002) and its direct influence on job satisfaction is unclear (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). However, Gen Y employees possess innovative ideas and they are good at new technological areas. The most common factors that drive Gen Y employees to leave for another job are more challenging work and need for professional development, which are related to being intelligent, original and innovative (Alexander & Sysko, 2012). Therefore, openness to experience is included to the analyses in the present study.

Finally, neuroticism correlated negatively with job satisfaction (Aydogmus et al., 2015; Brief, Butcher & Roberson, 1995; Furnham & Zacherl, 1986) as neurotic employees experience more negative life events (Magnus, Deiner, Fujit & Pavot, 1993). Such employees are depressed, angry, worried and embarrassed (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

With the emergence of Gen Y into the workforce, both managers and researchers began to consider the personality differences of Gen Y compared with other generations. In this respect, organizations should focus on the personality preferences of Gen Y employees in order to manage and satisfy them, as they are quite different from Generation X or Baby Boomers (Huntley, 2006). Nonetheless, despite of the studies about personality and job satisfaction, the understanding of how Gen Y employees' personalities influence their job satisfaction is underdeveloped.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence is referred as the ability to monitor individual's own and others' feelings and emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995) adopted Salovey and Mayer's definition of emotional intelligence and categorized the components of it as self-awareness (understanding one's own emotions), self-management (managing emotions), social awareness (empathy) and relationship management (handling relationships). Wong and Law (2002) also used Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) definitions of emotional intelligence. They used Gross' model (1998) of emotion regulation in order to understand the effect of emotional intelligence on organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction. They conceptualized emotional intelligence as composed of four distinct dimensions, which are self-emotion appraisal (SEA) referred as the ability to understand one's emotions before regulating, others' emotional appraisal (OEA) defined as the ability to understand the emotions of others, use of emotion (UOE) that is the ability to make use of emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and regulation of emotion (ROE) referred as the ability to regulate emotions.

Research has shown that employees with high emotional intelligence have higher levels of job satisfaction (Kafetsios, & Zampetakis, 2008; Sy et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002) as they are more skillful in regulating their own emotions compared to employees with low emotional intelligence. Additionally, high emotional intelligent employees are better at identifying feelings of stress, thus regulate their emotions to reduce stress. They can also develop strategies to deal with negative consequences of stress (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). On the contrary, low emotional intelligent employees have fewer abilities to cope with their emotions when faced with difficult situations, thus they experience more stress, which causes less job satisfaction.

Employees with high emotional intelligence can utilize their abilities in order to appraise and manage the emotions with others and they are likely to have higher job satisfaction (Shimazu, Shimazu, & Odahara, 2004). The ability to apply response-focused emotion regulation enables high emotional intelligent employees to have better relationships with their colleagues and managers, consequently cause greater satisfaction from their jobs (Wong & Law, 2002). As seen, there is accumulating evidence that emotional intelligence abilities positively influence employees' job satisfaction (Carmeli, 2003; Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). However, there has been limited research about the relationship between Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence and their job satisfaction (Baskaran & Vijayaragavan, 2015; Kowske, Rasch & Wiley, 2010).

Personality and Emotional Intelligence

Research has provided evidence about the relationship between Big Five personality characteristics and emotional intelligence (Eysenck, 1994; Stankov & Crawford, 1998). Extraverts are open to others and tend to be informal in their connections with other people and these characteristics are related to interpersonal intelligence, which is the ability to read the moods, intentions, and desires of others (Gardner, 1983). Employees high in extraversion are sociable, outgoing and friendly (Costa & McCrae, 1992). They tend to have the ability to understand their own and other emotions compared with the employees with low extraversion (Hundani, Redzuan & Hamsau, 2012). Gen Y employees are described as highly socialized (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010). In Turkey, Gen Y employees' extraversion was found positively correlated with their self-emotion appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion (Ordun & Akun, 2016).

