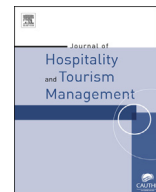




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

journal homepage: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-hospitality-and-tourism-management>

## “Texting in their pockets”: Millennials and rule violations in the hospitality industry

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 31 December 2015

Received in revised form

14 March 2016

Accepted 2 June 2016

## Keywords:

Communication rules

Millennials

Generation Y

Organizational culture

Assimilation

Workplace diversity

## ABSTRACT

This article takes a communication perspective to examine rule violations among Millennial employees. Rule violations are treated as a focal concern because they provide insight into how organizations socialize Millennials into their culture and how Millennials make inroads toward transforming the organization. Twenty-five managers in the hospitality industry were interviewed to learn about their perceptions of Millennial employees. Three categories of organizational rules are examined: policies regarding cell phone use, policies regarding requesting time off, and civility. These themes are explored with respect to how normative and code rules coalesce in order to promote assimilation and change. The findings also point to the implications that new generational cohorts have for collective assimilation and change for the organizational culture and the concomitant implications for managers.

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As the workforce changes, so too does the hospitality industry. Organizational cultures experience varying degrees of change, whether due to minor policy alterations or to more seismic shifts. Significant shifts occur as a new generational cohort enters the workforce. Richardson and Thomas (2012) address the challenges experienced by the hospitality industry in retaining these younger employees. One step toward retention involves learning about problems associated with Millennial entry into organizations. This study examines how Millennials are perceived as assimilating to and resisting organizational culture by examining the areas in which hospitality managers identify rule violations among Millennial employees. Identifying which rules are violated and how those rule violations are understood and handled by the organization highlights the interplay between “old” and “new” in organizational culture and offers insights into the ways that organizations can adapt amidst the evolving workforce of the 21st

century.

Currently, four generations may be working side by side in organizations, including Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. It is critical to understand these generational cohorts in order to comprehend how differences among them affect workplace perceptions and behaviors. Millennials are the newest generation to enter the workforce and are the focus of this study. Actual years delineating generational cohorts are disputed, assigning Millennials birth years spanning from 1978 to 2000 (see Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015; Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). Millennials are operationally defined in this study as those born between the years 1982 and 1994.

Millennials comprise the first generation to grow up with readily accessible technology, such as computers and the Internet, and are viewed as “more reliant” on technology for communication (Trees, 2015, p. 119). They are also known for their perceived ability to multi-task with various technological devices. Millennials are credited with being confident and valuing education (Suh & Hargis, 2016). At work, Millennials are said to appreciate frequent feedback (Trees, 2015) and personal attention from managers (Westerman, Bergman, & Bergman, 2012). Millennials also seek a clearly defined career pathway and prefer a “work-life balance” (Kuron et al., 2015; Maxwell, Ogden, & Broadbridge, 2010; Tews, Michel, Xu, & Drost, 2015).

Among their less positive characteristics, Millennials are said to

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crave jobs that are fun and that involve ample praise and rewards (Tews et al., 2015). They are described as demanding, impatient, and lacking in job loyalty (Suh & Hargis, 2016). Westerman et al. (2012) studied the high levels of narcissism among this generation, noting patterns of variation among college majors. Kersten (2009) made powerful claims about Millennials in the workforce. Although not based on any identifiable scholarly research, he asserted that Millennials are “likely to possess a host of interpersonal pathologies and behavioral maladaptations that have been linked to threatened egotism including violence and incivility” (p. 70). Millennials have also been described as sheltered and protected by “helicopter parents”. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) said managers usually want “to take off the Millennial water wings, throw them in the deep end, and see if they drown” (p. 218). With these negative attributes often associated with this generation, it becomes interesting to consider the reactions of hospitality managers to Millennials and their rule violations when entering the workplace. To lay a foundation for understanding the role of rule violations in organizational life, we provide a brief overview of organizational culture and assimilation, and rules.

## 1. Organizational culture and assimilation

Organizational culture is unique to each place of business (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). It distinguishes the way people operate and occurs naturally to the people within the culture. According to Eubanks and Lloyd (1992), organizational culture results when members share patterns of expectations, beliefs, and values. Culture is simultaneously “confining and facilitating” (Keyton, 2005, p. 18). Communication, both positive and negative, influences the organizational culture. The aim of this study is to examine how broader cultural forces, such as the introduction of new generations, holds implications for developing and maintaining that hospitality climate.

