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Research Paper



Frequency of Commensality with Leaders, Perceived Leadership Effectiveness and Job Satisfaction among Corporate Employees

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the relationship between the frequency of commensality of leaders with their subordinates, perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction. The responses were collected using both, online as well as offline methods, google forms as well as using paper pencil test. The participants (N=100) responded to the scales of job satisfaction given by Dr. Amar Singh and Dr. T. R. Sharma, Leadership effectiveness scale by Dr. Haseen Taj and a 5-point Likert scale for the frequency of commensality. The findings suggested that commensality has a positive correlation with perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction, additionally it also suggested that frequent commensality of the leaders with their subordinates improved employee's perception of their leader's effectiveness and job satisfaction. These findings are very useful in a corporate setting as commensality is not just related to eating together but also improves team bonding and understanding and comradery.

Keywords: Commensality, Eating Together, Perceived Leadership Effectiveness, Job Satisfaction, Comradery, Food at Workplace

Provides the necessary nutrients and energy to sustain life, but it also has a profound impact on our culture, traditions, and social interactions. Throughout history, food has been a source of enjoyment and comfort, as well as a tool for bringing people together. In fact, food sharing is described in evolutionary anthropology as a fundamental part of human evolution, as a means of reciprocal cooperation, which we share with other primates (Schino and Aureli, 2016b). Furthermore, from a bio archaeological point of view, sharing food and partaking in collective meals have been analyzed as acts that connect the human being as a biological organism to a social person (Sutton, 2010). Understood in this way, eating together makes up a fundamental part of our social nature. From an evolutionary perspective sharing food, individuals were able to ensure that everyone in the group had enough to eat, which increased their chances of survival. This may have led to the evolution of social bonding mechanisms that were activated when individuals shared food with each other [5]. Also, as humans are social animals, and our survival has always depended on our ability to form strong social bonds with others. Eating together may have helped to strengthen these

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bonds by providing opportunities for individuals to interact with each other in a relaxed and enjoyable setting [6]. Research has shown that sharing food with others can activate reward centers in the brain that are associated with social bonding and feelings of pleasure. This may be because sharing food is a form of prosocial behavior that is rewarded by the brain [7]. Across cultures and throughout history, humans have engaged in the practice of sharing food with others. This suggests that eating together may be a fundamental aspect of human social behavior that has been shaped by evolution [8]. Hence it shows that humans might be conditioned to think commensality as a way to enjoy and engage in building relationships with others.

Whether it's breaking bread with family and friends, trying new cuisines on a travel, or sharing a meal with coworkers, food is a universal language that transcends cultural and geographic boundaries. Moreover, food can be an expression of personal identity and cultural heritage, and it has the power to evoke memories and emotions. The love of food and the act of eating together(commensality) is a timeless and fundamental aspect of the human experience. And just like eating meals together with family and loved ones, in a workplace, commensality can take place with coworkers and leaders and make commensality a source to discuss things in an informal way and build better interpersonal skills with each other. Usually, a leader is perceived as someone who has the ability to influence, motivate, and guide others towards a common goal. Effective leaders possess a range of qualities and skills, including vision, communication, emotional intelligence, and the ability to inspire and motivate others. Leadership is often seen as a complex and multifaceted concept, and can be approached from many different perspectives, including trait theory, behavioral theories, situational theories, and contingency theories. The most effective leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to meet the changing needs of their followers and the situations they face, and are constantly seeking to improve and develop their leadership skills.

In this present study we try to see if leaders and employees engaging in commensality, the act of eating together or eating and drinking at the same table, which is known to improve communication and improve interpersonal relations, would lead to a change in how employees perceive leadership effectiveness and employees job satisfaction. Leadership effectiveness refer to those qualities of a leader that makes them an effective leader like interpersonal relationships, intellectual abilities, behavioral and emotional stability, moral strength and communication skills. While job satisfaction is the workers' satisfaction with their work, it is a source of satisfaction for the physical, economic, psychological and social needs of an individual, which includes working conditions and environment. The population targeted here is white collar employees, who are skilled or highly skilled employees, majorly engaging in mental work rather than physical work and mostly work in cooperate sector.

