



# Gender differences on job satisfaction of the five-star hotel employees

## The case of the Turkish hotel industry

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this research is to examine gender differences while controlling for select variables on job satisfaction using data collected from employees in the hospitality industry.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study was conducted on 397 employees (234 males and 163 females) in five-star hotels in Ankara, Turkey.

**Findings** – The level of job satisfaction is determined by four factors: “management conditions”, “personal fulfillment”, “using ability in the job”, and “job conditions”. The study results show that significant gender differences exist with regard to the “using ability in the job” dimension of job satisfaction. After controlling such variables as age, marital status, monthly income level, education, type of department, position held, length of time in the organization, length of time in the tourism sector, and frequency of job change, most gender differences remained significant.

**Research limitations/implications** – The use of hotel employees solely representing five-star hotels may be considered a limitation of this study. The results provide information that can be utilized in understanding, maintaining, and increasing the satisfaction levels of both female and male employees. The findings indicate that fairness and equity in salary and wages are effective tools to increase the job satisfaction levels of male and female employees.

**Originality/value** – This study focuses on the identification of gender-specific drivers of job satisfaction while controlling for select demographic variables. The study provides insight into employees’ perceptions of certain aspects of the nature of the hospitality and tourism sector in Turkey.

**Keywords** Gender, Job satisfaction, Hotel employees, Hotel and catering industry, Turkey

**Paper type** Research paper

### Introduction

In the hospitality industry, like in many other industries, employees’ decision about their labor force participation depends on job satisfaction. Consequently, analysis of job satisfaction may provide insight into employees’ perceptions of certain aspects of the nature of the hospitality and tourism sector (Clark, 1996). There are some unique aspects of managing in the hospitality and tourism sector that make the process of hiring and maintaining employees difficult. These aspects, which contribute to high turnover rates, may include: labor intensiveness, weak internal labor markets, 24/7-52



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weeks a year operation, low status and gender composition (mostly female), and a low level of professional prestige (Burke *et al.*, 2008a). Determining the perceptions of employees about their organization is crucial for understanding what mechanisms lead to employees' attitudes and behaviors toward their job (Tuzun, 2009).

The tourism industry is an accommodating industry because it offers a wide range of jobs with diverse human capital requirements (Szivas *et al.*, 2003). As well, tourism is one of the important industries with a great potential for growth for countries such as Turkey. According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey (2009) during the period 2000-2008, the national income rose from \$10.4 billion to \$21.9 billion in the tourism industry. Moreover, the hospitality industry is a significant sector which assumes a critical role with about 500,000 employees (Bengisu and Balta, 2010). In Turkey, female employees' proportion is nearly 25 percent of the total employees who registered in the tourism sector (Jensen, 2010).

Female employees usually are quite powerless to compete with their male counterparts due to several visible or invisible barriers and challenges, these barriers include: forgoing marriage, motherhood, discrimination, and stereotyping. This problem becomes magnified when the operational aspects of hospitality management require long working hours and high degrees of mobility (Pinar *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, a woman's desire for advancement into a senior-level leadership position becomes more difficult because of the prevalent "traditional role" assumptions (Schaap *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, research conducted in the US indicates that, even in America, a disproportionate low number of highly educated females attain executive status in the industry (Li and Leung, 2001). In the hospitality and tourism sectors around the world, and in various combinations, these barrier and challenges deter female employees from continuing their professional careers in the hospitality industry for fear of interference with their private and social lives. The hospitality business, therefore, provides fewer opportunities for promotion that are sufficient to meet the expectations of females (McCuddy *et al.*, 2010).

Given the many correlates and consequences of employee satisfaction in the hospitality sector, the purpose of this study is to analyze potential gender differences with regard to employee satisfaction. This study is warranted because, as will be detailed in the coming sections, there currently exists a wide array of inconsistent findings in the literature with regard to this issue. This current study controls for a number of demographic variables and also drills-down to examine specific dimensions of the employee satisfaction construct in order to shed new light on the theoretically and managerially important topic area. By controlling for a select number of variables, it is hoped that inconsistent findings on gender differences could be minimized and more detailed information can be revealed on gender differences. The present study is designed to address employee job satisfaction using data from five-star hotels in Ankara, Turkey.

Given the significant presence of women in labor force, it is very important that we understand the elements of job satisfaction, particularly using a gendered perspective (Garcia-Bernal *et al.*, 2005). Ng and Pine (2003) reported women working in executive levels in the hotel industry are essentially the same as in other industries. There is consistency of expectations both from male and female employees in performance and responsibility of assigned tasks and duties regardless of levels of decision making in the organization. The hotel industry demands the same skills of male and female

employees; if male and female employees have the necessary qualities and work hard, they should and can succeed in the organization. However, studies show that male and female do not enjoy equal employment and promotion opportunities (Ng and Pine, 2003). There is enough evidence to suggest that even if a woman were to gain a position in management, she might not necessarily benefit from equal pay (Skalpe, 2007). Likewise, emerging research indicates that males and females react differently to role stress in hospitality positions. Specifically, Kim *et al.* (2009) find that role stress has a stronger effect on the job satisfaction of women than for men, suggesting that stress reduces job satisfaction more in female employees than does in male employees.

