



Differences of Perception of Job Stress According to The Demographic Characteristics of Hotel Employees

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate that job stress perception may differ according to demographic characteristics and contribute to the existing literature. For this purpose, a questionnaire was applied to the hotel staff in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (n = 278). Statistical analyzes were made using SPSS for Windows 23.0 package program. For the determination of the demographic characteristics of the participants; frequency, percentage and arithmetic mean tests were performed. In order to determine whether work stress perceptions differ according to their demographic characteristics, t test and one-way Anova tests were performed. Participants; In the analyzes made by considering gender, marital status, age, education status and work experience, it is seen that perception of job stress differs according to certain situations. It is evaluated that the findings obtained as a result of the research will constitute a source for the researches to be made for the hospitality industry.

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INTRODUCTION

With the increasing competition conditions in the globalizing world, all organizations have been in an effort to gain sustainable competitive advantage. The effort to achieve sustainable competitive advantage affects the employees who determine the service quality especially in the hospitality industry and creates an intense stress on the employees. In addition, the social structure that has changed with globalization has made work conditions difficult in the hospitality industry (Başoğlu et al., 2016). Business in the hospitality industry, which is in an effort to combat difficulties, make their employees work more hours for low wages. Indeed, the literature covers the hospitality industry; It defines busy working hours, insufficient wages and continuous interaction with customers as the most intense organizations. Along with the effort to gain competitive advantage, this intense interaction in the hospitality industry and working a lot of time in work increases the stress of the employees.

Accumulated empirical literature agrees that job stress is one of the main reasons for reduced organizational performance and efficiency (Hon, 2013; Hon et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2014; Jung & Yoon, 2013; Karatepe & Karatepe, 2009; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Tsaur & Tang, 2012). Job stress, which constitutes the basis of problems such as unwillingness, absenteeism, and quitting jobs, is a major source of uncertainty for managers. Failure to manage the job stress experienced by the employees brings along negative consequences in terms of organization and employee health. (James & Edden, 2001). Employees with particularly low job stress resistance experience sudden performance drops in their work environments, resulting in high absenteeism. In addition, as the employees experience intense job stress, the motivation of the employees decreases and job burnout occurs. Along with the increase in job burnout, it also increases the rate of employee quitting. Qiu et al (2015) state that the hospitality industry is one of the sectors with high turnover. The high turnover rates cause the service quality in the hospitality industry to decrease and thus to lose the competitive advantage (Johnson, 1981).

Cornell University Hospitality Research Center (2005) states that the rate of turnover in the hospitality industry in the USA is 65%, which has caused the US economy to suffer \$ 300 billion annually (Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Considering the job stress and the cost of the accompanying turnover for organizations, reducing job stress has become a priority problem for the hospitality industry (Stalcup & Pearson, 2001). The research aims to contribute to the literature for the solution of this problem experienced by the hospitality industry. For this purpose, the relationship between demographic variables and job stress was investigated. The research consists of three parts. In the first section, a literature on job stress is created in the hospitality industry and its relationship with demographic variables is explained. In the second section, the data obtained are analyzed and the findings in the last section are discussed. It is evaluated that the research findings will create awareness in human resources managers operating in the hospitality industry.

Literature Review

Job Stress in the Hospitality Industry

The rapid change and increase in competition with globalization negatively affect the hospitality industry as in all sectors. This competition in the hospitality industry has made it compulsory for businesses to provide a better service to their customers. In this context, the enterprises in the hospitality industry try to increase the level of satisfaction with the service and create a loyal customer portfolio (Hernández-Lobato et al., 2006; Han et al., 2011). The process

of increasing customer satisfaction has become more difficult in the hospitality industry, unlike the other service sector, because it is necessary to provide a good service 24 hours in order to ensure customer satisfaction in the service sector. The obligation to provide good service to customers 24 hours a day increases the pressure on hotel employees. However, employees in the hospitality industry face more uncertain situations (Jogaratham & Buchanan, 2004). The high number of uncertain situations and the intensive customer-employee relationship is an important source of stress for employees. In addition to all these, factors such as intense working hours, excessive workload and low salary in the sector constitute a separate source of job stress for the employees in the hospitality industry

The intense stress of job is the main reason for leaving work. This causes the loss of trained personnel in the hospitality industry. Leaving jobs is an important problem with a heavy cost to the hospitality industry (Lambert & Hogan, 2009). Apart from the cost of the organization, the employees who leave their jobs due to job stress also have psychological and physiological problems for their employees (Güllüce et al., 2019). In order to prevent the problems encountered, the precursors of job stress should be investigated and measures to reduce job stress should be taken (Çiftçi et al., 2015).

