

## Gender Differences on Perceptions of Employee Quality of Working Life in Five Star Hotels in Turkey

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**Abstract:** The aim of the study is to examine gender differences on perceptions of employees' quality of working life indicators in five star hotels in Turkey. 443 hotel employees participated in this study. Quality of work life was measured using 7 dimension and 16 items scale. All these dimensions were investigated with respect to gender variable. According to these results male employees reported significantly different mean scores in health and safety needs, actualization needs and knowledge needs in quality of working life indicators. However; economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs and aesthetic needs factors were not statistically significant. This finding is also consistent with the results obtained from Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) in which the independent variable was gender and the quality of working life indicators were dependent variables. Finally, MANCOVA analysis was conducted while controlling for such variables as age, marital status, income level, education, type of department, type of work, length of time in this organization and length of time in the tourism sector. Specifically, males and females displayed more significant distinctions after controlling for these variables.

**Key words:** Gender differences • Quality of work life indicators • Turkey

### INTRODUCTION

Quality of work life is the essential concept of favorable situations in a working environment. Legislation enacted in early 20th century to protect employees from job-injury and to eliminate hazardous working conditions, firstly. It was continued following years and finally, in the 1970s the ideal of quality of work life was conceived and from 1980 onwards it was increasingly placed on employee-centered productivity programs. In the mid 1990s till today faced with challenges of economize and corporate restructuring [1].

In the wake of the most difficult economic times of the century, noted downsizing and restructuring, increased competition and decreasing demand within tourism organizations has necessitated the focus on employment practices. Employees are the lifeblood of any tourism organization and a motivated, committed and loyal staff is considered a competitive advantage in the workplace. Employees, who are provided a high quality of work life, are more productive and effective [2]. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate gender differences

on perceptions of employee quality of working life in five star hotels in Turkey. To accomplish the study objectives, this paper is organized as follows. A brief review of the literature, a description of the study methodology, respondent profiles and data analysis are presented. Surprisingly, the literature review did not reveal any study of this nature in Turkey. Moreover, the study results can provide useful information to organizations designing gender issue.

**Definition of Quality of Work Life:** QWL has been used in many different ways to refer to a wide variety of phenomena. In general, the term has been used to encompass such factors as providing adequate and fair compensation to employees, guaranteeing a safe and healthful working environment and providing employees with opportunities to develop and use their unique skills and abilities [3]. In the original discussions, conferences and studies, many of us working in this area saw quality of work life as an individual's reaction to work or the personal consequences of the work experience [4]. The quality of working life can be defined as the quality of

relationship between the employees and the work environment [5]. Quality of work life refers to the impact of the workplace on satisfaction in work life, satisfaction in non-work life domains and satisfaction with overall life [6]. It is the favorable conditions and environments of a workplace that support and promote employee satisfaction by providing workers with rewards, job security and growth opportunities [7]. The employees' satisfaction and reward expectations are influenced by their work environment and the extent to which it provides valued rewards. The work environment includes the employees' jobs, supervisors and work groups and the organizational structure and technology [8].

Quality of life was measured several dimensions by different researchers. Porter (1961) developed his Need Satisfaction Questionnaire and seven needs were originally used and divided into three different need dimensions including survival need (comprised of security and pay needs), social need (comprised of need for interpersonal interactions and friendships and need for membership) and ego need (comprised of need for self-esteem, need for autonomy; and self actualization needs [9]. The concept 'quality of working life' has been combined from literature findings and includes eight aspects: work motivation, learning opportunities, job satisfaction, work atmosphere, health and safety, participation in decision making, realization of personal/team-level targets and reward system [10]. Connell and Hanif (2009) reported QWL factors as three dimensions job content, working hours and work-life balance and managerial/supervisory style and strategies [11]. Sirgy *et al.* (2001) is conceptualized QWL domains as satisfaction of health and safety needs, economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs, actualization needs, knowledge needs and aesthetics needs [6].

The important thing to keep in mind is that QWL and such individual outcomes as satisfaction and productivity can be addressed by some of the same kinds of actions, but they aren't in a direct cause and effect relationship [4]. QWL is the shared responsibility not only of the management and employees, but also by the society. To improve quality of work life is first to identify and then try to satisfy employees' important needs through their experience in their working environment. Depending upon the situational requirements, management may select the relevant needs of the employee's to improve them with a short term plan [1]. Moreover, open communications, mentoring programs and fostering more amicable relationships among workers improve employees quality

of work life are [12]. If organizations are concerned about developing their human resources and gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace, it seems necessary that they attend to one of their most precious assets, namely, their human resources [13].

