

**An approach for reducing hospitality industry turnover ratio by understanding Millennials' work motivation based on values and their personality traits**

**Itziar Ramírez García**

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## DOCTORAL THESIS

Title	An approach for reducing hospitality industry turnover ratio by understanding Millennials' work motivation based on values and their personality traits.
Presented by	Itziar Ramírez García
Centre	Blanquerna School of Psychology, Education and Sport Sciences
Department	Psychology
Directed by	Dr. Albert Fornells Herrera



## Resum

La indústria hotelera és un dels sectors que dona feina a més persones a tot el món i el capital humà, és un dels actius més valuosos a causa de la naturalesa de les seves interaccions. Paradoxalment, la indústria hotelera pren la davantera en comparació amb altres indústries pel que fa al seu elevat índex de rotació de personal. Avui dia, aquest escenari s'agreuja amb el perfil de la noves generacions emergents en el mercat laboral que es caracteritzen per tenir una perspectiva professional diferent en comparació de les precedents. Amb aquesta premissa, moltes empreses estan tenint dificultat per comprendre les necessitats d'aquesta generació la qual cosa genera elevats costos organitzacionals.

La tesi doctoral té com a objectiu contribuir a la indústria hotelera mitjançant un enfocament centrat en l'anàlisi de la força laboral dels Millennials des de dues perspectives altament vinculades entre si. D'una banda, comprendre quines són les seves motivacions laborals basades en valors utilitzant l'Escala *EVAT*, i d'altra banda, estudiant la influència dels seus trets de personalitat i els aspectes més valorats a l'hora de busca feina utilitzant el qüestionari de trets de personalitat *Big Five*. Tots dos instruments es seleccionen per les seves propietats psicomètriques. La investigació s'aplica a estudiants universitaris de turisme i gestió hotelera y presta especial atenció a algunes característiques clau com el gènere o l'experiència laboral prèvia per determinar si poden influir en el comportament dels estudiants. Els mètodes emprats s'utilitzen com a eines de diagnòstic per ajudar a entendre les noves forces laborals en funció dels seus valors i trets de personalitat, així com els aspectes més demandats a l'hora de buscar feina.

Els resultats destaquen la importància de prestar atenció a algunes característiques clau com ara el gènere i l'experiència laboral prèvia. L'aplicació d'aquests elements permet als departaments de recursos humans comprendre millor els treballadors i crear un camí que pot ser útil per elaborar estratègies més precises que contribueixin a tenir una organització més saludable. Finalment, és important ressaltar que aquest enfocament és adequat per a ser aplicat en altres sectors i grups d'individus.

PARAULES CLAU: Rotació de Personal, Indústria Hotelera, EVAT, Big Five, Trets de Personalitat, Millennials, Recerca de Treball, Valors, Recursos Humans.

## Resumen

La industria hotelera es uno de los sectores que más emplea en todo el mundo y el capital humano es uno de los activos más valiosos por la naturaleza de sus interacciones. Paradójicamente, esta industria destaca por su elevado índice de rotación de personal. Actualmente este escenario se agrava con el perfil de las nuevas generaciones emergentes al que se caracterizan por tener una perspectiva profesional diferente en comparación con sus precedentes. Esto provoca que las empresas tengan dificultades para comprender las necesidades de esta generación lo cual genera elevados costes organizacionales.

La tesis doctoral tiene como objetivo contribuir a la industria hotelera mediante un enfoque centrado en el análisis de los Millennials que se incorporan al mercado laboral desde dos perspectivas altamente vinculadas entre sí. Por un lado, comprender cuáles son sus motivaciones laborales basadas en valores utilizando la Escala *EVAT*, y, por otro lado, estudiando la influencia de sus rasgos de personalidad y los aspectos más valorados a la hora de busca trabajo utilizando el cuestionario de rasgos de personalidad *Big Five*. Ambos instrumentos se seleccionan debido a sus propiedades psicométricas.

La investigación se aplica a estudiantes universitarios de turismo y gestión hotelera y presta especial atención a algunas características clave como el género o la experiencia laboral previa para determinar si pueden influir en el comportamiento de los estudiantes. Los métodos empleados se utilizan como herramientas de diagnóstico para ayudar a comprender mejor a los nuevos profesionales en función de sus valores y rasgos de personalidad, así como los aspectos más demandados a la hora de buscar trabajo.

Los resultados destacan la importancia de prestar atención a algunas características clave tales como el género y la experiencia laboral previa. La aplicación de estos elementos permite a los departamentos de recursos humanos comprender mejor a los trabajadores y crear un camino que puede ser útil para elaborar estrategias más precisas que contribuyan a tener una organización más saludable. Finalmente, es importante resaltar que este enfoque es adecuado para ser aplicado en otros sectores y grupos de individuos

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Rotación de Personal, Industria Hotelera, *EVAT*, *Big Five*, Rasgos de Personalidad, Millennials, Búsqueda de Empleo, Valores, Recursos Humanos.

## Abstract

The hospitality industry is one of the sectors that employs more people across the globe and human capital is the one of the most valuable assets due to the nature of its interactions. Paradoxically, the hospitality industry takes the lead when compared to other industries with regards to its elevated turnover ratio. Nowadays, this scenario is even worst due to the profile of the new workforces' generations, which are characterized by having a different professional perspective in comparison with previous generations. With the above scenario, a handful of companies are struggling when it comes to understanding the needs of this generation, which leads to high organizational costs.

The doctoral thesis aims to contribute to the hospitality industry by means of offering an approach focused on analyzing the Millennials' workforces from two perspectives highly linked among them. On the one side, understanding which ones their work motivations are based on values using the *EVAT* Scale and one the other side, linking the influence of their personality traits and the most valued aspects when they look for a job using the *Big Five* personality traits questionnaire. Both instruments are selected due to their psychometric properties. The research is applied into tourism and management university students and it pays special attention to some key characteristics such as gender or previous work experience to determine if they may influence students' behavior.