In the hospitality industry, employee job satisfaction has been shown to be critical for retaining employees. If the components of the work environment are conducive to job satisfaction, research indicates that the organization will experience fewer problems with disruptions such as turnover, absenteeism, and poor work performance (Bai *et al.*, 2006). Pavesic and Brymer (1990) investigated job satisfaction of managers. They found that respondents defined dislikes in hospitality jobs as long hours, nights and weekend schedule, low pay, stress, demanding supervisors and duties, no personal time, diminished quality of life, disruptive routine, no advancement or growth, no import or recognition, company politics, management issues, labor shortages, poor staff, lack of employee motivation, and employees' and coworkers' attitudes (Pavesic and Brymer, 1990). Recently, Okumus *et al.* (2010) also examined female work motivations in five-star hotels in a developing country and found that not having enough time for friends and relatives, low pay, difficulties in getting a promotion, not having enough time for hobbies, heavy working conditions, and insufficient time for household duties were the main work-related problems for female employees.

According to tourism research findings, the majority of hospitality and tourism employees leave the industry as a result of low job satisfaction, poor working conditions and absence of motivating factors (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). High turnover rate is a very important component in the tourism industry that ultimately produces higher overhead costs and lower quality customer service (Kuruuzum *et al.*, 2009). This also brings attention to the need for hiring a highly qualified and dedicated staff (that will stay with the company); and the need for overcoming the unique aspects of managing employees in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Organizational commitment and job satisfaction can be interpreted to suggest that a high degree of reciprocity exists between the individual and the organization (Ryan *et al.*, 2011). If employees are satisfied with their jobs, they feel strongly motivated to restore good working conditions and may also feel optimistic about the possibilities for improvement. Previous researchers found that high job satisfaction is evidenced by employee loyalty such as good citizenship behavior (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988). Essentially, these positive outcomes relate to satisfied employees demonstrating high level of organizational commitment (Yang, 2010). That is, Pettijohn *et al.* (2004) found that job satisfaction is positively related to the customer orientation scores. Their finding supports the argument that satisfied employees are either more capable of engaging in increasing customer satisfaction (Pettijohn *et al.*, 2004). On the other hand, employees who are dissatisfied with their job are more likely to leave their position than those who are satisfied (Ghiselli *et al.*, 2001). Such a correlation between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction is sometimes termed "the satisfaction mirror" in which the satisfaction of both groups of constituents feed each other (Noe *et al.*, 2010).

In other words, it is more likely that customers are happy when employees are happy – and vice versa.

Moreover, negative feelings about job can spill over into other areas of life, may affect self-image and generally have a detrimental effect on psychological well-being (Kokko and Guerrier, 1994). Employees should know that their organization is concerned about their well-being so that they can be satisfied with their current job or career and, as a result, can demonstrate high quality job performance (Karatepe, 2012). Lam *et al.* (2001) reported that in order to be successful in a competitive market, it is important that hotel managers know how their employees feel at work and understand what they want. The amount of effort that an employee expends toward accomplishing the hotel's goals depends on whether the employee believes that this effort will lead to the satisfaction of his or her own needs and desires.

### **Job satisfaction**

Understanding what promotes job satisfaction is one of the most important issues for organizations in human resource management. Job satisfaction is determined not only by the employees' objective working situation, but also by their subjective perceptions about their job (Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009). Locke (1969) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the employee appraising his/her job as achieving and/or facilitating their own job values (Locke, 1969). Job satisfaction is based on evaluation of conditions that exist on the job (work load, appropriate supervision) and/or financial outcomes from the job (pay, security). Job satisfaction consists of filtered and processed perceptions; filtered through the individual's system of norms, values, and expectations (Schneider and Snyder, 1975). Jung *et al.* (2007) reported that job satisfaction is related to employees' expectations and realities. Specifically, frustrated and disappointed employees are likely to have a low level of job satisfaction. These expectations and realities may also vary according to age, education, gender, and cultural background. These characteristics can be important determinants of job satisfaction (Jung *et al.*, 2007). Spector (1997) summarized job satisfaction determinants such as appreciation, communication, co-workers, fringe benefits, job conditions, nature of the work itself, the nature of the organization itself, an organization's policies and procedures, pay, personal growth, promotion opportunities, recognition, security and supervision (Spector, 1997).