**Gender Differences on Perceptions of Quality of Work Life Indicators in Tourism Sector:** Tourism activities which developing countries offer to developed countries cheaper have been developing since 1950s and became the area where woman is most employed. Relying on research results, Oktik (2001) states that, one of every fifteen people in the world works in tourism sector, half of this rate is women and especially in USA 52% of employers are women in this sector [14]. In contrast, Demir (2011) cites that, it has been seen in the studies done, being subjected to discrimination, women work in low-wage jobs in low working areas where experience and skills are not asked; even though there is a pick in women labor in the past years, women are still employed in low level jobs [15].

On the other hand, Stewart *et al.* (2007) reported that there has been an increase in the presence of women in the workplace over the last few decades and this growth pattern is projected to continue [16]. One feature of the present division of labor of the sexes appears to be basic: women almost universally have the care of the children, especially infants and small children at least up to age 6 or 7. The physical care of small children does not necessarily involve either confinement to a nuclear family home or exclusive pursuit of the domestic chores of food preparation and the making and care of clothes; yet the female work role nearly always involves these services for the children and, with the exception of men who live outside a family-type house-hold, for the male members of the family as well [17]. Moreover, changing gender roles in the last 20 to 25 years have allowed more women to combine domestic responsibilities with paid work outside the home. More families are comprised of dual earners where both partners participate in the labor market and are expected to participate in work in the household. Women traditional caring responsibilities as well as their primary responsibility for housework remain a significant barrier to employment opportunities [18]. Doble and Supriya (2010) reported that when work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the other [19].

Pugalendhi (2010) studied the quality of work life of college teachers under various dimensions. According to their study, there is a significant difference between sex of the respondents and their perceived levels of overall quality of work life in teaching environment [1]. Daskalova (2009) carried out in the framework of the project 'Quality of life in a changing Europe' aimed to review gender differences in quality of work and life. The survey findings showed that men are in more privileged positions at work, while women are more committed to the company. Gender differences are registered concerning most of the study's indicators of work quality, including autonomy, job satisfaction, supervisor support, job security and work-life balance [20]. Another study conducted by Considine and Callus (2001) and they developed the index about the quality of work life of Australian employees. The results of these findings showed that the majority of Australian workers were satisfied with the occupational health and safety standards at work and 76 per cent were satisfied with the way in which people at work got on together [21].

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 quality of working life indicators (health and safety needs economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs, actualization needs, knowledge needs and aesthetics needs) and that this hypothesized differences may be moderated both by a group of select demographic variables of age, marital status, income level, education and a group of job related variables such as type of department, type of work, length of time in the organization and length of time in the sector.

**H1a:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to health and safety needs.

**H1b:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to economic and family needs.

**H1c:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to social needs.

**H1d:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to esteem needs.

**H1e:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to actualization needs.

**H1f:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to knowledge needs.

**H1g:** Male employees have a higher level of perceptions on quality of working life than female employees with respect to aesthetics needs.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Data Collection:** The study was conducted in a 5 star hotels in Turkey during the months of June 2010 through October 2010. Since 5-star hotels tend to have a larger number of employees, these hotels were selected to populate the sample with "enough" employees. The study used a proportional stratified random sampling based on the number of 5-star hotels and their total number of employees. In total, 1200 employees who work in 5 star hotels from all departments were asked to participate in the survey. And, 443 survey questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 37%. This sampling scheme also met the acceptable level of sample size that was suggested for the study.

The survey consists of two parts. In first part included some statements about demographic features (gender, age, marital status, monthly income level, education level and education degree) of hotel employees. And second part contains some statements about employee quality of working life. *Quality of Work Life* was measured using a 16 item scale developed by Sirgy *et al.* (2001) anchored with "I do not agree at all" [1] and "I agree completely" [5]. The scale consists of seven dimensions; health and safety needs economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs, actualization needs, knowledge needs and aesthetics needs. The reliability of these 16 items was good with a Cronbach Alpha of .91. Seven composite values of dimensions rather than 16 items were used for analysis.