In order to study organizational culture, certain organizational elements must be considered. Elements include key symbols (Keyton, 2005), rituals (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983; Martin, 2002), stories, performances (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983), artifacts (Keyton, 2005), and rules, which serve to establish normative behavior and help new employees to assimilate (Stohl, 1986). Because the symbols, stories, artifacts, and expectations for normative behavior are likely to vary across industries, to help to more clearly examine organizational culture, one industry, hospitality, served as the focal context for this research.

Organizational assimilation is significant because it examines how people integrate into their workplace culture (Keyton, 2005). Members learn the organization's “reality” and begin to understand their roles (Jablin, 1987). They become familiar with the organizational rules. Two processes are involved in organizational assimilation: socialization and individualization (Hess, 1993; Jablin, 1987; Kramer, 2010). Socialization occurs when the “organization attempts to influence and change individuals to meet its needs,” (Kramer, 2010, p. 3). The organizational insiders try to influence the newcomers (Wanous, 1992). With interactions influencing socialization, it is interpersonal in nature. Individualization occurs when organizational members begin to alter their roles and environment within the organization to fulfill their needs and values as an organizational member in their place of work (Jablin, 1987). Individualization can span from small acts, such as decorating one's workspace (Hess, 1993; Kramer, 2010) to larger practices such as customizing one's work schedule (Kramer, 2010). The two (socialization and individualization) are considered a “dynamic, interactive processes” (Jablin, 1987, p. 693), impacting one another. Kramer (2010) expanded on the relationship between the two parts of

assimilation by stating that they are in frequent tension with one another. As in the case of rules, the focus of this study, socialization would involve teaching newcomers the rules, and individualization would include how newcomers adapt to the rules.

## 2. Communication rules

People follow various communication rules that coincide with a particular context. According to Jabs (2005), “rules surround us and fill our communal world” (p. 265). Rules frequently appear in human interaction and provide a set of meanings and/or norms for given situations. Two types of communication rules exist. Scholars refer to these as code (constitutive) and normative (regulative) rules (Carbaugh, 1990; Harris & Cronen, 1979). Code rules “specify patterns of meaning” through symbols during interaction (Carbaugh, 1990, p. 139). They assist in socially constructing shared meaning in certain contexts. Code rules are developed conversationally and provide the meaning behind a rule (Carbaugh, 1990).

Conversely, normative rules guide appropriate action in a particular context. People are expected to coincide their behavior with the larger cultural norms and are evaluated in return. These rules prescribe what people “should” do. Normative rules follow a top-down implementation due to the established, appropriate norms of the culture. It is through social interaction that people learn rules instinctively and simply (Jabs, 2005), which teach them what they ought to do in particular situations (Schall, 1983). It is important to realize how peoples' diverse experiences can lead to differing opinions on what is deemed an appropriate behavior and rule (Schall, 1983; Shimanoff, 1980). In summary, code rules focus on the coordination of meanings and presume that there are social and cultural patterns for sense making, while normative rules center around proper models of behavior (Carbaugh, 1990).

As reviewed earlier, certain cultures construct unique sets of rules (Schall, 1983). Communication rules have been studied in the organizational context (see Cushman, 1977; Gilsdorf, 1998; Jabs, 2005; Schall, 1983). As with any culture, rules exist in organizations to guide the behavior of the people in it and create shared meanings (see Gilsdorf, 1998; Harris & Cronen, 1979; Kramer, 2010; Schall, 1983). People quickly learn the obvious rules of the organization in which they work. For example, Jabs (2005) referenced employees acting professionally when asking supervisors for a raise as well as not using curse words in workplace dialogue. Other organizational rules are harder to discover. According to Gilsdorf (1998), “some organizations give employees excellent guidance on how they expect them to communicate; some organizations give little or none” (p. 173). The rules may or may not be written, formal, explicit, specific, or positively implied.

Because the Millennial cohort is the newest to join the workforce, it becomes interesting to consider how they become socialized and individuate *vis a vis* an organization's rules. This study addresses the following research question and sub-questions:

1. Within the hospitality industry, which organizational rules do managers believe Millennials are violating?
  - a. Which rules are strongly enforced (assimilation)?
  - b. Which rules violations are allowed (individualization)?