As observed earlier, commensality increases the bond between group members, by creating an engaging environment where shared norms are observed and collective belonging is signified.[4] Commensality or eating together is not just another socializing tool or gesture to make friends or a platform to transact business etc. Actually, it has a larger meaning and impact on us that has been professed in Vedas, appreciated in ancient roman civilization, imbibed in Sufi bhakti movement and has been a part and parcel of our modern-day civilization because it enthralls you Physically, Mentally and spiritually.

As we can see here even 10000 years ago our ancestors and the great Vedas guide us to eat together to a truly peaceful, purposeful, enlightened, cohesive and fearless society. In fact, every religion of this world professes and practices commensality. Langar, Mahaprasad, Samohik bhoj are the part and parcel of Indian society irrespective of cast, creed or religion. Even today Sanjaha Chulha is practiced in many of the Punjab villages, there is something profoundly satisfying about sharing a meal. Eating together, breaking bread together, is one of the oldest and most fundamentally unifying of human experiences-Barbara Coloroso. A survey of 2,196 older people in Japan found that those who ate with others less than once a month were more likely to assess their health as poor (Takemi et al., 2017). Eating alone has also been found to have negative health effects on young people (Khoury et al., 2015; Jung and Sun Ja, 2010). Eating with others has been viewed as offering a protective factor through enabling people to strengthen their bond with others, with 76% of those who responded to a survey identifying a shared meal as a good way to bring people closer together (Dunbar, 2017). An evaluation of Eating with Friends, a social eating program running in 37 sites across Tasmania, found that involvement led to a more positive outlook and allowed friendships to flourish, with socializing taking place outside the arranged meal times (Eating with Friends Project, 2014).

Supporting shared eating can also encourage community cohesion through enabling people from different cultures and backgrounds to socialize. Research has found that eating with others can reduce people's perceptions of inequality, and diners tend to view those of different races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds as more equal than they would in other social scenarios (Julier, 2013). In a newspaper article which looked at the results of a BUPA study into productivity, 40% of workers said skipping lunch dampens their productivity. 52% claimed it puts them in a bad mood. (Davidson, 2015).

"When overwhelmed with work, lunch with colleagues can seem like a luxury, but eating alone can have adverse effects. Research has found that people who eat most meals alone may express feelings of loneliness and social isolation and, what's more, eating in solitude is more strongly associated with unhappiness that any single factor other than having a mental illness." (Gordon, 2018). Eating alone has been linked to negative health and well-being impacts. Studies in China and Japan have shown that lack of companionship during mealtimes is associated with depression in older adults (who are statistically more likely to eat alone (Dunbar, 2017).

Job Satisfaction

How is job satisfaction related to commensality and perceived leadership effectiveness. Several theories of job satisfaction attempt to explain the factors that contribute to an individual's level of satisfaction with their job like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposes that individuals have a set of basic needs that must be met before they can achieve higher levels of satisfaction. These needs include physiological needs (e.g., food, water), safety needs (e.g., job security), social needs (e.g., belongingness, love), esteem needs (e.g., recognition, achievement), and self-actualization needs (e.g., personal growth, creativity). Hence food is a very basic necessity and must be fulfilled for a better productivity and satisfaction.

According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two separate and distinct factors. Hygiene factors (such as salary, job security, working conditions, and company policies) can prevent job dissatisfaction, but they don't necessarily

contribute to job satisfaction. On the other hand, motivators (such as recognition, achievement, and personal growth) contribute to job satisfaction.

Equity Theory proposes that individuals compare their inputs (such as effort, skills, and experience) to their outcomes (such as salary, benefits, and recognition) to determine whether they are being treated fairly. If they perceive that they are being treated unfairly, they will experience job dissatisfaction. Which also shows that if employees are discriminated on any basis, it hurts their job satisfaction. Hence commensality with leaders can make them feel equal and at the same level, which also improves their job satisfaction. According to social exchange theory, job satisfaction is influenced by the social relationships that individuals have in the workplace. If individuals perceive that they are receiving support and positive interactions from their colleagues and supervisors, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction.

The perceived effectiveness of leadership is another crucial factor that can impact employee job satisfaction. Leaders who are perceived as effective are more likely to inspire and motivate their employees, resulting in higher job satisfaction levels.