The methods employed are used as a diagnosis tools to bring light into the new workforces based on their work values and personality traits as well as the most demanded aspects when looking for a job. Findings highlight the importance of paying attention to some key characteristics such as gender and previous work experience. The application of these tools allows human resource departments to understand better employees and create a path that can be useful to draft more accurate strategies contributing to have a healthier organization. Finally, it is important to highlight that this approach is suitable to be applied into other sectors and groups of individuals.

**KEYWORDS:** Turnover, Hospitality Industry, EVAT, Big Five, Personality Traits, Millennials, Job Search, Values, Human Resources

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# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1	<i>Research context .....</i>	9
1.2	<i>Identification of the research problem.....</i>	10
1.3	<i>Research objectives and structure of the document.....</i>	12
1.4	<i>Ethical Considerations .....</i>	13
<b>2</b>	<b>The Role of Work Motivation Based on Values in Employee’s Retention in the 21st Century .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1	<i>Introduction.....</i>	14
2.2	<i>Classification of Work Motivational Theories .....</i>	15
2.3	<i>Work Motivation Based on Values as a Common Pattern.....</i>	17
2.4	<i>Conclusions and Further Work .....</i>	18
<b>3</b>	<b>Understanding Hospitality Students’ Work Values as a Tool to Reduce Millennials’ Turnover .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1	<i>Introduction.....</i>	20
3.2	<i>Background: An incredible sector that moves the world and its employees .....</i>	22
3.3	<i>The challenges of the new generations in the labor market.....</i>	22
3.3.1	<i>The Millennial Generation .....</i>	23
3.3.2	<i>Millennial’s personality characteristics .....</i>	24
3.3.3	<i>Millennials’ work characteristics .....</i>	24
3.4	<i>From work motivation to values .....</i>	25
3.5	<i>Identification of work motivation based on values.....</i>	27
3.6	<i>Research methods and participants.....</i>	29
3.6.1	<i>Study one: Identification of undergraduates’ work values .....</i>	29
3.6.2	<i>Study two: HR professionals’ retention strategies .....</i>	32



3.7	<i>Results and discussion</i> .....	32
3.7.1	Study one: Identification of undergraduates' work values .....	32
3.7.2	Study two: HR professionals' retention strategies .....	37
3.8	<i>Conclusions and Future Work</i> .....	42
3.9	<i>Limitations and further research</i> .....	44
<b>4</b>	<b>Understanding Hospitality Students' Personality Traits and Most Valued Aspects</b>	
	<b>When Looking for a Job</b> .....	<b>45</b>
4.1	<i>Introduction</i> .....	45
4.2	<i>Related work</i> .....	46
4.2.1	Personality traits .....	46
4.2.2	Big Five as an instrument to measure personality traits .....	47
4.2.3	Millennials' most valued aspects when looking for a job.....	49
4.3	<i>Research methods and participants</i> .....	50
4.4	<i>Results and Discussion</i> .....	51
4.4.1	Experimentation One: Most Valued Aspects when looking for a job .....	51
4.4.2	Experimentation two: Students' Personal Traits .....	55
4.4.3	Experimentation Three: Personality traits against most demanded values when looking for a job and demographic information. ....	59
4.5	<i>Conclusions and Further work</i> .....	64
4.6	<i>Further lines of research</i> .....	65
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>67</b>
5.1	<i>General Discussion</i> .....	67
5.2	<i>Limitations and Further lines of research</i> .....	71
<b>6</b>	<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>72</b>
6.1	<i>Appendix 1. EVAT questionnaire.</i> .....	72
6.2	<i>Appendix 2. Big Five questionnaire.</i> .....	74

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Scatter plot with regression line between self-transcendence and openness to change.....33

Figure 2. Means for values dimensions according to the student’s previous professional experience and gender. ....35

Figure 3. Scatter plots and probability distributions for each of the four EVAT variables. Variables include: Openness to change, conservation, self-enhancement, and self-transcendence as EVAT dimensions and the student profile in terms of professional experience and gender. ....35

Figure 4. Probability distribution of variables showing significant differences. ....36

Figure 5. Description of the yearly percentage of Millennial employees and their turnover percentage. ....38

Figure 6. Most value aspects organized by previous work experience. ....52

Figure 7. Most demanded value of flexibility versus gender and year of studies. ....53

Figure 8. Most demanded value of close relationship with manager versus gender and year of studies. ....54

Figure 9. Most demanded value of no routine job versus gender and year of studies. ....54

Figure 10. Most demanded value of work life balance r versus gender and year of studies. 55

Figure 11. Average personality traits hospitality industry students.....56

Figure 12. Big Five personality traits versus gender. ....58

Figure 13. Big Five personality traits versus year of studies.....59

Figure 14. Permutation tests for the Big 5 elements comparing Flexible Schedule group versus Others group (green), Salary versus Others (yellow) and Flexible Schedule versus Salary (blue). .....61

Figure 15. Permutation test for the big 5 elements comparing less than 6 months of professional experience versus six months or more experience. ....62

Figure 16. Permutation test for the big 5 elements comparing Bachelor studies versus Master studies. ....62

Figure 17. Permutation test for the big 5 elements comparing Female vs Male.....63

## List of Tables

Table 1. Review of the main work motivation theories organized in needs, traits, values and cognition following the classification elements proposed in (Latham & Pinder, 2005). A detailed analysis of their constructs illustrates that needs are a common denominator. ....	16
Table 2. Content analysis of EVAT scale according to Schwartz’s theory adapted by (Arciniega & Gonzalez, 2000). For each description, a list of possible adjectives is generated .....	31
Table 3. Hospitality undergraduates’ work values interviews associated with each value dimension.....	31
Table 4. Percentile table of the four higher-order dimensions organized by gender.....	33
Table 5. Number of students organized by gender, previous professional experience, and academic year. ....	34
Table 6. Classification of HR professional interviews following EVAT methodology. ....	38
Table 7. HR professionals’ interview answers using the yearly Millennial turnover ratio as the main variable.....	40
Table 8. Structure of the survey distributed to the participants including the different elements namely demographic information, most valued aspects when looking for a job and Big Five questionnaire.....	50
Table 9. Demographic characteristics of the participants. ....	51
Table 10. Big Five personality traits an unpaired two-tailed t-test is applied between traits from different experience groups. Average and Statistical differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) included for each group of participants. Statistical differences are displayed in bold.....	57