Gen Y employees are willing to work hard and put in extra effort for immediate rewards and praise. They want the best and strive for the best (Na'Desh, 2008). Conscientiousness is related to achievement, goal oriented and self-efficacy. Gen Y employees having high conscientiousness have higher emotional intelligence due their ability to utilize their own emotions in order to increase their performance (Ordun & Akun, 2016).

Research has revealed that agreeableness is positively correlated with emotional intelligence (Davies, Stankov & Roberts, 1998; Van Der Zee, Thijs & Schakel, 2002). High agreeable people are warm and they tend to be sensitive to others' wishes and like corporation. These characteristics are associated with the cognitive and behavioral responses directed at the emotions of others. Gen Y employees tend to be selfish and they are willing to go from one company to another very easily. However, they are confident and team oriented, they like collaboration (Alexander & Sysko, 2012). Thus, high agreeable Gen Y employees have the ability to understand others' emotion, as well as regulating their own emotions, which result in high emotional intelligence levels (Ordun & Akun, 2016).

Employees high in openness to experience appreciate of new experiences, tend to be imaginative and have proactive seeking (Furnham et al., 2009). Openness to experience is also termed as "Intellect" (Goldberg, 1990). Van der Zee, Thijs and Schakel (2002) suggest that this characteristic is related to the regularities, which individuals find to be indicative of intelligence in everyday life of others. Openness to experience explains a higher proportion of variance in employee performance and effectiveness than intellectual intelligence (Goleman & Cherniss, 2001). It affects an employee's success in an organization and high emotional intelligent employees are expected to attend higher achievements, as well as contribute significantly to the organization performance (Carmeli & Josman, 2006). Gen Y employees may be the most adaptable yet in terms of technological skills. They give high importance on autonomy and tend to seek out work opportunities that supply freedom and like new experiences (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Gen Y employees high in openness to experiences were found to be positively correlated with their self-emotion appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion in Turkey (Ordun & Akun, 2016).

Neurotic people are depressive, vulnerable and worried; they view the world from a negative lens. They find it difficult to use their emotions and understand other people around them. As individuals' abilities to regulate their emotions are negatively related with their bad temper, worry and fragility, people high in neuroticism can hardly regulate their emotions. Therefore, a negative relationship has been confirmed between neuroticism and EI (Davies et al., 1998).

Van Der Zee, Thijs and Schakel (2002) found positive relationship between extraversion and emotional intelligence, whereas they confirmed negative relationship between neuroticism and emotional intelligence. In their study, Bracket and Mayer (2003) found high significant correlations between neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness and emotional intelligence, whereas they found openness to experience is moderately related to emotional intelligence. Singh and Sharma (2009) observed the negative relationship between neuroticism and emotional intelligence. Day, Therrian and Carroll (2005) found particularly extraversion and conscientiousness are positively correlated with emotional intelligence. Hundani, Redzuan and Hamsau (2012) observed conscientiousness, openness, extraversion and agreeableness are positively correlated with emotional intelligence. Similarly, Athota, O'Connor and Jackson (2009) found positive correlations between four of the Big Five characteristics (extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness) and emotional intelligence, whereas neuroticism is negatively correlated with emotional intelligence.

Mediated relationships: Personality – Emotional Intelligence - Job Satisfaction

It has been suggested that organizations have to understand the key generational personality preferences of Gen Y employees in order to maintain a high performing and satisfied workforce (Wong, Gardiner, Lang & Coulon, 2008). There is a general agreement about the dispositional sources of employee job satisfaction (Aydogmus et al., 2015; Furnham et al., 2009; Judge et al., 2002). Nevertheless, employees' personality characteristics also influence their emotional intelligence levels (Day et al., 2005; Van Der Zee et al., 2002) and employees, who are high in emotional intelligence tend to feel more satisfied from their jobs (Sy et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002).

However, the understanding of how Gen Y employees' personality characteristics influence their job satisfaction is underdeveloped despite of the research that currently exists. As researchers note that personality characteristics significantly influence emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, it is inferred that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence may play an intermediary role in their dispositional sources of job satisfaction. Therefore, the present study will attempt to verify whether Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence is a mediator variable between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction.