Further, due to the prevalence of literature on current problems with incivility in the classroom but an absence of scholarly discussion of incivility in the workplace, we also ask the research question:

2. Within the hospitality industry, do managers believe Millennials violate rules of civility?

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Participants

Purposive snowball sampling was used to locate 25 interviewees to participate in the study. The criteria for inclusion in the study were participants 31 years of age or older (therefore, would not be Millennials at the time of the study) and managers in the hospitality industry who were supervising Millennial workers at the time of interviews. The inclusion of managers from the hospitality field provided participants who interacted with Millennials in similar organizational contexts, which yielded more readily comparable data. Hospitality organizations included theme parks, hotels and visitor information centers. Eleven of the interviewees were male and fourteen were female.

#### 3.2. Procedure

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to assure that the research procedures conformed with university ethical standards, qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyze the data. This approach was appropriate due to the limited empirical, communication research that specifically studied manager and Millennial employee relationships in the workplace. [Strauss and Corbin \(1990\)](#) said, “qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known” (p.19). Thus, the researchers in this study also sought to explore a topic that is underdeveloped from a communication standpoint and is better studied from a qualitative approach.

Data were produced through a moderately scheduled interview of open questions that invited discussion from non-Millennial managers characterizing their Millennial employees’ behaviors and expectations for assimilation to the organizational culture. A funnel approach to questioning was used where questions in each of these areas elicited more general information and became increasingly specific and focused. Participants were provided the birth years (1982–1994) used to operationally define Millennials for this study.

Interviews typically lasted between 30 min and one hour, producing about 944 min of data. Interviewees were assigned pseudonyms to protect anonymity. Exact names of organizations and references to specific organizational processes were also altered to maintain anonymity. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. A modified version of [Jefferson’s \(1984\)](#) transcription system was utilized due to its discourse analytic approach that delves into the meanings behind the data. Instead of using a detailed recording of pauses or overlapping speech, only noticeable and significant occurrences were included. Word repetitions which did not enhance the understanding of meaning were eliminated. All minor interviewer back-channelling (e.g., “Mmm” and “Mmm Hmm”) used to demonstrate attentiveness was deleted. Verbatim transcriptions produced 468 pages of single-spaced data.

To constitute a communication rule, the rule must be “followable, prescriptive, contextual, and they pertain to behavior” ([Shimanoff, 1980](#), p. 39). [Carbaugh \(1990\)](#) proposed four criteria for isolating communication rules. These included communication rules that are reportable by participants, repeatable and recurrent patterns in the participants’ dialogue, “widely intelligible” and not questioned, and “invoked as repair mechanisms” when dissension occurs ([Carbaugh, 1990](#), p. 122). Participants were overtly asked about any organizational rules that Millennial employees violated. Any mention of rule violations voluntarily or through direct questioning were isolated, then examined by two coders to identify patterns. Patterns were reviewed until the coders reached

agreement. In addition to identifying the behavioral component of the rule, the coders also reviewed the surrounding data for any explanatory code rules used to explain or justify the normative rule for expected communication behaviors.

Patterns of rules were then interrogated further by looking for “deviant cases” that disconfirm the communication rules ([Schegloff, 1972](#)). “Deviant cases” provide further insight into some nuances of the rule that may go unnoticed otherwise. The deviations also assist in identifying if the disconfirmation is indicative of different organizational cultures or if they are informative about the nature of the rule under consideration.

### 4. Results

During each interview, managers were asked to describe their organizational culture and their expectations for organizational members. Following these two questions, managers were asked about their Millennials’ inappropriate or undesirable behaviors. The combination of questions provided a deeper look into the organizational culture, code rules or shared meanings that guide the workplace, and normative rules that garner organization-appropriate behaviors. Managers identified numerous rules in the interviews, including adhering to the dress code, embodying positive attitudes in front of customers, and following proper protocol for advancement. However, the two most prominent rule patterns comprise the focus of the analysis responding to the first research question regarding rule violations: discussions of cell phone policy and time off requests. These two rules comprised the most recurrent themes of discussion across managers and organizational boundaries.

Because of the limited information on incivility in the workplace, managers were explicitly asked about perceptions of incivility by Millennial employees. Among the numerous remaining rule patterns identified, the issue of incivility was chosen as a point of analysis due to the departure of these data from the existing literature on Millennials and the level of agreement across organizations. While the first question focuses on rules most commonly violated by employees, the second research question involving perceptions of incivility demonstrates a pronounced adherence to rules.