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*The hospitality industry is one of the largest sectors in the job market but unfortunately due to the poor reputation of its working conditions, it is commonly known by suffering from an elevated turnover ratio. This turnover ratio is aggravated by the Millennial generation entering the labor market which results in an increment of companies' direct and indirect costs. This problem has been approached mainly from a generational global perspective, but less emphasis has been brought to the importance of work motivation based on values and personality traits as key elements to generate organizational strategies.*

*This chapter presents the aim of the thesis by identifying the research problem and describing the research objectives. It ends with the document structure and the ethical considerations.*

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research context

This work is enclosed within two research groups of two schools belonging to the Ramon Llull University namely Blanquerna School of Psychology, Education and Sport Sciences (FPCEE) and School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Sant Ignasi (HTSI). On the one hand, the aim of the FPCEE is to provide with the competences and flexibility demanded by current societies, educational context, and social and health care professions. This work is part of the doctorate plan of this school falling within the research group of Organization, Person and Change which encompasses three main lines of investigation namely: ethics and the management of people, teambuilding and teamwork, and organizational development. On the other hand, the aim of HTSI is to promote teaching, research, and dissemination of knowledge within the Touristic Industry. HTSI has a research group of Hospitality, Tourism and Mobility with four research lines namely: tourism for all, excellence in hospitality, higher education in social transformation and mobility experiences, which aim to create an impact in the Touristic Sector by promoting sustainable and responsible practices. As it is described later on, this research addresses two key elements that are crucial for the mentioned schools namely: organizational psychology and avoiding turnover at the hospitality industry while cultivating employee's talent.

This work has been possible due to the role that I undertake within HTSI as lecturer and professional development advisor. This direct contact with students allows me to be aware about their worries and motivations to advise them with regards to the labor market. Moreover, due to my past work experiences as Human Resources Manager for different

hotels within the hospitality industry allowed me to experience from first-hand the high Millennial turnover and felt the urge to learn more about how this situation could be improved. The presented research aims to bring together future hospitality employees and current human resources practices to tackle down the turnover problem that the industry faces. To do so, the study depths into the importance of understanding work values and personality traits as a way to create retention strategies.

## 1.2 Identification of the research problem

The hospitality industry is one of the largest sectors in the job market and it is becoming the focus industry for people seeking for a job (Chang and Busser, 2020). This industry comprises every type of accommodation and additional services such as food and/or drink through a contemporaneous voluntary human exchange undertaken to enhance the mutual well-being of the parties concerned (Lashley and Morrison, 2001). Nevertheless, a major problem regarding this industry is its high turnover ratio. The industry turnover rate was of 73.8% in the hospitality industry in 2019 (Grant and O'Connor, 2018), whereas, human resources experts state that the average turnover rate in an enterprise should be around 10-15%. Some reasons that explains this high turnover ratio are factors such as industry low salaries, little opportunities to grow and develop and the influence in the employee's motivation due to low wages, long working hours and not having the opportunity to socialize. These circumstances make that employees look for other industries with better working conditions (Hom et al., 2017).

This situation is aggravated by the arriving to the new workforce's generation, which will reach over a 35% of the total workforce by 2020 (Green et al., 2017). Millennial generation is characterized by its high turnover rate and it is a huge concern due to its associated costs which are often underestimated (Grant and O'Connor, 2018). There are many other costs and repercussions for the company besides the visible cost of losing an employee. Some examples are the costs associated with time to recruit and fill a vacancy; training for the new employee in order to get familiar with the working environment and to acquire the necessary skills to be effective and independent among others; the impact into the team morale who has to adapt to a new person and potentially work harder until the new colleague is fully trained (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000). With the above scenario, many companies are struggling when it comes to understanding the needs of this generation. Therefore, for companies to have a

positive impact on their employees, gain their trust and commitment, *“it is imperative that employers gain deeper insight into their mindset, particularly attitudes towards work”* so as to help in the development of Millennials’ professional paths in a more engaging and enchanting way (Maxwell et al., 2010).

This problem has been approached by different scholars and practitioners mainly from a generational global perspective (Kong et al., 2016), but less emphasis has been brought to the importance of work motivation based on values and personality traits as a key elements to generate organizational strategies (Green et al., 2017). Another factor that is crucial is understanding personality traits as they influence the approach to a concrete organization (Arciniega et al., 2009). Due to the fact that business need to adjust to the demographic alters concerning workforce’s personality traits to have a better comprehension of individuals (Ordun and Akun, 2016) this research focuses in gaining a deeper knowledge on hospitality industry students work values and personality traits.

The attraction to, selection into, and remaining in an organization are all determined by the perceived similarity between employees and their work environment, as well as the match between their values, personality and attitudes and the organization’s values, goals, structures, processes, and culture (Schneider et al., 1995). The lack of fit between individual and organizational values at work result in occupational burnout and consequently a decrease in work engagement (Dylag et al., 2013). For this reason, understanding the values of Millennials is a must due to their generational particularities (Cogin, 2012). The understanding of what is important for them will help companies to reshape their current strategies and prioritize their rewards criteria contributing to shape employees performance (Richard P. Winter and Jackson, 2015).

During the consolidation of this degree thesis, the world faced an unprecedented health emergency the pandemic of COVID-19. This situation stopped our world affecting in our lives, societies, and economies. The hospitality industry is one of the most affected industries producing a massive loss of jobs and auguring a global recession. Having as a reference the latest measures adopted by governments, the UNWTO estimates international tourist arrivals could decline by 20% to 30% in 2020 which translates in losses of 300 to 450 US\$ billion in international tourism receipts (exports), almost one third of the US\$ 1.5 trillion generated globally (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2020). The above scenario highlights

the importance of contributing to heal the industry by understanding the needs of the employees and promote human resources practices to keep them engaged and motivated, so the industry does not lose its best asset, its people.