As seen in this related literature, there are different scales with which different factors are used to examine job satisfaction. One of the few well-known examples of job satisfaction surveys is the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss *et al.*, 1967). This scale measures activity, independence, variety, social status, supervision (human relation), supervision (technical), moral values, security, social security, authority, ability utilization, company policy, compensation, advancement, responsibility, creativity, working conditions, coworkers, recognition, and achievement. Another scale, the job descriptive index (JDI), is designed to measure the employees' job satisfaction as work, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers (Smith *et al.*, 1969). The major difference between the two is a degree of emphasis on the factors that are likely to affect job satisfaction and the determinants of the outcome of job satisfaction. JDI focuses more on the determinants of job satisfaction outcome as opposed to job satisfaction factors in general. Most of job satisfaction studies employ a wide variety of job satisfaction determinants as included in the mentioned measures.

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### *Gender and job satisfaction*

The relationship between gender and job satisfaction has been examined frequently. As previously stated, the primary motivation of the current study is to address the inconsistent findings reported in the literature regarding gender differences regarding job satisfaction. The findings about gender differences related to job satisfaction have been inconsistent from the 1950s to date (Al-Ajmi, 2006). For example, some studies (e.g. Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009) find that males show more satisfaction in their job than females. Yet, other studies (Okpara *et al.*, 2005; Clark, 1997; Kim, 2005; Jung *et al.*, 2007) indicate that females have more satisfaction than males. While yet other studies (Linz, 2003; Koyuncu *et al.*, 2006; Eskildsen *et al.*, 2004; Al-Ajmi, 2006; Frye and Mount, 2007; Ward and Sloane, 2000) find no significant gender differences in job satisfaction. The current study, therefore, controls for a number of demographic variables and also drills-down to examine specific dimensions of the employee satisfaction construct.

A number of studies with different work settings and sample populations have examined job satisfaction with respect to gender differences. For example, Okpara *et al.* (2005) focused on the effects of gender differences in job satisfaction as related to US academics. Their research showed that female faculty members were more satisfied with their work and co-workers, whereas their male colleagues were more satisfied with their pay, promotions, supervision, and overall job satisfaction (Okpara *et al.*, 2005). Clark (1997) conducted a study which included job satisfaction and gender using data from a 1991 British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The research results show that despite controlling for a number of factors, job satisfaction remains significantly higher for women than for men (Clark, 1997). Kim (2005) studied gender differences in job satisfaction of public employees in Korea and finds that female employees report more satisfaction than males in job security, worth of providing public service, pay, promotion, and social reputation of civil service. In addition to these findings, after controlling other factors such as rank, age, educational background, and length of service, gender differences remain statistically significant (Kim, 2005). Jung *et al.* (2007) investigate job satisfaction with age and gender in service sector using the Korean Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS). This investigation examines six aspects of satisfaction; wages, job security, task or job contents, work environment, personal development, and communication or human relations. According to this research, females have more satisfaction with their wages and work environments (Jung *et al.*, 2007). The role of gender as a determinant of job satisfaction has also been examined in Europe and North America, Kenya, China, and Kuwait. In these countries, research has found that women are more satisfied than equal male coworkers in some occupations such as clergy, scientists, attorneys, and doctors (Bender *et al.*, 2005).

Regarding the influence of gender on job satisfaction, females seem to possess a higher level of overall job satisfaction than their male counterparts. This was found to be true despite an obvious disadvantage of position for women in the labor market. The satisfaction gap between what women expect and what women attain is comparatively small (Kaiser, 2007). However, Kelly (1989) found small gender differences; females are significantly different than males regarding their job satisfaction. Initially females describe themselves much less satisfied than males. For females, there is a greater tendency to moderate their satisfaction level by saying they are only fairly satisfied. The analysis also found that gender does not directly influence

job satisfaction, even though predictors are controlled (Kelly, 1989). However, another study, Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2009) examines gender differences in job satisfaction of young university graduates. Job satisfaction was measured by five job satisfaction determinants such as work content, promotion possibilities, earnings, applicability of acquired knowledge, and job security. Results showed that those females are less satisfied than males in promotion possibilities, earnings, and job security factors. The gender gap was evident, as well, when regarding promotion possibilities even after controlling variables such as earnings, self-employment, and type of occupation (Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009). Lefkowitz (1994) claims that, in studies that compare male and female employees, there are different social and work environments regarding men and women satisfaction levels in the same locations, organization, and occupations. These studies also control for some demographic variables such as age and level of education. The results of Lefkowitz's (1994) study indicate that females are less adaptable to their work situations (Lefkowitz, 1994).