Job Stress and Demographic Factors

The behavior of employees in the service sector plays a critical role in ensuring “customer satisfaction”, which is one of the dominant themes of the sector, by affecting the quality of service offered to customers. For this reason, human resources should be seen as a basic asset rather than a cost for the hospitality industry and should be perceived as a strategic factor providing sustainable competitive advantage (Sun & Pan, 2011). People who are affected by their environment, react to these effects and change over time are still unchangeable and indispensable for hotel businesses. For this reason, the human being, which is the biggest factor in the performance of the business, has a role that is emphasized most and the expectations are constantly increasing (Kaygın & Naktiyok, 2012). Due to this role, it is subjected to intense pressure and change, which reveals the underlying causes of stress. Stress is not a situation that occurs suddenly in human life, it is a situation that occurs with the effect of the events that people experience daily. For example; Human interactions with other people or their environment, any event they witness, anything they read (such as books, newspapers) and anything they watch can cause stress in the individual (Şahin, 2014). As it is understood from this definition, stress arises from the relations between human and other factors, primarily in the environment of man. Businesses that do not want to employ more staff. Because of that managers assign their staff on additional shifts with an additional fee. The intense effort to stay away from the business environment, the constant repetition of the same job and the satisfaction of the customers is a source of intense stress for hotel employees. This source of stress affects all the staff at the hotel intensely, but it differs individually according to demographic characteristics.

When demographic factors are analyzed, it is seen that stress, resistance and the ability to cope with stress vary greatly from person to person. When the gender factor is evaluated; Despite the positive factors such as the woman's desire to work in work life, motivation and family support, the stress sources in the work environment and stress caused by her role in the family and responsibilities had a negative impact on the performance of the woman in the work life (Yıldız, 2000). Türker and Yamaç (2015) stated that in their studies where they examine job stress factors, there is gender discrimination in many of the institutions where women employees work (Türker & Yamaç, 2015). In addition, it is documented in many studies that female employees experience more intense job stress than male

employees depending on the gender factor (Michael et al., 2009). Education level, which is another demographic feature, turns into a negative source of stress on the individual with the increase in contrary to what is believed. With the increase in the level of education, the expectations of the individual and his/her environment also increase, and as a result, it can increase the individual's job stress (Arı & Bal, 2008). The responsibilities of the hotel employees, who have a busy working schedule, to be married also indirectly causes an increase in job stresses. In particular, the shift working order has difficulties in fulfilling the family responsibilities of married employees and therefore creates anxiety and psychological pressure in the employees. Kessler (1979) and Thoits (1987) stated that married employees are exposed to more intense job stress than single employees.

The age criterion has an important place in the business life of the individual. Hotel employees in different age groups have different concerns and expectations. Acker (2004), based on his demographic characteristics; examined the relationship of age with the job stress experienced by hotel employees, and observed that hotel employees of different age groups experienced different sizes of job stress. In his study, Acker (2004) states that young employees experience more job stress than the elderly. The following hypothesis has been developed to be investigated in line with these researches and current literature.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant difference between the job stress perceptions of male and female employees.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant difference between the job stress perceptions of single and married employees.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference between the job stress perceptions of age groups of employees.

Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference between the job stress perceptions of education level of employees.

Hypothesis 5: There is a statistically significant difference between the job stress perceptions of working time of employees.

Method

Universe and Sample

Tourism is an important source of income as well as a source of employment for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (Maslakci & Sesen, 2019). For this reason, the research was carried out for hotel employees operating in the tourism sector in TRNC. Karatepe and Uludag (2008) state that there is a high concentration of tourism in the TRNC in the summer period and the stress levels of the employees are high during these periods. From this point of view, Karatepe and Uludag (2008) suggests that researches on stress should be done in the summer. For this reason, the research was carried out in the summer period.

For the purposes of the research, the human resources managers of the hotels were interviewed and the purpose of the research was explained. Human resources managers; They allowed the research to be carried out on condition that the name of the hotel was not given in the research, and that the survey was carried out on-site and on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire was applied to the employees of the permitted hotels by applying

the sampling method easily by the researchers. The survey was carried out for 6 days and a questionnaire was applied to 314 employees who volunteered to fill in the questionnaire. 314 questionnaire data obtained were examined, 36 questionnaire data, which were evaluated as incorrect and incomplete, were excluded from the scope of the study. The research was carried out with 278 valid questionnaire data. Despite all efforts, no official source for the research universe has been found. Therefore, it was assumed that 278 sample groups represent the universe.