### 1.3 Research objectives and structure of the document

The aim of the doctoral thesis is to contribute to the hospitality industry to reduce Millennial turnover by offering insights that could help companies to better understand them and, consequently, adapt their strategies to retain them. The approach analyzes Millennials enrolled in tourism and hospitality studies by focusing on work motivation based on values and the influence of their personality traits when they look for a job. This exploratory analysis uses mix methods that combines different well-known and consolidated instruments with specific semi-structured interviews to provide a richer and more comprehensive response to the research question.

The document presents three self-contained research studies developed in chronological order focused on specific key elements of the thesis. All of them include a research question, state of the art, experimentation and conclude with a discussion about the gained insights. This format facilitates the possibility of their dissemination in conferences and journals as it will be explained later. Finally, this doctoral thesis ends with conclusions and future research lines. The main goal of each of these research studies is as follow:

- **The role of work motivation based on values in employee's retention in the 21st century.** It reviews the current literature related to different work motivation theories in order to identify and understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention.
- **Understanding hospitality students' work values as a tool to reduce Millennials' turnover.** It analyzes the interconnection of Millennials work values and their alignment with the human resources retention strategies by means of the EVAT scale (Arciniega and González, 2000) and semi-structured interviews.
- **Understanding hospitality students' personality traits and most valued aspects when looking for a job.** It explores students' personality traits and its link with most demanded values when looking for a job using the Big 5 questionnaire traits and semi-structured interviews (Şahin et al., 2019).

## 1.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics and access are critical aspects to ensure success in the research (Saunders et al., 2016). From the beginning of the research, HTSI approved and promoted the development of this research in order to contribute to the improvement of the professional development of their students and, at the same time, improve their entering into the labor market.

The research process is observant, not aggressive and there is no experimentation. It follows the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice and it is in line with Nuremberg code 1947 (Shuster, 1998). The below processes is followed in order to promote beneficence and to avoid harm or malpractice. Data is explored with the objective of finding trends, never with the objective of saying than one compared group is better than other. All participants (being students, lecturers or companies) are informed with a consent form about what the aim of the research, how data is managed and the possibility of asking questions along the process and withdrawing the research process whenever they want. All participants remain anonymous and data is collected and used following the European general data protection regulation (GDPR, 2019). Results and findings are shared with participants from HTSI and other professionals with the objective of raising awareness about the situation of Millennials in the workplace and how companies are dealing with them and how they could increase their engagement and retention. Finally, the application of the EVAT Scale is granted by his author Dr. Luis Arciniega and the Big Five personality traits is available online for research purposes.



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*The retention of talent and the reduction of employee's turnover are key strategical elements for any organization, and, in the case of the hospitality industry, these issues are more challenging than other industry due to the nature of this sector. In this sense, there are several theories from different disciplines such as the psychological or managerial ones pointing out the strong relationship between the employee's retention and their motivation.*

*This chapter analyzes the current literature related to different work motivation theories in order to identify patterns related to the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention. The review classifies the main motivational theories in needs, traits, values, and cognition and it identifies the "satisfaction of a need" as a common denominator in the motivational theories. Need theories explain why someone must act but they do not explain why particular actions are followed in specific situations and this is when values appear as a connector element that should be included into the equation because they are the ones that unveil what drives individuals to achieve a goal.*

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## 2 The Role of Work Motivation Based on Values in Employee's Retention in the 21st Century

### 2.1 Introduction

Employee leaving intentions is a topic that has attracted several scholars and practitioners alike for a century and nowadays remains to be a topic of concern as organizational researchers have shown that turnover has a repercussion in various productivity related processes in the organization (Hom et al., 2017). The rate differs between sectors, companies, gender or division, but what does not differ is the cost that companies face when an employee leaves. In fact, in today's extreme competitive labor market, there is a large amount of evidence stating that organizations are facing retention challenges independently of their size, market focus, or technological development (Ramlall, 2004). Employee turnover is costly as it includes direct and indirect costs that are often underestimated. For example, there are costs associated with time to recruit and fill a vacancy; there are costs to be considered in terms of training for the new employee in order to get familiar with the working environment and to acquire the necessary skills to be effective and independent. Then, there are costs linked directly to the team morale who has to adapt to a new person and potentially work harder until the new colleague is fully trained (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000). A lower turnover rate implies less organizational costs and consequently a positive correlation with organizational effectiveness (Koys, 2001).

The goal of this research study is to analyze different work motivation theories in order to identify potential patterns, which might help to understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention. The analysis highlights the importance of work motivation based on values as a key element to generate organizational retention strategies.

This chapter is organized as follows. Next section shows a review of the main motivational theories based on a detailed study of the state of the art using as a reference the widely known classification system of Latham and Pinder (2005). Then a discussion based on the previous insights is developed highlighting how they can contribute to generating organizational retention strategies. Finally, conclusions and future research are drawn.

## 2.2 Classification of Work Motivational Theories

The golden age of work motivation theories was in the mid of the 1960s where scholars were interested in understanding the processes behind work motivation. But by the 1990s, the interest of work motivation decreases and as a consequence theoretical developments on work motivation declined (Steers and Mowday, 2014). This is quite a paradox since companies see having motivated employees as a source of competitive advantage, as motivation is related with a lower turnover rate (Ramlall, 2004).

The Latin root of motivation means “to move” and that is why motivational experts study what moves individuals to act and why people acts in a particular way (Weiner, 1992). In other words, the study of motivations means to study individual’s actions (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002) and it is a topic widely studied from different disciplines and it has evolved across the years. While psychologists study the relationship between motivation and instincts, managers are more interested in pragmatic issues (Steers and Mowday, 2014). Pinder defined in 1998 work motivation as “a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration”. Later, this concept evolved to a motivational framework based on needs, traits, values and cognition due to their direct connection with work motivation(Latham and Pinder, 2005).For example, elements such as national culture, job design characteristics or person-context fit influence in how people set their goals and strategies based on their needs, values, and situational context.

Table 1 shows an extension of Latham and Pinder work where other authors and work motivational theories are also included with the goal of identify if there are common patterns, which might help to understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention as it is discussed in the following section.