Common explanations for the different levels of job satisfaction can be explained in that females and males have different characteristics, experience or expectations or perhaps females are more apt to have inferior working conditions (Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009). Garcia-Bernal *et al.* (2005) reported that these differences stemming from employees' characteristics as well as the job position itself (Garcia-Bernal *et al.*, 2005). Moreover, male and female employees may use different qualitative criteria in their assessment of work and job satisfaction. This can be seen as an emotional response interaction related to employees' work values (Oshagbemi, 2003). Employees have lower or higher job satisfaction depending on whether they have lower or high ability to be satisfied emotionally (Al-Ajmi, 2006). If female employees are content with their work, supervisor, co-workers, their pay policies, and advancement opportunities in their organizations, they will be satisfied with their job (Reed *et al.*, 1994).

Garcia-Bernal *et al.* (2005) define four factors to determine an employee's level of job satisfaction: economic aspects, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and personal fulfillment. Their research findings show that there is no gender difference in job satisfaction. A more in depth analysis shows that interpersonal relation factors affect male employees more than they do female employees, but the factor of work conditions has more importance for female than males (Garcia-Bernal *et al.*, 2005). Koyuncu *et al.* (2006) examine work experience and satisfaction on male and female professors in Turkey and they, as well, find no significant gender differences in their job satisfaction (Koyuncu *et al.*, 2006). Another study, Al-Ajmi (2006) examines the effect of gender on job satisfaction in Kuwait and he found that there is no significant difference with regard to the gender variable (Al-Ajmi, 2006). Also, Frye and Mount (2007) examines job satisfaction of general managers and found no significant difference in overall satisfaction according to gender; however, women reported a minimally higher level of job satisfaction than men (Frye and Mount, 2007).

Johnson *et al.* (1999) examine job satisfaction of male and female managers using a survey of 146 women and 155 men. Results showed that both men and women managers were reasonably well satisfied with their job (Johnson *et al.*, 1999). In another study, Burke *et al.* (2008a) examines gender differences in job satisfactions of 637 (24 women, 613 men) Norwegian oil rig workers and two groups of workers shows similar levels of job satisfaction (Burke *et al.*, 2008b). Eskildsen *et al.* (2004) also investigate gender differences and job satisfaction in the Nordic countries and find no significant gender

differences on job satisfaction. Male and females showed equal satisfaction with their job (Eskildsen *et al.*, 2004). Donohue and Heywood (2004) investigate job satisfaction for males and females and by occupational group. Research results show that white-collar females have high-level satisfaction when they have available childcare benefits and work with small firms. White-collar males have high level satisfaction when they have available retirement plan. Both occupational groups, males and females, displayed high levels of satisfaction when skills were acquired on the job (Donohue and Heywood, 2004). Oshagbemi (2003) investigated the effects of some variables of job satisfaction among UK academics using data from 554 academicians. He finds that gender is not significantly associated with overall job satisfaction; several of the interactive relationships of variables such as age, rank and length of service in higher education were statistically significant (Oshagbemi, 2003). Lam and Zhang (2003) reported that job satisfaction is important for employees because customer satisfaction can only be achieved when employees are content with their jobs (Lam and Zhang, 2003).

As seen from the comprehensive review of the related literature on job satisfaction with respect to gender differences, it is evident that differences can exist between male and female employees in their job satisfaction. Such differences are evidenced from country to country and from organization to organization with some variation. Most of these studies have also used select variables as covariates to examine differences between the two genders. The nature of selected variables is a function of the study unit of analysis and types of organizations from which data are generated. Most of these covariates may be grouped under two categories of variables: demographic variables such as age, income, occupation, marital status or organization variables such as type of department, length of work, frequency of job change, position held.

The general hypothesis of this particular study is that there are differences between female and male employees of the five- star hotel sector with respect to job satisfaction and that this hypothesized differences may be moderated both by a group of select demographic variables of age, marital status, income level, and education, and a group of job related variables such as typed of department, position, length of time in the organization and length of time in the sector.

This current study contributes to the rich literature on job satisfaction in two ways. First, it uses data that were generated using five-star hotels, a fast growing tourism sector in Turkey. Secondly, and more importantly, the study uses both demographic variables such as age, marital status, monthly income, educational, and a select list of organizational variables such position held, length of time in the sector, length of time in the organization, frequency of job change in order to examine the existing differences between the two gender groups in their job satisfaction levels. It is hoped that the examination of both the select demographic and organizational variables would further enhance our understanding of the possible determinants of the existing differences between males and females in relation to their job satisfaction. Such rich information would also contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of job satisfaction constructs in human resources. This information would also have sector specific managerial implications.