## RESULTS

The majority of the respondents were male (72.9%), 27-34 years old (26.2%), single (61.2) and high school (47.9%). The income distribution of respondents showed that 36.1% employees 1501-2500 TL and 28.9% employees

Table 1: Gender Differences on Perceptions of Employee Quality of Working Life

Quality of Working Life Indicators	Female	Male	t-value	Sig.
Health and Safety needs	3,1389(7)	3,3839(6)	2,543	,011
Economic and Family needs	3,2472(6)	3,3127(7)	,691	,490
Social needs	3,2917(4)	3,4056(5)	1,058	,291
Esteem needs	3,3250(3)	3,4474(4)	1.138	,256
Actualization needs	3,2583(5)	3,5944(2)	3,744	,000
Knowledge needs	3,3417(1)	3,6331(1)	2,977	,003
Aesthetic needs	3,3333(2)	3,5263(3)	1,790	,074

Note: Scale ratings: 1=do not agree at all; 2= Agree less; 3= neither agree nor not agree; 4= I agree; 5= I agree completely. The parenthesis beside the mean scores indicated the rank of the main values.

1500 TL and under. The distribution of work departments was rather even; 11.7% Front Office, 14.9% Food and Beverage, 20.8% Housekeeping, 10.2% Accounting, 10.4 % Public relations, 7.7% Sales and Marketing, 13.1% Human Resources and 8.6% other departments. In terms of the employment status, majority of the respondents were full-time employer and mainly department manager(36.8%). In total, 47.9% of the respondents worked in their current jobs 1-5 years and 42.4% worked in the tourism sector for 1-5 years.

Gender Differences on Perceptions of Employee Quality of Working Life Table 1 reported that t-test result in gender differences on perceptions of employees quality of working life. According these results male employees reported significantly different mean scores in “Health and Safety needs” ( $X_{female} = 3,1389$ ,  $X_{male} = 3,3839$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), “Actualization needs” ( $X_{female} = 3,2583$ ,  $X_{male} = 3,5944$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and “Knowledge needs” ( $X_{female} = 3,3417$ ,  $X_{male} = 3,6331$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in quality of working life indicators. However; “Economic and Family needs”, “Social needs”, “Esteem needs” and “Aesthetic needs” 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 quality of working life indicators. Both groups gave equally high scores for “Knowledge needs” indicator. Female employees scored lowest for “Health and Safety needs” and male employees scored lowest for “Economic and Family needs”.

MANOVA (A one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance) was also performed to investigate sex differences in perceptions of quality of working life. Seven delineated factors were used: “Health and Safety needs”, “Economic and Family needs”, “Social needs”, “Esteem needs”, “Actualization needs”, “Knowledge needs” and “Aesthetic needs” were used as dependent

variables. The independent variable was gender. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the combined effects of seven quality of working life indicators as dependent variables, ( $p = .006$ ; Wilk’s Lambda=0.955; partial eta squared=0.007. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, difference to reach statistical significance, using a Benforroni adjusted alpha level of 0.012, were Health and Safety needs ( $F = 6,459$ ,  $p = 0.011$ , partial eta squared=0.014), Actualization needs ( $F = 14,021$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , partial eta squared=0.031, and Knowledge needs ( $F = 8,864$ ,  $p = 0.003$ , partial eta squared=0.020). An inspection of the mean scores indicated that males reported slightly higher levels of “Health and Safety needs” ( $M = 3.3839$ ,  $SD = 0,90119$ ), “Actualization needs” ( $M = 3.5944$ ,  $SD = 0,78291$ ) and “Knowledge needs” ( $M = 3.6331$ ,  $SD = 0,93296$ ) than female ( $F = 3.1389$ ,  $SD = 0,90086$ ), ( $F = 3,2583$ ,  $SD = 0,97658$ ), ( $F = 3,3417$ ,  $SD = 0,86720$ ), respectively.