Classification	Construct	Authors	Main theories
Needs	<p>Why I have to act? Goal oriented. <b>Need</b> structure. People prioritize <b>needs</b> in different ways. Provide an explanation for choice, effort and persistence. Individuals acquire <b>needs</b> from culture and society (need for autonomy, achievement). Motivation is defined as the process that determines how energy is used to satisfy <b>needs</b>.</p>	<p>(Maslow, 1943a) (R. Kanfer, 1990) (Wicker et al., 1993) (Ronen, 2001) (Kluger and Tikochinsky, 2001) (Klein, 1991) (Härtel et al., 2010) (Payne, 1992) (Atkinson, 1957) (Herzberg, 1966) (Alderfer, 1969) (Gannon and Anna Boguszak, 1966) (Vroom, 1964) (McClelland, 1980) (Argyris, 1959) (Lawler and Porter, 1967) (Weiner, 2010) (Raynor, 1969)</p>	<p>Vroom's (1964), Valence Instrumentality Expectancy Theory; Maslow (1954), Hierarchy Theory; Raynor (1969), Theory of Future Orientation Effect and Achievement Motivation; Weiner's (1974), Attribution Theory; Herzberg (1966), Motivation Hygiene Theory; McClelland's (1961), Learned Needs Theory; Atkinson (1978), The Dynamics of Action Approach; McGregor (1960), X and Y Theories; Porter and Lawler Model (1968).</p>
Traits	<p>Personality <b>Need</b> to express your traits No recognize classification system. Personality predicts what motivates you Self-regulation (action and traits) Personality defines performance</p>	<p>(Côté and Moskowitz, 1998) (Kanfer and Heggstad, 1999) (Mitchell and Daniels, 2003) (Schmitt et al., 2003) (Kanfer and Heggstad, 1999) (Day et al., 2002) (Tett and Burnett, 2003) (Dweck, 1999) (Bono and Judge, 2003) (Digman, 1990)</p>	<p>Day, Schleicher, Unckless, &amp; Hiller, (2002), A Meta-analysis of a Self-monitoring Personality; Digman (1990), Five Factor Model; Judge (2009), Core Self Evaluations and Work Success; Dweck (1999), Self-theories; Deci and Ryan (1970), Self-determination Theory.</p>
Values	<p><b>Needs</b> are rooted in values Acquired by experience Basis to achieve goals Influence choices and behavior Determine job seeking behavior Values are determined by the individual context and culture</p>	<p>(Locke and Henne, 1986) (Foreman and Murphy, 1996) (Verplanken and Holland, 2002) (Malka and Chatman, 2003) (Arciniega and González, 2000) (Ralston et al., 2011) (Kluckhohn, 1951) (Rokeach, 1973) (Super and Sverko, 1995) (Srivastava and Barmola, 2011) (Hackman and Oldham, 1975) (Elizur, 1984) (Schwartz, 1992) (Barrett, 2006)</p>	<p>Foreman &amp; Murphy (1996), Valence Expectancy Framework; Elizur (1984), Model on Work Values; Schwartz (1992), Circular Model of Values; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1951), Values Orientation Theory; Arciniega Ruiz de Esparza &amp; González (2000), EVAT Scale; Barrett (1997), The Seven Levels Model.</p>
Cognition	<p>Knowledge is required to identify individual <b>needs</b> and to choose and achieve goals. People are motivated by the foresight of goals. Self-efficacy is important to determine success.</p>	<p>Weise and Carraher (1998) Weise and Cropanzano (1996) Parket (1998) Brunstein et al. (1996) Alderfer (1972) Deci (1975) Bandura (1977) Falk (1965) Hackman (1976)</p>	<p>Alderfer (1972), Existence Relatedness Growth Theory (ERG); Deci (1975), Competence and Self-determination; Deci (1975), Cognitive Evaluation Theory; Bandura (1986), Behavioral Framework; Bandura (1977), Social Cognitive Theory; Hackman (1976), Job Characteristics Model (JCM); Adam's (1965), Equity Theory Organizational Justice; Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), Affective Events Theory.</p>

Table 1. Review of the main work motivation theories organized in needs, traits, values and cognition following the classification elements proposed in (Latham & Pinder, 2005). A detailed analysis of their constructs illustrates that needs are a common denominator.

## 2.3 Work Motivation Based on Values as a Common Pattern

Employee motivations influence retention rates and other behaviors within organizations (Ramlall et al., 2004). In fact, there is a large amount of evidence suggesting that there is a direct relationship between motivation of individuals at the job and lower turnover intentions (Upasna A Agarwa, Vishal, 2018) because when individuals are motivated at work they feel committed to the organization (Kong et al., 2016). Motivation at work is a complex topic as it includes a large number of theories, concepts and diverse information and it brings together scholars from the psychology and managerial sciences that try to unveil individual's behavior as a function (Chiang and Jang, 2008).

The previous Table 1 illustrates the main work motivation theories and their authors organized in needs, traits, values, and cognition following the classification elements proposed in (Latham and Pinder, 2005). For each one of the classifications, the main constructs are identified based on the analysis of the literature review and the "need" concept appears as a common denominator. Many scholars studied the relationship between satisfaction of needs and employee motivation and they stated that the failure of satisfying a need will lead to pain associated with unmet needs (Alderfer, 1969; Argyris, 1959; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2000; Maslow, 1943; Gannon & Boguszak, 1966). Therefore, human resources practices that satisfy employee's needs will have a higher motivational workforce (Green et al., 2017).