#### 4.1. Cell phone policy resistance

The literature clearly stated that Millennials are typically associated with superior technological abilities and frequent use of technology as a means of communication ([Gibson & Sodeman, 2014](#); [Hershatzer & Epstein, 2010](#); [Trees, 2015](#)). With the concentration on technology and Millennials in the literature, it was expected that technology would also play an important part in Millennials’ organizational lives. To delve further into managers’ opinions specifically on their Millennial employees and technology, questions were asked about the negative side to Millennials’ strong technology skills, examples of inappropriate uses of technology, and whether or not Millennials over-relied on technology. Even before these questions were posed, however, managers frequently began to discuss Millennials and technology.

Interviewees repeatedly described Millennials’ over-use of technology at work, but discussed how their organizational cultures were not bending to accommodate Millennials’ preferences. In other words, the normative rules/policies that existed in the organization were maintained despite Millennials’ affinity for technology. Josh, Supervisor of Guest Relations for CC Theme Park, provided an example of upholding a clear-cut cell phone policy.

J definitely out in the park there's a lot of write ups done for having your phone out because it's against pol, company policy to have uh your using your cell phone in the park. Even if it's just checking the time.

I Right.

J That's what clocks and watches are for.

I Right.

J And definitely those uh write ups are 90 percent in that age group.

Josh provided the organizational policy and noted its saliency in that it prompts "write ups". The need for write ups is reflective of Millennial resistance of this policy.

Director of Internal Communications at BB Theme Park, Julie, provided a similar example of this rule violation in her organization.

J we have a BB Theme Park look.

(...)

And you can't have a phone. Ya know you can have it in your pocket. It can be served as a time piece but you can't be (organization-specific location) texting and you can't be (organization-specific location) reading your phone and making phone calls and so I think that's something that's been a bit of a challenge to, umm to help educate our Millennials that are so used to being tied to it.

Rather than using write ups, Julie's organization faces similar challenges to Millennial's use of cell phones. Their response is to "educate our Millennials" on the policy. The data demonstrate a clear disconnect between the organization's reasoning for the policy and Millennial employees' understanding of the reasoning.

Some participants stated the company cell phone policy and gave some rationale behind the policy. In other words, their discourse explained some of the code rules that inform the normative rules in their organizations. Jill, Human Resources Director at JJ Hotel, talked about both the cell phone policy and its importance.

J Well I think there's some - when you talk about the generation you're talking

about. The biggest problem we have with people in that generation is that they don't know to turn their cell phone off. Okay so they come to work and they still bring [the cell phone] outside with them. Okay and we have to tell people over and over again not to use your not to use your cell phones ya know. Unmm, I think that's one of the biggest issues and of course with all of the media there is out there it's kind of hard to do. So one of the things we focus on is being professional. Uh of giving a full day's work for a full day's pay.

Jill's response is to remind the Millennials of the normative rules through repetition, but to also provide the code rule of "being professional". For Jill, overuse of technology precludes earning wages for a full day of work.

A second code rule identified by participants involved the

hospitality industry standard of offering exceptional customer service. Joey, Food and Beverage Manager at HH Hotel, stated that he has had to document violations of the policy. He specifies, "if it's in any way, shape or form, if it hinders my guest service, then they receive documentation." Here, the code of "guest service" foregrounds the shared importance within the organization on customer service, which has led to the creation of such rules, like a cell phone policy.

Managers repeatedly associated difficulty with cell phone policies with the Millennial generation. When this occurred, managers clearly appreciated the unique historical influences of this generational cohort. Carol, Merchandise Coordinator at BB Theme Park, also identified how cell phone policies are challenging for her Millennials to follow.

C Which they are way more attached to their cell phones than older people. And, ya

know umm I didn't get my first cell phone till I was almost 30. Because really that's

when they started to become mainstream. But I think they were this was like the first group of people that they had their own phone that they could carry around with them, from a very young age. So, they don't umm see it as rude or whatever if they pull out their phone in front of a customer and

I Right.

C so, umm, that's more a challenge with the younger ones.

(...)

But ya know like I said they do. They'll ya know you'll see them out there texting in their pockets.