When the demographic characteristics of the participants are examined; 111 of them are men, 167 of them are women, 149 of them are single and 109 of them are married. 47 of the participants are at primary school, 93 at secondary school, 83 at associate degree, 50 at undergraduate level and 5 at graduate level. According to age groups; 69 participants are 25 years and under, 141 participants are 26-30 years old, 36 participants are 31-35 years old, 19 participants are 36-41 years old and 13 participants are 41 years old or older. Participants; 70 of them have 1 year and below, 135 of them have 1-5 years, 48 of them have 6-10 years and 25 of them have 10 years of work experience.

Measures

In the research, a questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire form consists of two parts: In the first part, there are five statements to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants, and in the second part there are four statements to identify the employees' perceptions of job stress. The questionnaire form consists of nine expressions.

Demographic factors: Participants; There are five statements regarding age, gender, marital status, educational background and work experience.

Job stress: In order to determine the job stress of employees, Cohen et al. (1983) was developed as one-dimensional. The scale adapted to Turkish by Küçükusta (2007) was used. The scale consists of 4 items and is in the 5-point Likert system, rated from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Questions about the scale; "If I had a different job, my health would be better.", "I get angry and uncomfortable with the work done here.", "I work under intense tension." and "I seem to get tired very quickly." Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale; 0.868, The average explained variance (AVE) was 0.717, and the composite reliability (CR) value was measured as 0.910. These values show that the scale is valid and reliable for research (Hair et al., 1998).

Findings

Statistical analyzes were made using SPSS for Windows 23.0 package program. For the determination of the demographic characteristics of the participants; frequency, percentage and arithmetic mean tests were performed. The analysis made for the distribution of the variable included in the study ($Z_{\text{Skewness}} = -0.487$, $Z_{\text{Kurtosis}} = 0.852$) shows that the data have a normal distribution (Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, in order to determine whether job stress perceptions differ according to their demographic characteristics, t test and One-Way Anova tests were conducted. Participants; In the analyzes made by considering gender, marital status, age, education status and work experience, it is seen that perception of job stress differs according to certain situations.

In order to determine whether the job stress perceived according to gender has differentiated, t test has been performed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. t-test: Gender

	Gender	n	Mean	Sd	t	p	Results
Job Stress	Women	111	3,70	0,91	2,593	0,01**	a - b
	Man	167	3,43	0,84			

** $p < 0,05$ (a: Women b: Man)

The results of the t test analysis conducted to determine whether the job stress is different from men and women; to show that the variances are homogeneous and there is a significant difference between the mean values of women and men ($t = 2.593$, $p < .05$). t test results show that women have more perception of job stress than men. In the light of this finding, hypothesis 1 has been accepted.

In order to determine whether the perceived job stress differs according to the marital status of the participants, t test was performed and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. t-test: Marital Status

	Marital Status	n	Mean	Sd	t	p	Results
Job Stress	Single	160	3,49	0,85	1,457	0,04**	b - a
	Married	118	3.64	0,95			

** $p < 0,05$ (a: Single, b: Married)

The results of the t-test analysis, whether the job stress is different according to the marital status; to show that variances are homogeneous and there is a significant difference between the average values of married and single participants ($t = 1,457$, $p < .05$). Accordingly, the job stress perception of married employees is higher than that of single employees. In the light of this finding, hypothesis 2 has been accepted.

One-Way Anova test was performed to determine whether there are differences in perceptions of job stress according to the age groups of the participants and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Participants by Age Groups (One-Way Anova)

	Age Groups	n	Mean	Sd	F	p	Results
Job Stress	≤ 25	69	3.61	.916	1.269	.282	
	26-30	141	3.43	.971			
	31-35	36	3.70	1.043			
	36-40	19	3.36	1.021			
	≥41	13	3.14	.760			

** $p < 0,05$ (a: 25 years and under, b: 26-30 years, c: 31-35 years, d: 36-40 years, e: 41 years and above)

Post Hoc test was not performed because the results of One-Way Anova analysis, which were conducted to determine whether there were differences in job stress perceptions according to age groups, were not significant. Accordingly, there is no significant difference between the participants' perceptions of job stress according to their age groups. In the light of this finding, hypothesis 3 was rejected.

One-Way Anova test was performed to determine whether there is a difference in job stress perceptions according to the educational status of the participants and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of Participants According to Their Educational Status (One-Way Anova)

	Education	n	Mean	Sd	F	p	Results
Job Stress	Primary Education	47	3,54	0,908	2,213	0,03**	b – c
	Secondary	93	3,70	0,896			
	Associate Degree	83	3,29	0,929			
	Bachelor	50	3,47	0,725			
	Graduate Education	5	3,80	0,925			

** $p < 0,05$ (a: Primary Education, b: Secondary, c: Associate Degree, d: Bachelor, e: Graduate Education)

In the One-Way Anova analysis, “Tukey”, one of the Post Hoc tests, was applied due to the homogeneity of the variances. The results of the analysis show that the participants whose education level is secondary education has higher perceptions of job stress compared to their undergraduate graduates. In the light of this finding, hypothesis 4 has been accepted.