Needs are directly related with values in the sense that needs cannot be translated into goals unless they have a cognitive representation through values. According to Schwartz's ideas, people choices are affected by the set of values that each individual has (Arciniega & Gonzalez, 2005) and, in the professional environment, the behavior of employees is affected by their values. For example, an employee may end up working in a particular position depending on the satisfaction of a certain need which is translated via their values (Arizamontes and Han, 2017). Needs and values are as well related in the sense that need theories explain why someone must act, they do not explain why particular actions are followed in specific situations to achieve a goal (Kanfer, 1990). For this reason, it is crucial when talking about work motivation to look at values. According to the philosopher Alain Locke (1885-1954), values are elements that mediate motivational processes transforming needs in intentions, being intentions conscious processes (Harris, 1989). Looking at the professional

environment it can be seen that goals are considered the expressions of values. According to (Elizur et al., 1991) organizational values refer to an object, situation, or behavior with high importance for the individual or group, consequently, work values refer to those situations, behaviors, or objects within the work context. Values include work intrinsic, extrinsic, and social situations. Furthermore, values are directly linked to needs in the sense that they respond to three universal requirements: the need that individuals have from a biological point of view, the need for appropriate social interaction, and the requirement of a proper functioning of a group (Ros et al., 1999).

The identification of values is a very relevant tool for most organizations interested in continuously measure the level of motivation of their employees (Arciniega & González, 2000). This identification helps them to create either short or long-term strategies in order to improve employee's welfare and reduce turnover (Ertas, 2015). (Ralston et al., 2011) for example, analyzed a sample of business managers and professionals across 50 societies assessing workforce work values using the framework provided by Schwartz (1992). Another example will be Barrett (2006) who developed several cultural transformation tools for organizations based on values with the objective of driving effectiveness and corporate profit (Barrett, 2006).The above are just some examples that highlight the fact that organizations recognize the importance of understanding the motivational paradigm in order to retain talented employees. Talented employees will be able to survive within the changing organizational world providing a competitive advantage (Hussain, 2013).

## 2.4 Conclusions and Further Work

The previous section analyzed different work motivation theories with the objective or identifying patters that might help to understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention. The study concluded that motivational theories have the satisfaction of a need as a common denominator. Although need theories explain why someone must act, they do not explain why particular actions are followed in specific situations to achieve a goal. If motivation has to do with the satisfaction of needs and needs depend on individual values, then which ones are the work values of employees? This question must be considered in the establishment of the human resources strategies in order to generate retention strategies based on the alignment of the company vision and the employee's work values.

Apart from the challenge of including this approach into the human resource strategy, it is also crucial to include the generational perspective because they influence into the work preferences and work values as many researchers point out (Eversole et al., 2012) (Dokadia et al., 2015) (Lyons, Sean T ; Schweitzer, Linda; NG, 2015). This issue is specially critical because the Millennial generation will represent 74% of the world's working population by 2025 (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). Next chapter analyzes in more detail this topic by means of a study focused on getting insights from hospitality undergraduates.

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*This chapter provides with an overview of the three self-contained studies undertaken in this thesis in order to provide useful recommendations to help HR professionals in the definition of their strategies in relation with the retention of Millennial employees.*

*The first study focuses on analyzing the role of work motivation based on values in employee's retention in the 21st century by identify patterns, which might help to understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention.*

*The second study identifies hospitality industry students' work values using the EVAT Scale with the aim to understand better their needs in order to decrease organizational turnover.*

*Study number three links the influence of students' personality traits and the most value aspects when they look for a job using the Big Five personality traits questionnaire.*

Results provide interesting insights regarding the challenge of reducing the turnover ratio at the hospitality industry. Limitations and future research lines of research are discussed at the end of the chapter.

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## 5 Conclusions

### 5.1 General Discussion

This doctoral thesis has been developed within the doctorate plan of the Blanquerna, Ramon Llull University. These studies are part of the research group of Organization, Person and Change which follows three main lines of investigation namely: ethics and the management of people, teambuilding and teamwork, and organizational development. Furthermore, this research is framed within the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Sant Ignasi, (HTSI), Ramon Llull University.

Millennial's characteristics have been approached by different scholars and practitioners mainly from a generational global perspective (Kong et al., 2016), but less emphasis has been brought to the importance of work motivation based on values and personality traits as a key elements to generate organizational strategies (Green et al., 2017), that is why the objective of this research is to contribute to the hospitality industry to reduce its Millennial turnover rate by exploring two complementary perspectives. The first one aims to understand hospitality students work motivation based on work values. The second one is focuses on analyzing how their personality traits influence the job search process, while exploring their most demanded aspects when looking for a job. Next the three studies undertaken to achieve the objectives are exposed.



## **Study One: The role of work motivation based on values in employee's retention in the 21st century**

The aim is to analyze the current literature related to different work motivation theories in order to identify patterns, which might help to understand better the dynamics between motivation at work and its impact on employee retention. After organizing the motivational work theories in needs, traits, values, and cognition following the classification elements proposed in Latham and Pinder's study (2005), the common pattern that appears is the concept of "need" This finding is crucial due to the fact that although need theories explain why someone must act they do not explain why particular actions are followed in specific situations to achieve a goal (Kanfer, 1992), for this reason, it is crucial when talking about work motivation to look at Millennials' work values.

Results conclude that undergraduates' work values place themselves under the categories of self-transcendence which refers to individuals who seek to promote the welfare of others and is altruistic (universalism, benevolence) and openness to change which alludes to individuals who give importance to independence of thought, actions or readiness to change (self-direction, stimulation) (Ralston et al., 2011).

Recommendations for human resources departments include paying special attention to Millennials' work values, as individual needs depend on them. Being aware of this can help hotels to understand the importance of work values and create retention strategies by acquiring a deeper understanding of their workforce.

Results of this study were presented in the Conference of the International Society for the Study of Work and Organizational Values in 2018 and they are available at *The Journal of Management Studies* (Ramirez, et al., 2019).

## **Study Two: Understanding Work Values as a tool to reduce Millennials' turnover**

The aim of this study is to increase the awareness of the importance of understanding the Millennials' work values and their alignment with the human resources retention strategies. The study has been developed convening a research mix approach of semi-structured interviews with the EVAT Scale.

The research conducted shows that previous work experience and gender influence undergraduate work values. The greater previous work experiences the higher openness to change and self- enhancement. With regards to gender, males seem to have more developed self-enhancement and show lower self- transcendence when compared to females. Caution should be applied when interpreting these results.