The literature reviewed above showed the mediation conditions applied to this study: (a) Gen Y employees' personality characteristics are valid predictors of their job satisfaction, (b) Gen Y employees' personality characteristics are related to their emotional intelligence, and (c) Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence levels are related to their job satisfaction. Thus, it is plausible to expect that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction as such;

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence will mediate a positive relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction of Gen Y employees.

Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence will mediate a positive relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction of Gen Y employees.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence will mediate a positive relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction of Gen Y employees.

Hypothesis 4: Emotional intelligence will mediate a positive relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction of Gen Y employees.

Hypothesis 5: Emotional intelligence will mediate a negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction of Gen Y employees

Method

Sample and Procedure

This study consists of a convenience sample of Gen Y employees (1980-2000) working at IT (Information Technology) companies in Turkey. All of the participants were engineers and they were assured that their responses would be confidential. The standard, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 650 employees; of those 477 were returned with a response rate of 73.3 %. Females made up 45 %, whereas men made up 55% of the sample. The average tenure of the employees was 2.5.

Measures

The research survey was designed to gather information about Gen Y employees' personality characteristics, emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Responses to all of the following multi-item scales were averaged to form composite variables.

Big- Five Personality: The 44 item Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) was used to assess the personality characteristics of Gen Y employees. Some examples of the sets of items are as follows: "Generates a lot of enthusiasm" for extraversion; "perseveres until the task is finished" for conscientiousness; "is helpful and unselfish with others" for agreeableness; "is original, comes up with new ideas" for openness to experience and "worries a lot" for neuroticism. The Turkish translation and adaptation of the instrument was conducted by Sumer, Lajunen, and Ozkan (2005). Internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) for each of the BFI subscales were all at reasonable intervals, ranging from 0.70 to 0.75.

Emotional Intelligence: Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence were measured by Wong and Law (2002) scale. The scale consists of 16 items. Sample items are "I am a self-motivated person" and "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions". Participants rated five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1)" to "strongly agree (5)". Higher scores were indicative of greater levels of emotional intelligence. The Turkish translation and adaptation of the instrument was conducted by Guleryuz, Guney, Aydin and Asan (2008). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82.

Job Satisfaction: Gen Y employees' job satisfaction was assessed by using 20 item short form of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Participants rated Likert scale ranging from "very dissatisfied (1)" to "satisfied (5)". Turkish translation and adaptation of the instrument was conducted by Bilgic (1998). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86.

In the present study, suggestions of Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) and the remedies of Chang, Witteloostuijn and Eden (2010) were followed to reduce common method biases. Different scale endpoints and response anchors for the criterion and predictor variables were used. The order of the questionnaire items was manipulated and Harman's single factor-test was applied. All of the items were entered together into a factor analysis and the results of the unrotated factor solution were examined. Consequently, no single factor accounted for the majority of the covariances. Besides, no general factor was apparent suggesting that common method variance was not a serious issue (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Control variables: Prior studies have demonstrated that gender and job tenure can be potential predictors of employees' job satisfaction (Ellickson & Logsdon, 2002; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Valentine & Fleischman, 2008).

Therefore, in the analyses they were included as control variables. Age was not taken as a control variable, because all of the participants were in Y Generation (1980-2000).

Results

Preliminary Factor Analyses

Following the two step procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), first the measurement model was examined, second hypotheses were tested. In order to test the factor structure of the main study variables and to determine how well the measurement model fit the data (Bollen, 1989), a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted. Outliers and univariate distributions were scanned for skewness and kurtosis scores in order to test the normality assumptions. These were found to be within reasonable ranges (Skewness <2; Kurtosis values <2). Multivariate normality with Mardia's coefficient of the value for kurtosis was inspected and no violation was found in the data. In the study, all of the indexes were evaluated according to Byrne's (2010) recommendations.