According to research, there is a significant relationship between perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 1990). Transformational leadership (Ilies et al., 2007), ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008), and leadership behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1990) have all been found to predict higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, core self-evaluations traits, such as self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability, are positively related to job satisfaction and job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001). These findings suggest that leadership effectiveness plays a crucial role in shaping employee job satisfaction and well-being. Organizations can benefit from developing effective leadership strategies that promote inspiring, ethical, and transformational leadership behaviors to foster high levels of job satisfaction among their employees.

Hence, commensality is a good way to build interpersonal relations, social support, etc. and so as employees converse more with their leaders, they build more interpersonal relations with them which affects their perception about leaders' actions, thoughts and perception about their leadership effectiveness also changes, and both these can affect an employee's job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study followed a survey design to assess the relationship between the frequency of commensality among the leaders and their subordinates and perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction of the employees. Spearman Correlation and linear regression statistical tests were used to analyze the data.

Problem statement

The present study was undertaken to understand the relationship between the frequency of commensality among the leader and their subordinate with job satisfaction and perceived leadership effectiveness among corporate employees.

Objectives

- To understand the relationship between frequency of commensality and perceived leadership effectiveness.
- To understand the relationship between frequency of commensality and job satisfaction.
- To understand the impact of the frequency of commensality with the leaders on perceived leadership effectiveness of the employees.
- To understand the impact of the frequency of commensality with the leaders on job satisfaction of the employees.

Hypothesis

- H_{01:} There is no significant relationship between the frequency of commensality and perceived leadership effectiveness
- H_{02:} There is no significant relationship between the frequency of commensality and job satisfaction.
- H₀₃: There is no significant impact of the frequency of commensality with the leaders on perceived leadership effectiveness among corporate employees.
- H₀₄: There is no significant impact of the frequency of commensality with the leaders on job satisfaction among corporate employees.

Operational definitions

The major variables in the study are commensality, perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction. Following are definitions of these terms within the context of the study:

- **Commensality:** The act of eating together or sharing a table together.
- **Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction refers to the satisfaction of a worker in his/her work. It is the source of satisfaction for the physical, economic, psychological, and social needs of an individual, which includes working conditions like a place of posting, democratic functioning, and cooperation (Singh and Sharma, 1986).
- **Perceived Leadership effectiveness:** Perception of Leadership qualities that make an effective leader (like interpersonal relationships, intellectual abilities, behavioral and emotional stability, moral strength, and communication skills). (Haseen Taj, 2010).
- **Corporate employees:** Full time employees who work for a corporation or large organization in a professional, administrative, or managerial role, typically perform tasks that involve higher levels of education or specialized knowledge, such as accounting, finance, marketing, human resources, or information technology and have been employed by their current organization for at least 6 months, indicating a degree of familiarity with the company's culture, policies, and practices.

Sampling

The sample of the present study was collected via purposive sampling. The sample consisted of 100 white collar corporate employees. The data from the participant was collected as a mixed method, some responses were collected online through google form, while some were collected through distribution of the questionnaire and collecting responses.

Inclusion criteria:

White collar full time corporate employees with minimum of 6 months experience in the current organization.

Exclusion criteria:

Blue collar job professionals, interns, seasonal, temporary, Freelancers, Part-time employees, Review meetings and other regular meetings, work-from-home employees.

Scales used:

Leadership Effectiveness Scale (Haseen Taj, 2010).

The participants (employees) describe the effectiveness of the designated leader in formal organizations. A total of 79 items, Contains both positive and negative items. It has a test-retest reliability coefficient of .77, split-half reliability for the odd and even methodof.78 and for the first half vs. second half method, it is .80

Job Satisfaction Scale by Singh and Sharma

Job satisfaction scale is a 30-item statement scale, with the statements related with different vocations of job satisfaction. It includes both positive and negative items.

The test-retest reliability works out to be 0.978 with a gap, of 2 days. The scale compares favorably with Muthayya's job satisfaction questionnaire giving a validity coefficient of 0.743.

It has two factors job intrinsic and job extrinsic. The total of which gives the score for overall job satisfaction.

Commensality:

5-point Likert scale question asking the frequency of commensality between the leaders and their subordinates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationship between commensality, perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction among corporate employees.