The study puts into manifest, the fact that there is still a very high turnover ratio. 43,75% of hotels analyzed had a yearly Millennial turnover ratio between 46 and 65%. Hospitality industry professionals aim to tackle the above problem by creating more development opportunities; having extra employee benefits or providing with tailor-made trainings however, none of the interviewees mentioned anything about providing neither healthy work -live balance nor flexibility.

A way to retain talent is by learning and covering what individuals need. Participants shared that they like to be recognize by attributes that fall within the work values of openness to change and self-transcendence with initiatives such as, providing employees with small details, sharing positive feedback, training, recognition emails, verbal recognition or recognition events, referring to the former one value dimension, and initiatives such as outings and meals together, free time, free meals, extra vacation, work-life balance, massages, night free in the hotel referring to the self-transcendence value dimension. This information is valuable in the sense that might help professionals from the hospitality industry to understand a more what their Millennials need.

Recommendations for the industry include avoiding any traditional approaches as a strategy to retain this generation. In fact, the nature of the hospitality industry itself, with its long work hours, lack of flexibility, hierarchical and traditional structure, can be a restraint for this generation

The content and results of this study are being prepared to be sent to an international journal.

**Study Three: Understanding Hospitality students' personality traits and most valued aspects when looking for a job.**

This study analyzes the Millennials' personality traits and what they value the most during the job search process. Data is obtained by means of a survey to identify students' most valued aspects when looking for a job and the Big Five Personality Traits questionnaire to identify student's personality traits.

Results show that the most developed personality traits according to the Big 5 questionnaire correspond to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Agreeableness is understood as the degree to which an individual is sociable and receptive (Holman *et al.*, 2012). It is a sign of tenderness and collaboration in social interactions; individuals who have a high percentage on this category are merciful, delicate and get along well with their colleagues (Nga and Ken Yien, 2013). Conscientiousness outlines dependence, attentiveness, and persistency of a person. Conscientiousness individuals are extremely capable, self-containment and active in decision-making (McCrae and Costa, 1997).

Student's preferences when looking for a job include: having flexible schedules, a good salary and compensations and other aspects corresponding to work life balance, close relationship with managers and having a dynamic job. The relationship between most valued aspects and personality traits was examined concluding that students looking for flexible schedules and higher salary seem to have higher emotional stability than those looking for other aspects. Extraversion is another personality trait seems to be higher on those looking for other aspects.

Moreover, personality traits appear to be shaped by working experience, academic year, and gender. Individuals with higher working experience have a higher extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability while agreeableness and intellect imagination seem not to be affected by experience. When analyzing the student's degree, bachelor students have higher extraversion and intellect imagination when compared to Master students who have a much higher emotional stability. Finally, females seem to have much higher agreeableness and conscientiousness while males a higher emotional stability. Caution should be applied while interpreting the meaning of these results.

A recommendation will be for companies to have into consideration student's personality traits when shaping their retention strategies. Knowing what students' value and their relationship with personality might help to create more accurate job descriptions and job profiles contributing to have a healthier organization. The analytical tools explored in this research might help the industry to avoid losing talent by understanding student's needs based on values, personality traits and most valued aspects when looking for a job.

The content and results of this study are being prepared to be sent to an international journal.

## 5.2 Limitations and Further lines of research

Like all research, this study is not extent of limitations. First, the empirical evidence is very specific to an organization and city; consequently, the results will present a snapshot of a group of student and professionals, about how they feel about work motivation. Secondly, the findings can not be generalized, for this reason, it will be interesting to increase sample size, professionals and to develop this study under other countries to assess cross-cultural differences. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the academic discussion and findings will potentially be of interest to tourism and hospitality organizations as there is limited research about work motivation based on values and its relationship with Millennials' retention.

Regarding future lines of research, it will be very interesting as stated above to evaluate the impact of this practices within hotels, as well due to the variety of organizations that can be found inside the hospitality and tourism industry, it will be interesting to explore other segments such as transport, food and beverage or recreation. Moreover, it will be interesting to evaluate if the Millennials motivations are different regarding the culture and extrapolate this study to other countries and sectors, in fact, the methodology proposed could be used to explore students' profiles in other sectors and analyze if current human resources strategies are aligned with their future employee's personality traits and valued aspects. Finally, it will be interesting to examine other variables impacting the turnover using models of structural equations such as the journey from values and needs (in combination with other antecedents) to intentions (or likelihood) to start a career in the hospitality industry.

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 Appendix 1. EVAT questionnaire.

#### ¿Qué tanto se parece el empleado descrito a usted?

<b>Introducción</b>	En esta sección se le pedirá determinar cuál es el grado de parecido entre varios empleados y usted.														
<b>Instrucciones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Los siguientes enunciados describen brevemente las características de distintos empleados. Su tarea consiste en calificar qué tanto se parece cada uno de ellos a usted empleando para ello la escala que se presenta a continuación y anotando el número que corresponda en la línea en blanco:</li></ul> <table><tr><td><b>1</b></td><td><b>2</b></td><td><b>3</b></td><td><b>4</b></td><td><b>5</b></td><td><b>6</b></td><td><b>7</b></td></tr><tr><td>Es totalmente distinto a mí</td><td>Casi no se parece a mí</td><td>Se parece muy poco a mí</td><td>Se parece algo a mí</td><td>Se parece a mí</td><td>Se parece mucho a mí</td><td>Es idéntico a mí</td></tr></table>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	Es totalmente distinto a mí	Casi no se parece a mí	Se parece muy poco a mí	Se parece algo a mí	Se parece a mí	Se parece mucho a mí	Es idéntico a mí
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>									
Es totalmente distinto a mí	Casi no se parece a mí	Se parece muy poco a mí	Se parece algo a mí	Se parece a mí	Se parece mucho a mí	Es idéntico a mí									
<b>Enunciado 1</b>	_____ Es un(a) empleado(a) muy activo(a), contagia energía sólo de verle.														
<b>Enunciado 2</b>	_____ Respetar las costumbres y tradiciones que se siguen en su trabajo, es muy importante para él (ella).														
<b>Enunciado 3</b>	_____ A él (ella), le gusta manejar a la gente, le gusta mandar e influenciar a las personas.														
<b>Enunciado 4</b>	_____ Para él (ella), es muy importante el bienestar de las personas que conforman su equipo de trabajo.														
<b>Enunciado 5</b>	_____ Él (ella) es un(a) empleado(a) inquieto(a), siempre está buscando nuevas maneras de hacer mejor su trabajo.														
<b>Enunciado 6</b>	_____ Siempre se guía por lo que otros hacen, no le gusta hacer cosas que otros no hagan.														
<b>Enunciado 7</b>	_____ Él (Ella) busca siempre sobresalir y ser exitoso(a) frente a los demás.														