CFA results revealed that the model did not initially provided a good fit with the data for the BFI scale [χ^2 ($df = 20$) = 83.888, GFI = 0.79, CFI = 0.74, TLI = 0.72 and RMSEA = 0.08]¹. Three items have insignificant loadings namely, item 5 related to agreeableness, item 6 related to openness to experience and item 5 related to neuroticism. Therefore, these items were removed. Then CFA was conducted on the remaining items. Based on the modification indices, a path covariance was added between error terms of items 5 and 7 loadings on extraversion scores. Next another path of covariance was added between error items of 2 and 7 loadings on conscientiousness scores. Finally, the final model shows a better fit to the data

¹ The criteria for a good fit (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006): χ^2/df ratio < 3, GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI 0.90), CFI = Comparative Fit Index (CFI 0.90), TLI = Tucker Lewis Index (TLI 0.90), RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA < 0.08).

[χ^2 ($df = 19$) = 52.851, GFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95 and RMSEA = 0.06]. For each dimension of BFI, indexes were created by averaging the relevant items.

For the emotional intelligence scale, the 16 items were averaged to create a single index. Conducting CFA revealed that the scale did not initially provide a good fit to the data. [χ^2 ($df = 75$) = 460.541, RMSEA = 0.17]. Items 9 and 16 had insignificant loadings, thus after these items were removed CFA was conducted on the remaining ones. Following the inspection of the modification indices, it was determined that the model provided an adequate fit after covariance terms were added between items 4 and 14 and items 10 and 12 [χ^2 ($df = 66$) = 226.008, GFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92 and RMSEA = 0.07]. All estimated loadings were significant.

For the job satisfaction scale, the unidimensional model did not initially provide a good fit to the data [χ^2 ($df = 135$) = 553.543, GFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.82, TLI = 0.79 and RMSEA = 0.08]. Based on the modification indices, after covariance terms were added between items 2 and 15 and items 8 and 13, the model of job satisfaction provided an adequate fit [χ^2 ($df = 128$) = 364.026, GFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.91 and RMSEA = 0.06]. All estimated loadings were significant.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, alpha coefficients and intercorrelations among the study variables. For the reliability tests, final reliability coefficients of the scales and subscales yielded high internal reliability coefficients (in a range between .70 and .86).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlations among variables

Variable	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	-	-	-								
2. Job tenure	2.55	1.06	.07								
3. Conscientiousness	3.67	.65	-.15**	.16**	(.73)						
4. Extraversion	3.68	.76	-.04	-.06	.27**	(.72)					
5. Agreeableness	3.34	.54	-.01	.03	.19**	.22**	(.70)				
6. Openness	3.68	.61	.01	.09*	.24**	.32**	.05	(.71)			
7. Neuroticism	2.87	.76	-.13	-.02	-.11*	-.21**	-.01	-.12**	(.75)		
8. EI	3.81	.54	.05	.04	.31**	.37**	.16**	.34**	-.41**	(.82)	
9. JS	4.18	.48	-.16**	-.05	.32**	.24**	.15**	.20**	-.06*	.31**	(.86)

Note: Gender is coded as 0 = woman, 1 = man.

N = 477, * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Cronbach alpha coefficients are in parentheses in the diagonal.

Openness = Openness to experience, EI = Emotional Intelligence, JS = Job Satisfaction

The correlations among the variables provide initial support for our hypotheses, such that significant positive correlations are found between the job satisfaction and emotional intelligence ($r = .31, p < .01$), conscientiousness ($r = .32, p < .01$), extraversion ($r = .24, p < .01$), agreeableness ($r = .15, p < .01$), openness to experience ($r = .20, p < .01$) and neuroticism ($r = -.06, p < .05$). Consistent with the previous research, employees who score high in emotional intelligence tended to be more satisfied with their job. Moreover, Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence is correlated with conscientiousness ($r = .31, p < .01$), extraversion ($r = .37, p < .01$), agreeableness ($r = .16, p < .01$), openness to experience ($r = .34, p < .01$) and neuroticism ($r = -.41, p < .01$). However, employees' gender and job tenure have no correlations between the variables in the study.