According to the normalcy test of Shapiro-wilk, it was found that the data was not normally distributed and thus non parametric tests were used for further analysis.

Table 1 Relationship between frequency of commensality of leaders and their subordinates and perceived leadership effectiveness among corporate employees

Variables	M	SD	1	2
СО	3.38	1.00	-	0.812*
PLES	292.85	52.77	0.812*	-

^{*} *p* < .05

Table 1 shows the relationship between frequency of commensality of leaders with their subordinates and perceived leadership effectiveness. The relationship was found to have a high degree of positive correlation, which was proved to be statistically significant (r = 0.812, p<0.05). According to the table the M or the mean value shows that typically the sample engaged occasionally to frequently in commensality with their leaders, and had a typical perceived leadership effectiveness score of 292.85, which is average degree of perceived leadership effectiveness. The standard deviation value of both the variables has huge difference which shows that the strength of the relationship might be affected. Hence H_{01} which stated that "there is no significant relationship between the frequency of commensality and perceived leadership effectiveness" was rejected. Which signifies that if the frequency of commensality of the leaders with their subordinates increases, it will improve or increase the perceived leadership effectiveness among the employees. This result

is completely in line with various previously conducted studies, of which, a study by Oh, Kim, and Lee (2018), discovered that having meals together improved feelings of positivity and resulted in better perceptions of leadership effectiveness among Korean workers. Another study by Moss, Larsen, and Sonnenfeld (2012) found that sharing food and drinks was linked to a leader's charisma and positive mood, both of which are important factors in how effective they are perceived to be. Additionally, Wu, Wu, and Wu (2016) found that when supervisors and subordinates had a positive relationship, the benefits of commensality on employee satisfaction were even stronger, which could also contribute to better perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Hence these studies support that when employees share meals with their supervisors or colleagues, it can increase positive emotions and strengthen relationships. This can lead to perceptions of a leader's charisma, positive mood, and overall effectiveness. When supervisors and subordinates have a positive relationship, the benefits of commensality on employee satisfaction are even stronger, which can further contribute to better perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Ultimately, the act of sharing a meal can help foster a sense of community and create a more positive and effective work environment.

Table 2 Relationship between frequency of commensality of leaders and their subordinates and job satisfaction among corporate employees

Variables	M	SD	1	2
CO	3.38	1.00	-	0.79*
JSS	60.71	7.67	0.79*	-

^{*} p < .05

Table 2 shows relationship between commensality and job satisfaction. The relationship was found to have a high degree of positive correlation, which was proved to be statistically significant (r = 0.799, p<0.05). Hence H_{02} , which stated that "there is no significant relationship between the frequency of commensality and job satisfaction" was rejected, which signifies that if the frequency of commensality of the leaders with their employees increases, it will also improve the job satisfaction of the employees. This result is completely in line with various previously conducted studies, like that of Barnett's (2018) study, wherein the employees who participated in shared meals reported higher levels of job satisfaction. The reason for this might be that the shared experience created feelings of connection and belongingness. Similarly, Kim and de Bloom (2019) found that Korean employees who engaged in commensality experienced lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of job satisfaction. This suggests that the social support provided by shared meals can help to counteract the negative effects of job demands. Moreover, Riggio et al. (1991) examined the relationship between social support and job stress among U.S. Navy officers and found that shared meals were positively associated with job satisfaction. This means that when Navy officers had shared meals, they tended to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, Stokols (1974) found that social support, including shared meals, was positively related to job satisfaction among factory workers. In summary, the evidence suggests that sharing meals with colleagues can be beneficial in terms of promoting job satisfaction.

Table 3

Impact of Frequency of commensality with leaders on perceived leadership effectiveness

Independent variable	R ²	В	SE	β	T
Constant		148.15	11.07		13.38
P-LES	.659	42.83	3.145	.812	13.622*

^{*}p<.05

Table 3 shows regression analysis of frequency of commensality with leaders on perceived leadership effectiveness with R2 value of .659 and the result was found to be significant with p < 0.05. This indicates that there's a considerably significant impact of the frequency of commensality with leaders on the perceived leadership effectiveness among corporate employees. The R2 value indicates that 65% change in perceived leadership effectiveness was predicted by the frequency of commensality with leaders. B value shows slope coefficient of the regression equation, which represents the change in the perceived leadership effectiveness for every unit change in the frequency of commensality. SE value or the standard error value shows variability in the perceived leadership effectiveness that is not accounted for by the frequency of commensality. Thus, the null hypothesis stating —There is no significant impact of frequency of commensality on perceived leadership effectiveness among corporate employees was rejected.