### Methodology

The data were collected from 397 hotel employees in Ankara, Turkey. To prevent potential language problems, the questionnaire was translated into Turkish using back

translation method by the research team. Data collection took place during the months of September 2009 through February 2010. Since 5-star hotels tend to have a larger number of employees, these hotels were selected to populate the sample with “enough” female and male employees. These hotels also meet the rating requirements of five stars hotels as outlined by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The study used a proportional stratified random sampling based on the number of 5-star hotels and their total number of employees. According to a survey “Hotel and Tourism Industry Labor Force Survey”, conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (1989), the number of staff per bed is 0.59 in the 5-star hotel establishments. Moreover, according to data obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2009), the total number of beds in the certified tourism business is 19,401 in Ankara. Based on this information, the total survey population is estimated by multiplying the number of beds by the number of staff per bed, which resulted in “11,446”. Hence the limit of the universe was taken as 11,446 and following the sample size calculation as suggested by Yamane (2001), the appropriate sample size was 371. Initially, based on the size of the hotel, an appropriate number of questionnaires were sent to each hotel manager to distribute the questionnaires. At the time of data collection there were around ten 5-star hotels in Ankara. Since the number of 5-star hotels and total employees are known, we wanted to make sure that we would collect enough from each property to populate the sample based on the required appropriate sample size ( $n = 371$ ) that would represent both gender and hotel employees in general. The total number of questionnaires that was distributed was around 750. Each hotel property depending on its employee size, received 50 to 70 questionnaires. The questionnaire was filled out by male and female employees who worked in all departments of the hotels that were covered in the study and employees were instructed to complete the questionnaires, once completed, and they were asked to leave the completed questionnaires with their supervisors or the main office staff members. After a waiting period of 5 months, one of the researchers retrieved the collected questionnaires ( $n = 397$  in total) from the 5-star hotels. The total number of questionnaires generated ( $n = 397$ ) was slightly over the required number of sample size of 371; yielding a 53 percent response rate. Five questionnaires had several incomplete sections and were not included in the data analysis.

The data questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section of the questionnaire included employees’ demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, and education level. The second part included job satisfaction questions. In order to measure employee job satisfaction level, the study adopted Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire developed by Weiss *et al.* (1967). The short form of the scale consisted of 20 items and covered three dimensions: intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction and general satisfaction (Weiss *et al.*, 1967). This scale covers areas of ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision-human relations, supervision-technical, variety, and working conditions. A five-point response scale was employed, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

While the demographic characteristics of the entire employee population in the participating hotels were unavailable to the research team, due to the human resource offices randomly administering the surveys in their respective properties, we can be reasonably confident that the sample represents the population. As detailed in the



following sections, data analysis procedures include descriptive analysis, factor analysis, t-tests, and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). The study utilized SPSS for data analysis.

## Results

Respondent characteristics are listed in Table I. The gender distribution of respondents showed that male employees accounted for 58.9 percent and female employees 41.1 percent of the sample, respectively. The respondents were mainly 21-30 years old (52.95 percent), single (58.7 percent), earning a monthly income of 1500 Turkish Lira or less (67.5 percent). Almost 53 percent had some college or a college degree. The distribution of work departments was rather even; 16.1 percent front office, 24.9 percent food and beverage, 20.4 percent housekeeping, 10.3 percent accounting, 6.5 percent technical, 7.6 percent sales and marketing, 5.5 percent human resources and 8.6 percent other departments. The respondents mainly consisted of line employees (64.7 percent). In total, 72.3 percent of the employees have been with their current organizations less than five years and 62.0 percent have worked in the tourism sector five years or less.

## Factor analysis of job satisfaction

In order to determine the dimensions of job satisfaction, the 20 items were factor analyzed utilizing a principal components analysis with a varimax rotation (Table II). The Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.00 and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.929. All retained factors had an eigenvalue greater than 1 and all factor loadings were above .45. The four factors were labeled as "management conditions", "personal fulfillment", "using ability in the job" and "job conditions".

"Management conditions" had the highest percentage of the total variance (45.9 percent) and indicated that this particular factor presents a very important dimension in job satisfaction. Also, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the factor dimensions ranged from 0.815 to 0.887. The factors of "personal fulfillment" and "using ability in the job" mostly correspond to the intrinsic elements of the job satisfaction scale. On the other hand, the factors of "job conditions" and "management conditions" seem to have both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction elements on the scale.

## Gender differences on job satisfaction factors

According to the t-test result in gender differences on job satisfaction (Table III), female managers reported significantly different mean scores in "using ability in the job" satisfaction factor. ( $X_{female} = 3.38$ ,  $X_{male} = 3.58$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However; "management conditions", "personal fulfillment" and "job conditions" factors were not statistically significant at the 0.05 probability level. There are no differences between the two groups in regards to the rank importance of job satisfaction factors. Both groups gave equally high scores for "management conditions" factor. female employees scored lowest for "using ability in the job" and male employees scored lowest for "personal fulfillment". These findings revealed that significant gender differences did exist in every dimension on the job satisfaction scale. However, little research was available with which to compare or confirm this particular finding in the literature.