Hypothesis Testing

Mediated Regression Analysis

Mediated regression analyses were used in order to test the hypothesized models. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) four criteria need to be met to support the mediational hypothesis. First, the independent variable (i.e. Big Five personality characteristics: Conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and neuroticism) needs to be significantly related to the mediator (i.e. emotional intelligence). Second, the mediator (i.e. emotional intelligence) needs to be significantly related to the dependent variable (i.e. job satisfaction). Third, Big Five personality characteristics should significantly influence job satisfaction. Finally, full mediation will occur, if the relationship between Big Five personality characteristics and job satisfaction disappears when emotional intelligence is introduced into the regression equation predicting job satisfaction. If the coefficient between Big Five personality characteristics and job satisfaction after introducing emotional intelligence into the regression equation remains significant but is reduced, there is evidence for partial mediation. Table 2 presents the results of the series of mediated regression analyses.

Table 2. Results of the mediated regression analyses

Equation	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	b	S.E.	β	R ²	F
1a	Conscientiousness	EI	.26	.03	.32**	.11	18.65**
1b	EI	JS	.28	.04	.31**	.12	22.90**
1c	Conscientiousness	JS	.23	.03	.32**	.11	21.76**
1d	EI		.22	.04	.24**	-	-
	Conscientiousness	JS	.17	.04	.23**	.17	24.91**
2a	Extraversion	EI	.26	.03	.37**	.14	25.67**
2b	EI	JS	.28	.04	.31**	.12	22.90**
2c	Extraversion	JS	.15	.03	.24**	.08	14.04**
2d	EI		.24	.04	.26**	-	-
	Extraversion	JS	.09	.02	.13**	.14	19.67**
3a	Agreeableness	EI	.21	.06	.16**	.04	4.81**
3b	EI	JS	.28	.04	.31**	.12	22.90**
3c	Agreeableness	JS	.19	.05	.15**	.05	8.43**
3d	EI		.27	.03	.30**	-	-
	Agreeableness	JS	.13	.05	.10**	.13	18.89**
4a	Openness	EI	.34	.04	.33**	.12	21.10**
4b	EI	JS	.28	.04	.31**	.12	22.90**
4c	Openness	JS	.19	.04	.20**	.07	11.86**
4d	EI		.25	.04	.27**	-	-
	Openness	JS	.10	.04	.11**	.13	18.94**
5a	Neuroticism	EI	-.28	.02	-.40**	.16	31.73**
5b	EI	JS	.28	.04	.31**	.12	22.90**
5c	Neuroticism	JS	-.05	.03	-.06*	.03	5.52**
5d	EI		.30	.04	.33**	-	-
	Neuroticism	JS	.03	.03	.05 ^{n.s.}	.12	17.49**

n.s. = non-significant * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Openness = Openness to experience, EI = Emotional Intelligence, JS = Job Satisfaction

As shown in the equations from 1a to 1d in Table 2, the three mediation conditions are confirmed. Both conscientiousness and emotional intelligence were related to job satisfaction but the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction was weakened (decreased from .32 to .23) when emotional intelligence was added to the regression model. Sobel test (1982) was used in order to test whether the indirect effect of conscientiousness on job satisfaction via emotional intelligence (mediator) was

significantly different from zero using the relevant parameter estimates and standard errors (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Sobel Test was significant ($z = 6.06, p < .01$), indicating that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationship between their conscientiousness and job satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

As it can be seen in the equations from 2a to 2d both extraversion and emotional intelligence were related to job satisfaction, but the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction was reduced (from .24 to .13) when emotional intelligence was added into the model. Sobel Test was significant ($z = 6.78, p < .01$) revealing that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationship between their extraversion and job satisfaction, and thereby supporting Hypothesis 2.