Carol talked at length on the subject, even recognizing that Millennials had a different code rule for cell phone use, i.e., that it is not rude. In her lengthy response, Carol proceeded to note that the cell phone policies were reinforced and that one employee was actually fired for continued cell phone use.

The extent of Millennials' determination to use cell phones on the job is also evident as Carol explained that some Millennials try to covertly violate the normative rule by still texting "in their pockets". Although they were the only two to mention this behavior, it warrants noting that Allison, Director of Human Resources at AA Hotel, described the same phenomenon.

A They learn the ways to ya know. They're, they I think they can text in

their pocket (HHhh) without looking or something (hhhhhhh)

Through Allison's laughter, it was evident that she is amazed by her Millennials' methods of finding ways to bypass the policy. Her observation aligned with Miller and Jablin's (1991) discussion of employees testing the limits. By finding ways to defy the policy in place, they appear to "test" the saliency of the policy.

While some organizations rigidly held to the normative rules prohibiting cell phone use, other managers described adaptation. Allison explained how her organization adapted its policy.

A trying to get them to stop being on a phone or wanting to have an iPod in

their ears or texting is, is almost impossible. You know they're you know like this ya know, all the time. They'll go to the bathroom just so they can text.

(...)

So now the challenge is to just not do it while you're working. But it's just, it's hysterical because it's like they're addicted to doing it. Even if it's not anything important (hh).

Like Carol, not only did Allison marvel at the intense attachment, she also described dealing with cell phone usage among Millennials as “our biggest challenge”. Unlike Carol, however, Allison seems to have adapted the policy due to the sheer extent of lost work time of her Millennials going to the bathroom to text. Instead, she asks that they not “do it while they are working”, which seems softer than prohibiting cell phone use at work.

Tristan, Executive Housekeeper at FF Hotel, provided an example of policy change in his hotel that has been influenced by the Millennial employees.

T associates aren't allowed to carry cell phones in the workplace. It's not

acceptable. Ya know now here we are today and it's uh ya know it was just a really losing battle. I mean you were continuously chasing people down going, “no no no you can't have a cell phone because they either run or you hear them vibrating or you caught them in a closet talking on one.

I Right.

T I mean it's a battle that you just can't win from a management perspective or

a human resources perspective. Someone always has someone in the hospital or this or that. It just became so convoluted that's all you were talking about all day long and you really wanna rub people the wrong way over cell phone but it's just so mainstream now that ya know I see peoples' cell phones all the time. Most of them have iPods ya know so now the message is from you can't have a cell phone to you can't have a cell phone in guest areas.

Tristan's excerpt showed how the former policy and employee resistance to it created numerous problems for managers. The extent of the problem made it untenable for the organization to keep enforcing such a rule, so the normative rule became, “don't have a cell phone in guest areas”. Tristan was not alone in his decision to change the terms of the “fight” over cell phone use. When it comes to rules, the cell phone provided a clear leader in the rule violation discussions.

#### 4.2. Time off request standards

While discussing expectations with participants, it was clear that managers had certain opinions on what they believed were appropriate requests for time off. These normative rules for requesting time off stemmed from their organizations' codes. Millennial employees were often seen as violating organizational expectations because of their types and amount of requests for time off from work, which were perceived as an overall decreased commitment to their workplaces. In Maxwell et al.'s (2010) research on Millennials in the hospitality industry, they found this generation as having a pronounced desire for work-life

balance. One of the ways that this expectation may manifest itself is through time off requests. However, this was an area where managers expressed a consistent unwillingness to change its normative rules in response to Millennials' resistance. Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, employees are needed year-round and on weekdays, weekends, evenings, nights, and holidays, thus making work attendance mandatory.

Many participants discussed how the code rule, “hospitality” guides the expectation to come in as scheduled or provide adequate notice or reason for absence. For example, Mitch, Director of Loss and Prevention at BB Hotel, explained how expectations at his hotel are affected by the industry, and that Millennials sometimes do not understand what the business is about.

M ones that think eh Monday through Friday uh eight to five um you know you

have they'll work hard when they're here they don't last long because that's one of the biggest expectation I think to overcome is someone doesn't have a realistic expectation that they'll come in it's eight to five I'll set my hours from now on of course I have the weekends off - no I'm sorry it's twenty-four seven kind of thing we have to look at so ↑that's again successful ones have very realistic expectations

The force of this rule is clearly identified as Mitch indicates that Millennials who refuse to adhere by the hospitality code “don't last long.” The rules regarding having organizational members show up is highly salient in this industry, and to achieve success, one must adhere to this rule.