A one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also performed to investigate gender difference in job satisfaction. Four delineated factors

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Variable	f	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	163	41.1
Male	234	58.9
<i>Age</i>		
20 and less	39	9.8
21-30	210	52.9
31-40	103	25.9
41 and over	45	11.3
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	164	41.3
Single	233	58.7
<i>Monthly income level (TL)</i>		
1,500 and less	268	67.5
1,501-2,500	99	24.9
2,501 and over	30	7.6
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary education	187	47.1
Associate	90	22.7
College and graduate	120	30.2
<i>Department</i>		
Front office	64	16.1
Food and beverage	99	24.9
Housekeeping	81	20.4
Accounting	41	10.3
Technical	26	6.5
Sales and marketing	30	7.6
Human resources	22	5.5
Other	34	8.6
<i>Task</i>		
General manager or assistant	24	6.0
Department manager	52	13.1
Chief	64	16.1
Line employees	257	64.7
<i>Length of time in this organization</i>		
2 and/or less year	156	39.3
3-5 year	31	33.0
6-8 year	61	15.4
9 and over year	49	12.3
<i>Length of time in tourism sector</i>		
2 and/or less year	125	31.5
3-5 year	121	30.5
6-8 year	69	17.4
9 and over year	82	20.7
<i>Frequency of job changes</i>		
2 or less	230	57.9
3-5	115	29.0
6 and/or over	52	13.1

**Table I.**  
Characteristics of  
respondents

Factors	Factor loading	Eigen-value	Explained variance (%)	Reliability coefficient
<i>Factor 1: management conditions</i>				
The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	0.779	9.189	45.9	0.858
The way my boss handles his/her workers	0.769			
Working conditions (warming, clearing, air condition)	0.759			
The way my co-workers get along	0.759			
The praise I get for doing a good job	0.584			
<i>Factor 2: personal fulfilment</i>				
The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	0.846	1.715	8.5	0.887
Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	0.779			
The freedom to use my own judgment	0.745			
The way my job provides for steady employment	0.580			
Being able to keep busy all of the time	0.544			
<i>Factor 3: using ability in the job</i>				
The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	0.811	1.222	6.1	0.834
The chance to work alone on the job	0.739			
The chance to do things for other people	0.590			
The chance to try my own methods of doing job	0.572			
The chance to tell people what to do	0.512			
<i>Factor 4: job conditions</i>				
The chance to do different things from time to time	0.802	1.001	5.0	0.815
The chance to be "somebody" in the community	0.714			
The chance for advancement on this job	0.687			
The way company policies and put into place	0.466			

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**Note:** Extraction method – Principal component analysis; Rotation method – Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy) = 0.929; Bartlett's test of sphericity:  $p = 0.000$ ; the item of "My pay and amount of work I do" was removed from the scale since it did not meet the minimum loading cut-off point of 0.45

**Table II.**  
Factor analysis of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction factors	Female	Male	<i>t</i> -value	Sig.
Management conditions	3.6798 (1)	3.6949 (1)	0.180	0.857
Personal fulfilment	3.4466 (3)	3.4316 (4)	-0.156	0.876
Using ability in the job	3.3840 (4)	3.5786 (2)	2.243	0.025
Job conditions	3.5767 (2)	3.4957 (3)	-0.879	0.380

**Notes:** Scale ratings: 1=Very dissatisfied; 2=Dissatisfied; 3=Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 4=Satisfied; 5=Very satisfied; The parenthesis beside the mean scores indicated the rank of the main values

**Table III.**  
Gender differences on job satisfaction factors

of job satisfaction: "management conditions", "personal fulfillment", "using ability in the job" and "job conditions" were used as dependent variables. The independent variable was gender. There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the combined effects of four job satisfaction factors as dependent variables ( $F = 4.589$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; Wilk's Lambda = 0.955; partial eta squared = 0.045). When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only difference to

reach statistical significance, using a Benforni adjusted alpha level of  $-0.001$ , was still “using ability in the job”,  $F = 5.032$ ,  $p = 0.025$ , partial eta squared =  $0.013$ . An inspection of the mean scores indicated that male reported slightly higher levels of “using ability in the job” ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) than female ( $F = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ).

**Gender differences in job satisfaction when controlling for other characteristics**

MANCOVA was employed to test gender differences while controlling for other variables, such as age, marital status, monthly income level, education, type of department, position, length of time in the organization, length of time in the tourism sector and frequency of job change. In terms of assumptions, the distribution of data variables was checked for outliers first, and then the boxplot and normal Q-Q plot of skewness options of selected variables were examined. It is determined that the data met multivariate normality. The findings indicate that gender differences in job satisfaction (i.e. multivariate main effect) exist after controlling for these covariates (see Table IV). These findings signify male and female respondents, after eliminating the impact of age, marital status, monthly income level, education, and type of department, position, length of time in the organization, length of time in the tourism sector and frequency of job change have significantly different job satisfaction levels.