As understood from the equations through 3a to 3d both agreeableness and emotional intelligence were related to job satisfaction, but the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction was reduced (from .15 to .10) when emotional intelligence was added into the model. Sobel Test was significant ($z = 2.44, p < .01$) revealing that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationship between their agreeableness and job satisfaction. Therefore Hypothesis 3 was confirmed.

Similarly, for the equations 4a to 4d, both openness to experience and job satisfaction were related to job satisfaction, but the relative weight of openness to experience on job satisfaction was weakened (from .20 to .11) when emotional intelligence was added into the model. Sobel test was significant ($z = 5.52, p < .01$) indicating that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence partially mediated the relation between their openness to experience and job satisfaction, and thus supporting Hypothesis 4.

Finally, as it can be understood from equation 5a, neuroticism was negatively related to emotional intelligence, while equation 5b displayed that emotional intelligence was positively related to job satisfaction. Equation 5c showed that neuroticism was significantly related to job satisfaction, but equation 5d confirmed that the effect of neuroticism on job satisfaction became insignificant when emotional intelligence entered into the equation. Therefore, Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence acted as a full mediator on the relationship between their neuroticism and job satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 5.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to further investigate the mediating effects of Gen Y's emotional intelligence levels on the relationship between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction in IT sector in Turkey. Through a literature review, causal relationships among personality characteristics, emotional intelligence and job satisfaction were examined. The participants for the study were Gen Y employees working in IT sector because of the technologically driven characteristic of this generation.

One of the important factors, which influence employees' job satisfaction, is their demographic characteristics (Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2001). Generational differences play major role in shaping the future of the workplace (Twenge, 2010). Thus, organizations need to understand the key generational differences across the personality characteristics in order to have more satisfied workforce (Avery, Bouchard, Segal & Abraham, 1989). It has been suggested that Gen Y employees revolutionize the work, liberate the workplace from the traditional career paths, tactics, outdated norms, and ineffective work patterns (Tulgan, 2004). The present study proved that Gen Y employees' personality characteristics correlated significantly with their job satisfaction. Thereby, this study provided support for previous theoretical arguments (Macky et al., 2008; Twenge et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2008) about the relationship between Gen Y personalities and their job satisfaction. It was found that Gen Y employees' being conscientious, extraverted, agreeable and open to experiences positively, whereas their neuroticism negatively influenced their job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the present study determined that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence positively influenced their job satisfaction supporting the previous research (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Law, Wong & Song, 2004; Sy & Cote, 2004). Results of the study showed that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence played a significant role in their work environment and predicted their job satisfaction. Gen Y employees who are high in emotional intelligence are more capable of utilizing their ability to manage others' and regulate their own emotions compared with Gen Y employees having less emotional intelligence, thus have higher job satisfaction.

The originality of the present study is that it extends the prior literature by providing Gen Y emotional intelligence into their personality-job satisfaction relationship. The study showed that Gen Y employees' personality characteristics influence their job satisfaction via their emotional intelligence levels. Gen Y employees being neurotic was found to be the strongest variable out of other personality characteristics. For Gen Y employees; the negative influence of neuroticism on their job satisfaction is fully mediated by their emotional intelligence. Thus, Gen Y employees having low neuroticism scores are more likely to have relatively more emotional intelligence, which results as higher job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence was found negatively correlated with neuroticism as in previous studies (Ghiabi & Besharat, 2011; Petrides et al., 2010). As neurotic people have anger, anxiety, depression and vulnerability, they can hardly regulate their emotions (Johnson, 2014). They experience more problems at work and they have trouble in forming and maintaining relationships leading to less understanding of others in the work environment (Klein, Beng-Chong, Saltz & Mayer, 2004). Consequently, high neurotic Gen Y employees would have low ability to understand their own and others' emotions, which would result in low emotional intelligence.