Likewise, Maria, Director of Sales at NN Hotel, stated her organization's expectation that members are present during their peak season. She also hinted to her organization's code rules regarding special events.

M Like, one of them requested time off during the (local event). You just don't do that.

All hands on deck. Especially if we've already told you when you were hired don't ask for time off

I Right.

M during the (local event).

I Right.

M Ya know we're special events. You're not gonna get it! Unrealistic expectations of Millennials

Maria indicates that the normative rule of having “all hands on deck” is clearly stated when hiring a candidate. The response to a request for time off during that time was unequivocal. The organization cannot function if this rule is challenged.

When this rule is violated, negative attributions are made regarding the rule violator. Some participants suggested that employees who violate these rules do not place the same importance on work. For example, Allison, Director of Human Resources at AA Hotel, identified how her Millennial employees do not place high importance on work, which results in requesting time off.

A I think that while they, ya know, it is work and everything. Sometimes

it's easier for them to blow it off a little bit for something that's not, that's

more important to them at the time. And, I think part of our job is to help teach them that work is work and it is important. And ya know, you can still go out and have a good time but ya know if you've got to be at work at 6 o'clock in the morning maybe that's ya know the night before's not the night to stay out partying till two.

I Right

A Do it the next night. Ya know, so that's kind of the challenge. Sometimes, people, it's just it's easier for them to blow things off. Because it's not their complete livelihood. It's spending money or whatever.

Allison believes that Millennials' attendance problems are due to not seeing work as "their complete livelihood." Her organization's response to violations is to educate them about the importance of work. They are not changing the policy of needing organizational members to be available, but to help shape their values about work.

Jerry, Regional Director of X Area Hotels, acknowledged that the Millennial employees do have less of a commitment to work because of their focus on social aspects of their lives. However, his organization's response is more punitive than educational.

J I think at times depending on how long they have been in the workforce.

They feel that their social life is important - more important than their work life. And they need to just find a proper balance. And if we see that way too many requests for certain times or certain days off is there then we'll sit down and becomes a progressive discipline as well and say hey you need to realize that you need to now make a choice. It's either work. It's either ya know [or] school. Or make sure they get create a perfect balance with it all.

Like Allison, Jerry discussed how Millennials do have other aspects of their lives that are important to them. However, he provided an example of how the organization will not tolerate continuous violations or misunderstandings of their codes. He said the Millennials are responsible for making the choice whether or not they will follow the rules of the organization. If not, he implied they will either be disciplined or removed.

Largely, the participants' discourse showcased how organizations in the hospitality industry value members who prioritize work over personal, non-emergency requests for time off. The managers identified that organizational members are aware of the type of work they are getting into and should not expect their personal lives to guide their schedules. This process of the organization influencing its members to adhere by and understand these expectations is an example of how the organization is trying to socialize its members in the assimilation process. The code of hospitality mandates adherence to these rules as a fundamental aspect of membership in the organization.

#### 4.3. Incivility forbidden

The literature on Millennials sometimes suggests that the cohort lacks civility. We explicitly asked about incivility expecting some

descriptions of rule violations, however this was clearly not the case. Although the first research question examined common rule violations, the second research question specifically targeted possible rule violations in incivility because (a) it helps address an ambiguous point in existing literature, and (b) it showcases how powerfully a code rule can ground a normative rule. Most managers interviewed clearly explained how their organizational codes would not tolerate incivility from Millennials or any of their organizational members. This was a recurrent pattern in the data. The questions on incivility, while expected to provide examples of rule violations, actually yielded insight into how well Millennials are assimilating in the hospitality industry.

Multiple participants provided code rules that exist within their organizations that would regulate Millennials from acting uncivil. For instance, Bobby, Director of Recreation at HH Hotel, stated how he does not observe incivility because his industry does not allow it.

I Do you see that amongst this generation, opposed to other generations?

B No. Not in what we do. M: not in the hospitality. We wouldn't allow it. Ya

know this company wouldn't allow a lack of respect or a lack of regard for anybody. Umm, something that we're trained to lead by example. Ya know my boss would never do it. I would never do it. My supervisors would never do it and we wouldn't tolerate it.