One-Way Anova test was performed to determine whether there is a difference in perceptions of job stress according to the work experience of the participants and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of the participants according to their work experience (One-Way Anova)

	Working Time	n	Mean	Sd	F	p	Results
Job Stress	<1	70	3,74	0,81	5,332	.001***	a-b
	1-5	135	3,27	1,05			
	6-10	48	3,47	0,83			
	>10	25	3,75	0,74			

** $p < 0,05$, *** $p < 0,001$, (a: 1 year and under, b: 1-5, c: 6-10, d: 10 years and above)

In the One-Way Anova analysis conducted to determine whether there are differences in perceptions of job stress according to the job experience of the participants, “Games-Howel”, which is one of the Post Hoc tests, was applied due to the non-homogeneity of the variances. The results of the analysis show that participants with job experience of 1 year or less have more perception of job stress than those who have job experience of 1-5 years. In the light of this finding, hypothesis 5 has been accepted.

Results

This study, which was carried out taking into consideration the demographic characteristics of the hotel employees, also included the following; The differences between age, gender, marital status, educational status and job stress perceived to work experience were determined and the results were compared with previous studies.

The results of the t-test analysis, whether the job stress is different from men and women, show that women have more perception of job stress than men. When the previous studies on the subject are examined, we encounter a different study in which female employees experience more intense job stress than male employees depending on the gender factor (Michael et al., 2009).

The results of the t test analysis, whether the job stress is different according to the marital status, show that the job stress perception of the married employees is higher than the single employees. The fact that hotel employees are married causes difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities in the family besides the intense workload they face at the workplace. It is seen in our study that single hotel employees are exposed to less work

stress. Kessler (1979) and Thoits (1987) stated that married employees are exposed to more intense job stress than those who are not married.

Age criteria have an important place in the business life of the individual. Hotel employees in different age groups have different concerns and expectations. Status and salary are expected to increase with increasing age and experience, and more respect and understanding is demanded by the superiors. When these expectations and demands are not met, a pessimistic structure is created in the workplace and the stress level that the employees are exposed to at the workplace increases. In his study, Acker (2004) examined the relationship of age with the job stress experienced by hotel employees, and observed that hotel employees of different age groups experienced different sizes of job stress. In our study, One-Way Anova test was performed to determine whether there is a difference in the perceptions of job stress of the participants according to their age groups. According to the results of One Way Anova analysis, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the participants' job stress perceptions according to their age groups. The different results in our study are considered to be related to the universe and the sample. The research was carried out in TRNC. It can be evaluated that different results were obtained due to the fact that the region where our study was conducted is not very large and the number of samples is low.

One-Way Anova test was performed in order to determine whether there is a difference in perceptions of job stress according to the educational status of the participants. The results of the analysis show that the participants whose education level is secondary education has higher perception of stress than the associate degree graduates. This finding of the research is unexpected. Because the literature indicates that with the increase in the level of education, the expectations of the individual and his/her environment also increase and as a result, job stress occurs in the individuals (Arı & Bal, 2008). This result may be related to the sector and sample group in which the research was conducted. The research was carried out during the summer, when temporary workers worked intensively in the hospitality industry. The education status of temporary workers is generally lower than that of fixed workers. Considering that temporary workers work under intense stress, this finding of the research may be considered reasonable.

One-Way Anova test was performed to determine whether there is a difference in perceptions of job stress according to the work experience of the participants and the results are shown some differences. Analysis results show that participants with work experience of 1 year or less have more perception of job stress than those who have work experience of 1-5 years. The main reason for this result is the inexperience of hotel employees in their first year and the difficulties they have in adapting to the busy working environment. As the difficulties experienced decrease with the experience gained in the following years, it is observed that the stress experienced by the employees in the workplace decreases. In their study, Shukla and Srivastava (2016) stated that with the increase of work experience, the self-confidence of the employee increases and the job stress that he/she may be exposed to at the workplace will decrease.

Limitations and Recommendations

There are some limitations of this study, which contributes to the literature that the perception of job stress will differ according to demographic factors and offers some advice to practitioners. The study was carried out only in hotel businesses operating in the tourism sector in the TRNC. Therefore, the sample size of the study is

limited. In addition, another limitation is that the study was performed in a short time and with very few variables. More research can be done to investigate the differences and relationships between different variables. In addition, more research can be done to test and generalize the findings at different time intervals, at various hotels and at different locations. Finally, in future studies, different data collection techniques can be used to obtain more information and data collection time can be kept longer.

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