Scholars have agreed on the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Sy et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002). Employees high in emotional intelligence are more adept at appraising and regulating their own emotions that contribute to job satisfaction. Because of their ability to understand their emotions, they are more aware of the factors, which conduce to their experiences about positive and negative emotions, thus they buffer negative events that cause to diminish job satisfaction. Hence, when Gen Y employees' neuroticism is low, they will be more aware of themselves and more adept at identifying and regulating their emotions. If they feel stress, this awareness will allow them to search for the reasons of their stress, thus enable them to develop strategies for the stressors (Sy et al., 2006). Awareness of the factors, which reveal certain emotions and understanding the influence of these emotions would cause them to have higher emotional intelligence (compared with Gen Y employees with high neuroticism and low EI) that would help such employees to take the appropriate actions, which lead an increase in their satisfaction at work.

The study found positive correlation between Gen Y employees' extraversion and their emotional intelligence. This result supports the studies, which emphasize that high extraverted employees tended to be considerably more emotional intelligent (Day et al., 2005; Petrides et al., 2010). Similarly, the present study confirmed the positive relationships between Gen Y employees' being conscientious, agreeable and open to experience and their emotional intelligence. These findings also verify the previous research (Athota et al., 2009; Hundani et al., 2012; Ordun & Akun, 2016), which suggest that employees, who are high in these stated personality characteristics display higher levels of emotional intelligence. Consistent with the predictions of the study, the positive relationships between Gen Y employees' extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience and their job satisfaction were partially mediated by their emotional intelligence. These findings demonstrate that Gen Y employees' personalities predict their job satisfaction as these characteristics influence emotional intelligence levels suggesting that lack of emotional intelligence for Gen Y employees is quite crucial.

On the other hand, equally important finding was that Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence did not fully mediate the personality and job satisfaction relationships; that is extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience have also direct relationships with job satisfaction that was independent of Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence.

Practical Implications

This research is the first to investigate Gen Y employees' dispositional effects on their emotional intelligence levels and job satisfaction. The mediation effects of Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence on the relationship between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction found in the current study has several practical implications for both Gen Y employees and their managers. One outcome of this research is to emphasize the importance for managers and Human Resources professionals to attend to individual differences, respective of generations.

The study attracts attention to the importance of Gen Y employees' personalities. Personality characteristics should be regarded as a crucial variable for the organizations in order to better understand Gen Y employees. It is associated with Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction levels. The managerial level of employees should comprehend that both dispositional and emotional variables are important determinants of Gen Y employees' job satisfaction; the impact of dispositional variables is partly indirect by influencing Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence levels.

The findings of the study indicate that managers should focus more on their Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence, which is the underlying mechanism between their personality characteristics and job satisfaction. Gen Y employees, who have high emotional intelligence are more likely to experience high job satisfaction. Organizations can organize periodic personality development programs for Gen Y employees to provide training in emotional intelligence skills, which may result in higher job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, Gen Y employees should endeavor to have an understanding of their own emotional intelligence and use it for better and effective communication with their colleagues to create a productive work environment. At the same time, managers can try to provide challenging work that really matters for Gen Y employees, offer them increasing responsibility as a reward for their accomplishments, provide learning opportunities, establish mentoring relationships and create a comfortable and low stress work environment for them (Martin & Tulgan, 2001).

Limitations and Future Research

The present study is not without limitations. The first limitation points out the country that may limit the generalizability of the results for Gen Y employees. Turkey is a transcontinental developing country between Europe and Asia. Therefore, Turkish organizational culture can be defined as a blend of "Western" and "Eastern" values (Aycan, 2001).

Thus, future research might be done in both developed and developing countries having different features of social and organizational context. Another limitation of this study is the use of cross-sectional design that does not allow for an assessment of causality. Further research with longitudinal design might confirm the causality of the hypothesized relationships. Another avenue for future research involves the examination of other mediating variables linking Gen Y personalities and job satisfaction such as psychological empowerment, leadership perceptions and positive and negative affectivity at work. Finally, even if several remedies have been done to reduce it, common-method bias is still another concern as the information in the study has been collected with a self-report survey.

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