**Discussion**

The study was aimed at understanding job satisfaction differences between female and male employees of five-star hotels in Turkey using a job satisfaction scale adopted from the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire (MSQ). MSQ is designed to measure an employee’s satisfaction with his or her job. The MSQ provides more specific information on the aspects of a job that an individual finds rewarding than do more general measures of job satisfaction ([www.psych.umn.edu/psylabs/vpr/msqinf.htm](http://www.psych.umn.edu/psylabs/vpr/msqinf.htm)). The scale has 20 items, covering both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of job satisfaction.

Although the initial job satisfaction scale resulted in two dimensions that combined both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction elements, the current study reveals four dimensions: management conditions, personal fulfillment, using ability in the job and

Item controlled	Management conditions (F, p)	Personal fulfilment (F, p)	Using ability in the job (F, p)	Job conditions (F, p)
Age	3.19 (0.075)	1.769 (0.184)	0.324 (0.569)	0.733 (0.392)
Marital status	0.114 (0.735)	0.002 (0.966)	0.971 (0.325)	0.002 (0.962)
Monthly income level (TL)	14.653 (0.000)*	3.877 (0.050)*	5.857 (0.016)*	36.692 (0.000)*
Education level	0.279 (0.598)	1.533 (0.216)	1.936 (0.165)	5.878 (0.016)*
Type of department	1.894 (0.170)	3.713 (0.055)*	4.059 (0.045)*	8.515 (0.004)*
Position	0.247 (0.620)	0.038 (0.847)	1.043 (0.308)	2.773 (0.097)
Length of time in this organization	0.698 (0.404)	0.391 (0.532)	1.591 (0.208)	0.104 (0.747)
Length of time in tourism sector	0.683 (0.409)	3.302 (0.070)	0.666 (0.415)	0.037 (0.847)
Frequency of job changes	3.840 (0.051)*	1.401 (0.237)	0.735 (0.392)	3.327 (0.069)

**Note:** Based on the previous independent *t*-test results in Table III

**Table IV.** Gender differences on job satisfaction factors controlling for other variables

job conditions. The number of factor differences may be attributed to the nature of labor forces in the hotel sector and the perceptual change in the relative importance of job satisfaction over time. Furthermore, the cultural interpretations of the scale items may have also contributed to the four-factor solution of the job satisfaction scale. However, the four combined factors of the scale explained 65.5 percent of the variance in job satisfaction and included all the elements of the initial scale, suggesting that the scale was robust and stable.

The comparisons of gender differences using independent t-tests indicated that the only significant difference was in the job satisfaction scale of “using ability in the job” dimension; without controlling for other variables or examining the combined effect of the four factors on the gender variable as an independent variable. This dimension covered such items as ability utilization, independence, social service, creativity, and authority. Most of these elements command empowerment.

This finding is also consistent with the MANOVA analysis in which the independent variable was gender and the four delineated factors were dependent variables. Again, there is a statistically significant difference in “using ability in the job” between males and females on the combined dependent variables of the four factors. A closer examination of the mean scores indicates that males report slightly higher levels of satisfaction in using ability in the job ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) than did female employees ( $F = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ).

MANCOVA was employed to test the gender differences while controlling for other variables, such as age, marital status, monthly income level, education, types of department, position, length of time in the organization, length of time in the tourism, and frequency of job changes. After controlling for monthly income, the mean score of “management conditions”, “personal fulfillment”, “using ability in the job” and “job conditions” factors show a significant difference between male and female respondents. Without controlling for income, the differences between the two groups may reveal limited information. From the analysis, it can be inferred that male employees of the five-star hotels in Turkey are more likely to satisfy mostly with “management conditions” and “using ability in the job” factors, while female employees are more likely to be satisfied with “personal fulfillment and job conditions” factors. These inferences also suggest that male employees are motivated more by extrinsic factors and female employee are more motivated more by intrinsic factors. Their source of job satisfaction stem from the degree of personal needs and expectations. It is interesting that the level of income shows differences on all the job satisfaction dimensions. Regardless of gender, income is an important variable or covariate in understanding job satisfaction. The mean score of “job conditions” factor became a significant difference after controlling for education. This means that, in terms of job conditions as part of the four dimensions of job satisfaction, there are significant variations in the job satisfaction scores of hotel employees depending on their gender. In the case of the variable of department type, the mean score of “personal fulfillment”, “using ability in the job”, and “job conditions” factors still show a significant difference between male and female respondents. This means that male employees reported higher satisfaction scores with “management conditions” and “using ability in the job” while female employees reported higher satisfaction scores with “job conditions” factors more often than did males while controlling for the work department of employees. After controlling for the frequency of job changes, the mean

score of “management conditions” factor show a significant change between male and female respondents. That is, male employees have a greater focus on management condition than their female counterparts.