*Continúa en la siguiente página*

¿Qué tanto se parece el empleado descrito a usted?, Cont...

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<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Es totalmente distinto a mí	Casi no se parece a mí	Se parece muy poco a mí	Se parece algo a mí	Se parece a mí	Se parece mucho a mí	Es idéntico a mí

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- Enunciado 8**     \_\_\_\_\_ Para él (ella) es muy importante ganarse la confianza de sus compañeros de trabajo, siéndoles leal y honesto(a).
- Enunciado 9**     \_\_\_\_\_ Él (Ella), siempre está preocupado(a) por actualizarse, ya sea leyendo o asistiendo a cursos, con la finalidad de ser un empleado(a) eficiente.
- Enunciado 10**    \_\_\_\_\_ Siempre sigue las reglas y procedimientos en su trabajo, tal y como si fuera un reloj.
- Enunciado 11**    \_\_\_\_\_ Mantener una imagen de superioridad ante los demás, es su principal preocupación.
- Enunciado 12**    \_\_\_\_\_ Él (Ella) siempre lucha por que todos los empleados reciban el mismo trato y oportunidades.
- Enunciado 13**    \_\_\_\_\_ Le gustan los retos en su trabajo, prefiere siempre lo nuevo y desconocido.
- Enunciado 14**    \_\_\_\_\_ Él (Ella) es muy metódico(a); no le gusta intentar nuevas formas de hacer las cosas, prefiere lo que siempre le ha funcionado.
- Enunciado 15**    \_\_\_\_\_ Para él (ella), adquirir y acumular bienes o usar servicios costosos es muy importante.
- Enunciado 16**    \_\_\_\_\_ Para él (ella) la lealtad hacia su empresa y/o equipo de trabajo es muy importante.

Retrieved from: <https://www.luisarciniega.org/evat-scale-spanish.html>

## 6.2 Appendix 2. Big Five questionnaire.

### Introduction

This is a personality test, it will help you understand why you act the way that you do and how your personality is structured. Please follow the instructions below, scoring and results are on the next page.

### Instructions

In the table below, for each statement 1-50 mark how much you agree with on the scale 1-5, where 1=disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly agree and 5=agree, in the box to the left of it.

### Test

Rating	I....	Rating	I....
	1. Am the life of the party.		26. Have little to say.
	2. Feel little concern for others.		27. Have a soft heart.
	3. Am always prepared.		28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
	4. Get stressed out easily.		29. Get upset easily.
	5. Have a rich vocabulary.		30. Do not have a good imagination.
	6. Don't talk a lot.		31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
	7. Am interested in people.		32. Am not really interested in others.
	8. Leave my belongings around.		33. Like order.
	9. Am relaxed most of the time.		34. Change my mood a lot.
	10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.		35. Am quick to understand things.
	11. Feel comfortable around people.		36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.
	12. Insult people.		37. Take time out for others.
	13. Pay attention to details.		38. Shirk my duties.
	14. Worry about things.		39. Have frequent mood swings.
	15. Have a vivid imagination.		40. Use difficult words.
	16. Keep in the background.		41. Don't mind being the center of attention.
	17. Sympathize with others' feelings.		42. Feel others' emotions.
	18. Make a mess of things.		43. Follow a schedule.
	19. Seldom feel blue.		44. Get irritated easily.
	20. Am not interested in abstract ideas.		45. Spend time reflecting on things.
	21. Start conversations.		46. Am quiet around strangers.
	22. Am not interested in other people's problems.		47. Make people feel at ease.
	23. Get chores done right away.		48. Am exacting in my work.
	24. Am easily disturbed.		49. Often feel blue.
	25. Have excellent ideas.		50. Am full of ideas.

Retrieved from: <http://www.itpmetrics.com>

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**ACTA DEL GRAU DE DOCTOR**

En aquesta data es reuneix el Tribunal nomenat el 20/11/2020 compostat per:

*On this date, the Tribunal designated on 20/11/2020 meets. It is composed by:*

President:	Dr. Luis Martin Arciniega Ruiz	Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México
	de Esparza	
Secretari:	Dr. Ricard Santomà Vicens	Universitat Ramon Llull
Vocal:	Dra. Ankie Hoefnagels	Zuyd University of Applied Science

per jutjar la tesi doctoral, per a l'obtenció del títol de DOCTORA per la Universitat Ramon Llull, que presenta la Sra. Itziar Ramírez García, el títol de la qual és **An approach for reducing hospitality industry turnover ratio by understanding Millennials' work motivation based on values and their personality traits** dirigida pel Dr. Albert Fornells Herrera.

*to judge the doctoral thesis, for the obtention of a DOCTOR's degree by Ramon Llull University, presented by Ms Itziar Ramírez García, with the title **An approach for reducing hospitality industry turnover ratio by understanding Millennials' work motivation based on values and their personality traits** under the supervision of Dr Albert Fornells Herrera.*

Exposada i mantinguda la tesi, és qualificada amb

*Once the thesis has been presented and debated, it is qualified with*

EXCEL·LENT

El Secretari, fa constar que ha rebut les actes i informes signades per cada membre del tribunal, que s'adjunten a aquesta acta.

*The Secretary states that he has received the minutes and reports signed by each member of the tribunal, which are attached to this record.*

Barcelona, a 15 de desembre de 2020

*Barcelona, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

Firmat pel Secretari,

*Signed by the Secretary,*

Dr. Ricard Santomà Vicens