In the excerpt above, Bobby invoked the code rule of hospitality to explain why incivility is not tolerated. There is a shared meaning of no tolerance for such behavior because everyone is held to the same standard.

Participants explained how their hiring processes prevent uncivil behaviors. For example, when asked about incivility, Mitch, Director of Loss and Prevention at BB Hotel, immediately turned to hiring practices, saying, "I don't see it as much partly because I think we s: we kind of really screen for that." If an interviewee lacks the ability to build relationships with people, he or she does not join as an organizational member.

Allison, Director of Human Resources for AA Hotel, also noted that they screen for negative behavior before the interview even begins.

A Because ya know when people come in here it's funny because they don't

think that I guess the first person you talk to matters. Because if you come in here and you have a less than stellar attitude or you get snippy. Or ya know you're demanding. You're not getting past us. Ya know, and I don't know if people think oh you're just some secretary that doesn't count. Or what because or if umm like a manager is coming down to interview them and they see them in the hallway and they're not friendly. I've had my housekeeping director walk in here and say was that person out in the hallway. No, don't, I'm not even gonna interview them because they weren't friendly. So, ya know that's how important that is.

In her excerpt, Allison explained how the screening process

begins when potential organizational members step into the workplace for an interview. The way they interact with all organizational members is important in the decision process, and can disqualify a candidate from serious consideration.

It was evident that certain codes within the organizations, including hospitality and guest/customer service, guide normative behavior. Despite literature associating Millennials with incivility, managers said their organizations would not allow members to have a disregard for others.

The codes explained why incivility is not acceptable and insight into organization's hiring processes explained how these types of people rarely get hired in the hospitality industry. If they do somehow make it through the interview process, they do not last long because they are in violation of everything the organization represents. When organizations highly value their code rules in order to uphold a specific image and culture, the inclination of certain organizational members will assume a secondary status or will not be permitted at all.

## 5. Discussion

This study examined rule violations and rule enforcement in order to understand how Millennial employees are assimilating to and changing organizational culture in the hospitality industry. Existing literature describes the assimilation process as having two parts: individualization and socialization (Hess, 1993; Jablin, 1987; Kramer, 2010). However, studying how Millennials violate organizational rules and the organizations' response to these violations may suggest other factors in assimilation. In this study, it was evident how the needs of the collective Millennial generational cohort affected organizational rules and overall culture. As a result, some organizations have found it necessary to assimilate to the changing workforce. Three categories of rule-guided behavior were explored and analyzed: cell phone policies, time off requests, and civility. These three categories provide sources for studying stasis and change in the workplace.

The data regarding cell phones revealed that most organizations had cell phone policies which Millennials were the most likely to violate. Overall, the resistance to existing cell phone policies has been met with two different responses: strict enforcement of the policy and some organizational adaptation of the policy. Both responses, however, speak to how the hospitality climate is socially constructed and is constantly reconstructed and influenced by the members (Harris & Cronen, 1979; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). As Gergen and Gergen (2003) said, people share meanings that are capable of leading to alterations. In this case, the meanings shared between Millennials, in particular the importance of connectedness with their technology, are beginning to lead to changes in the organizations they work within. Even in organizations that are not changing policy, managers are forced to increasingly "police" the Millennial employees and are thereby actively working to maintain specific organizational social reality. This point of contention between managers and new employees is not likely to dissipate any time soon.

This shift in organizational policies is interesting because it seems that people not only assimilate into an organization based on their individual needs but also based on the needs of their group as a whole. Collective assimilation is not acknowledged in existing organizational communication literature. In fact, some scholars criticize how an aggregate system of the organization is studied on the interpersonal or individual level. For instance, Miller (2012) critiqued this occurrence by particularly focusing on conflict in the organization. She asserted that, "by far, the most research attention has been to the interpersonal level of conflict, the level at which individual members of the organization perceive goal

incompatibility. However, conflict can also be present in form of intergroup conflict and interorganizational conflict" (p. 163). Even though she concentrated on conflict, her argument of looking at other, more macro influences in the organization supports the need of understanding collective assimilation. The increasing numbers of a new generational cohort may provide the impetus for a broader shift in organizational rules.