From a theoretical perspective, such gender difference can stem from the fact that male and female employees often employ different qualitative criteria in their assessment of work and job satisfaction (Ward and Sloane, 2000). In fact, emerging research conducted by Okumus *et al.* (2010) specifically examines female job-related concerns in five-star hotels in Turkey (the same context of the current study) and finds that female hotel workers are most concerned with lack of time with friends and family, low wages, and promotion decisions. Evidently, the differing contributors to job satisfaction judgments stemming from such situational characteristics will result in differing job satisfaction sentiment with regard to the various facets of the construct.

### Conclusions

From a theoretical implication perspective, the main contribution of this research to the existing knowledge is the identification of gender-specific drivers of job satisfaction. Insights into managing employee job satisfaction are advanced in this research mainly due to the fact that intervening variables present in all hospitality work environments are controlled for in our analyses. It is clear from the study’s findings that examining gender differences on job satisfaction while controlling relevant variables would help contextualize the study place and make findings more useful in managing human resources. Mixed results involving the relationship between employee gender and job satisfaction produced by past studies can likely, in part, be attributed to the masking effects of such variables. As witnessed in our results, gender differences can be illuminated when controlling for situational factors such as income. The adage “practice is wiser than theory” will continue to hold true if academic research routinely falls short of capturing, moderating and mediating variables that influence focal relationships being studied. In other words, it is through accounting for the variables that are routinely present in the hospitality work environment that can generate useful and actionable pragmatic information. This point also suggests that examining general differences on job satisfaction would need to be contextualized to properly investigate the unique research setting. What types of variables should be controlled for would be a function of the research setting. Thus, researchers in hospitality settings need to fully understand the uniqueness of the research environment and its surroundings before they proceed with data collection and analysis.

The findings of this study suggest several practical implications. In sum, high job satisfaction is desired by managers as it provides positive working conditions, while low job satisfaction brings organizational inefficiency and disciplinary problems (Davidson *et al.*, 2010). And importantly, job satisfaction positively correlates with customer satisfaction in service industries (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2003). If employees are satisfied with their job, they will provide better service to their guests and thus, customer satisfaction will increase (Noe *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, from a pragmatic perspective, research findings such as the result of the study should be utilized by hotel managers and human resource managers. In the case of this study, one of the key findings is that, how much monthly income an employee makes in the hospitality sector in Turkey may play a significant role in understanding job satisfaction levels of employees. Fairness and equity in salary and wages are the basic tools that can be used to maintain and

increase job satisfaction levels of both male and female employees. In addition, depending on employees' education levels, employees can be placed in a situation where there is a match between their education and positions assigned for them to perform. These factors may also result in higher job satisfaction. Unfortunately, in the case of independent hotels in Turkey, one may argue that nepotism plays a significant role in placement of employees. So, there is commonly some sort of mismatch between one's formal education and his/her role in the organization. However, having talked with a number of hotel managers it was confirmed that that this is also changing as the hospitality industry matures, so does the level of professionalism, making the hiring of individuals with less qualifications more difficult. It is expected that, as found in the study, female employees that are assigned to departments with technical responsibilities seem to report lower satisfaction with their job conditions. In order to increase job satisfaction level of employees, managers should attempt to provide a working environment that is sensitive to the needs of employees and their competency levels. This arrangement will also help improve the relationship of the frontline employee and, ultimately, the customer.

Also from a pragmatic perspective, it is prudent to note that some lodging companies and organizations are making efforts to create management opportunities for female employees. For example, Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) hosts an annual conference for female hotel managers and has reserved two seats on its 34 member board for females (Woods and Viehland, 1997). In Turkey, there are many organizations (e.g. KAMER Foundation, Turkish Philanthropy Funds Gender Equality selections, and Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways) which support females on the job and provide different opportunities in a variety of areas (Jensen, 2010).

While managing hotel workers differently based upon their gender would be unwise from both motivational and legal perspectives, certainly possessing an understanding of the drivers of each employee's satisfaction is extremely useful in the industry. Thus, future research is warranted that extends the current study. For instance, country cultures vary around the globe with regard to their levels of masculinity/femininity. According to (Hofstede, 1980), Turkey is in the middle range in terms of the masculinity/femininity (the accepted gender roles in society). Hence, it might prove informative to investigate the relationship between gender and job satisfaction dimensions in a high masculinity society (e.g. Latin America) or in a low masculinity society (e.g. Scandinavia). Examining the influence of such contextual variables would further enhance our understanding the relationship between gender and job satisfaction. It is also important to mention that as the nature and importance of gender specific-drivers of job satisfaction change and shift over time, researchers will have to monitor the possible effects of such changes examining differences on job satisfaction.

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