Table 4 Impact of Frequency of commensality with leaders on job satisfaction of corporate employees

corporate employees						
Independent	\mathbb{R}^2	В	SE	β	T	
variable						
Constant		38.97	1.50		25.94	
JSS	.703	6.43	.427	.839	15.08*	

^{*}*p*<.05

Table 4 shows regression analysis of frequency of commensality with leaders on job satisfaction among the corporate employees. The table shows R2 value of .703 and the result was found to be significant with $p \le 0.05$. This indicates that there's a considerably significant impact of the frequency of commensality with leaders on the job satisfaction of the corporate employees. The R2 value indicates that 70% change in job satisfaction was predicted by the frequency of commensality with leaders. B value shows slope coefficient of the regression equation, which represents the change in the perceived leadership effectiveness for every unit change in the frequency of commensality. SE value or the standard error value shows variability in the perceived leadership effectiveness that is not accounted for by the frequency of commensality. Thus, the null hypothesis stating "There is no significant impact of the frequency of commensality with leaders on the job satisfaction among corporate employees" was rejected.

Implication

1. Encouraging leaders to engage in communal activities with their employees: The study's findings suggest that leaders who share meals with their employees are perceived as more effective and are associated with higher job satisfaction among

their employees. Organizations can encourage leaders to engage in communal activities with their employees to build relationships, increase trust, and improve communication.

- 2. Enhancing leadership development programs: Leadership development programs can be designed to include training on how to engage in communal activities with employees. This can help leaders learn how to create a positive work environment, build relationships with their subordinates, and improve their perceived effectiveness.
- 3. Promoting positive workplace culture: Organizations can promote a positive workplace culture by emphasizing the importance of communal activities and encouraging employees to participate in them. This can create a sense of belongingness and promote a positive work environment that can boost employee well-being and productivity.
- 4. Improving employee satisfaction and retention: Organizations that prioritize employee satisfaction and retention can benefit from the study's findings. Encouraging leaders to engage in communal activities with their employees can increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover, resulting in cost savings and increased productivity.
- 5. Generating future research: The study's findings highlight the need for further research on the topic of commensality with leaders. Future studies can explore how different types of communal activities may impact employee perceptions and wellbeing and identify best practices for promoting positive workplace cultures.

Limitation

- 1. Firstly, there is a potential for fatigue bias as the study collected the data using questionnaires with more than 100 questions. This may have affected the accuracy of the data collected and, consequently, the study's findings.
- 2. Secondly, the study had a relatively small sample size, which may have limited the generalizability of the findings. The sample population was also majorly based on the pharmaceutical sector, which may not be representative of other industries or organizational contexts. This limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized.
- 3. Thirdly, the study did not account for other factors that may influence the relationship between commensality, perceived leadership effectiveness, and job satisfaction. For instance, individual differences in personality traits, work experience, or job roles may affect employees' perceptions of their leaders' effectiveness and their job satisfaction levels.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of commensality with leaders in the workplace. Further research can build on these findings and address some of the limitations to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between commensality, leadership effectiveness, and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between frequency of commensality with leaders, perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction among corporate employees. The study collected data about the frequency of commensality of leaders and their subordinates using a 5-point Likert scale and used questionnaires of perceived leadership

effectiveness and job satisfaction to gather the data from the participants, who were majorly pharmaceuticals employees.

The study found that the frequency of commensality with leader has a high degree of positive correlation with perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction of the employees, which means if the frequency of commensality with leaders increased the perceived leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction of the employees also increased. Hence, commensality is a good way to build interpersonal relations, social support, etc. and so as employees converse more with their leaders, they build more interpersonal relations with them which affects their perception about leaders' actions, thoughts and perception about their leadership effectiveness also changes, and both these can affect an employee's job satisfaction.

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Conflict of Interest

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