Gender Differences in Perceptions of Quality of Life When Controlling for Other Characteristics

MANCOVA was employed to test gender differences while controlling for other variables, such as age, marital status, income level and education, type of department, type of work (part-time or full time work), length of time in the organization and length of time in the tourism sector. In terms of assumptions, the distribution of data variables was checked for outliers first and then the box plot 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 on perceptions of quality of working life (i.e. multivariate main effect) exist after controlling for

Table 2: Gender Differences on Job Satisfaction Factors Controlling For Other Variables

Item controlled	Health and Safety	Economic and Family	Social	Esteem	Actualization	Knowledge	Aesthetic
Needs (F, p)	Needs (F,p)	Needs (F,p)	Needs (F,p)	Needs (F,p)	Needs (F,p)	Needs (F, p)	
Age,	250(.617)1,	345(.247)	2,155(.143),	080(.777),	014(.905),	451(.502)	4,903(.027)*
Marital status	3,288(.070)	2,907(.089)	4,885(.028)*	1,081(.299),	132(.716),	122(.727),	297(.586)
Income Level (TL),	515(.473),	000(.998),	039(.843)2,	744(.098),	015(.904)	11,662 (.001)*	9,613(.002)*
Education,	992(.320),	029(.865),	016(.900),	258(.612),	7502(.387),	178 (.141),	138 (.711)
Type of Department,	426(.514),	056(.814),	044(.833),	112(.738) 6,	131(.014)*,	208(.648),	411(.522)
Type of work	7,939(.005)*	5,223(.023)*18,	400(.000)*6,	959(.009)* 1,	491(.223) 1,	969 (.161)	3,894(.049)*
L. of time in this org.,	903(.343),	566(.452),	246(.620),	007(.933)	3,205(.074),	099(.754),	014 (.904)
L. of time in tourism s.,	044(.834),	215(.643),	075(.785)	2,652(.104)	4,389(.037)*,	757 (.385)	1,403 (.237)

Note: Significance levels are indicated in parentheses (\* $p < 0.05$ ); \*indicated the significant gender difference based on the previous independent  $t$ -test results in Table 1.

these covariates (Table 2). These findings signify male and female respondents, after eliminating the impact of age, marital status, income level, education, type of department, type of work, length of time in the organization and length of time in the tourism sector have significantly different job satisfaction levels. The previous  $t$ -tests indicated that there were significant gender differences in health and safety needs, actualization needs and knowledge needs.

The gender differences remained significant when controlling for the covariates but there were also changes after the variables had been controlled respectively. For example, after controlling for the variable ‘type of work’, the mean score of health and safety needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.385$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.135$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), economic and family needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.314$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.244$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), social needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.408$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.286$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), esteem needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.448$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.322$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and actualization needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.595$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.257$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘health and safety needs’, ‘economic and family needs’, ‘social needs’ and ‘esteem needs’ and ‘actualization needs’ factors more important than did women.

After controlling for the variable ‘age’, the mean score of aesthetic needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.513$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.369$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘aesthetic needs’ factor more important than did women. When controlling for the variable ‘marital status’, the mean score of social needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.401$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.304$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘social needs’ factor more important than did women. After controlling for the variable ‘income level’, the mean score of knowledge needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.635$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.338$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and aesthetic needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.528$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.329$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant

change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘knowledge needs’ and ‘aesthetic needs’ factors more important than did women. For the variable ‘type of department’, the mean score of actualization needs’ ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.602$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.238$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘actualization needs’ factor more important than did women. When controlling for the variable ‘length of time in tourism sector’, the mean score of actualization needs ( $X_{\text{male}} = 3.593$ ,  $X_{\text{female}} = 3.262$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a significant change between male and female respondents, revealing that men considered ‘Actualization needs’ factor more important than did women.

## CONCLUSION

This study attempts to find out the gender differences on perceptions of employee quality of working life in five star hotels in Turkey. For this aim, quality of work life was measured using 7 dimension and 16 items scale. The main contribution of this research to the existing knowledge is the identification of gender issue in quality of working life. Moreover, it will provide global and regional implications for the employees who work in hospitality and tourism sector.

Using an independent  $t$ -test, significant gender differences were investigated on perceptions of employee quality of working life. The study results suggest that male employees reported significantly different mean scores in health and safety needs, actualization needs and knowledge needs. H1a, H1e and H1f supported. However; economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs and aesthetic needs dimensions 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 quality of working life indicators.

This finding is also consistent with the results obtained from Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) in which the independent variable was gender and the quality of working life indicators. Finally, MANCOVA analysis was conducted while controlling for such variables as age, marital status, income level, education and type of department, type of work, length of time in this organization and length of time in the tourism sector. Specifically, males and females displayed more significant distinctions after controlling for these variables (Table 2).

This study adds to a growing literature examining the gender differences on perceptions of employee quality of working life in five star hotels in Turkey. Research findings should be utilized by the both male and female hotel employees to improve their view of quality of working life. Future research can focus on a wider sample to reach more generalized results.

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