A second area of rule violations involved Millennial requests for time off of work. Although participants voiced concerns for work ethic or devotion to the job as a cause for this behavior, the requests for time off can be seen as a characteristic of this generational cohort. Kuron et al. (2015) stated that Millennials seek interesting work. They have also been attributed with a desire to achieve a holistic work-life balance (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Kuron et al., 2015). This second area of rule violations may point to generational misunderstandings regarding the meaning of requesting time off of work. Whereas managers seem to suggest that the requests are due to a lack of commitment, the literature suggests that Millennials may be more motivated to find a better balance and live a holistic lifestyle where work and personal are integrated. The differing understandings between the groups could lead to some feelings of inter-group hostility, so it is helpful for managers to be aware of these differences. The strategies that managers have in place, revealing the code rules for guest service, appear to be effective in upholding the normative rules and assimilating Millennial employees.

Finally, although it was expected that managers would cite incivility as a problem for Millennials, this was not the case. Even the violations of using cell phones were not interpreted by managers as uncivil behaviors, but as a sign of the times. This is an encouraging finding suggesting that organizations that have a strong value for civility as a central part of their organizational code will filter out inappropriate candidates during the selection process and will have organizational members modeling the kinds of behaviors expected of new employees. Additionally, the incivility and time off request themes demonstrated how salient organizational rules trump certain tendencies of generational cohort members. Incivility may be associated with Millennials in other contexts, like the classroom, but not in a workplace where the organization overcomes this potential behavior or attitude. In the hospitality industry, at least, seniority does not 'exempt' any employee from adhering to this normative rule. This finding also suggests that managers are showing insight into some generational differences, such as cell phone use, and how these behaviors are 'second nature' to Millennials rather than indicators of incivility. Although the managers interviewed maintained a 'zero tolerance' attitude toward incivility, they also showed an awareness of the operating environment in which they are managing by demonstrating flexibility in what they view as uncivil.

The study yields salient implications for managers. The following list offers some suggestions that managers might utilize based on the study's findings:

- Organizations should involve employees in reciprocal mentoring (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Studies have indicated that Millennials like to receive mentoring (Westerman et al., 2012) and that "reverse mentoring" wherein the younger employee trains the more tenured employees can promote better cross-generational relationships and interpersonal skills and also create a larger network (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). Our study findings suggest that reciprocal mentoring would draw upon the strengths that Millennials bring to the work force, foster organizational assimilation, and promote intergenerational understanding.

- Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra (2014) discuss the importance of open dialogue to improve employee engagement. If managers are willing to have these open conversations when their Millennial employees first enter the organization, they can quickly develop interpersonal relationships with their team members. When trust is established, managers can engage in more productive conversations with Millennial employees regarding “why” something is a potential rule violation. As a result, Millennials may want to avoid the violation out of respect for their superiors and organization.
- The onboarding process for new employees needs to take rule resistance into consideration. Carpenter and de Charon (2014) found in their study that “rules that are seen as too restrictive” created increased dissatisfaction for managers (p. 76). Managers attempting to adapt to their Millennial workforce felt constrained and needed greater flexibility to adapt to the changing workforce.

The data reveal ways in which some organizations are flexing and adapting. They also show ways organizations are working to enculturate members of the newest generational cohort through providing the meanings guiding their normative rules. Research in this area is arguably needed in a rapidly changing workplace environment that will soon be dominated by Millennials. Learning to navigate these new organizational waters is an important task. The findings also suggest that the preceding generations have established some code rules that, out of necessity, will require the enforcement of certain normative rules. The organizational system flexes to incorporate new input from the latest generation to join the work force thereby changing the nature and the meaning of normative and code rules for all involved.

As with any research, this study had limitations. The data are qualitative, thus are not generalizable. The data were obtained from only one region in the United States. The study also included participants from various parts of the hospitality industry, rather than offering more focused insight into one sphere of the industry. Future research could build on the findings of this study by focusing on the Millennial perceptions of normative and code rules. It would also be helpful to know how Millennial influences begin to shape the behavior of members of other generational cohorts, such as how prevalent violations of cell phone policies affect the technology uses of other generational cohorts. Useful information could also be gained through finding strategies to create viable opportunities for work-life balance in hospitality jobs. The ways that organizational norms flex must ultimately accommodate the needs of the organization through the use of a code that resonates with employees.

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