

## EFFECTS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USE ON QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: FIVE-STAR HOTEL CASE

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### **Abstract**

*In parallel with the globalization and the increasing competition, the importance of information technology in rapidly growing business life has reached a indisputable point. These technical innovations create different perspectives which result in structural changes in businesses. In this context, Quality of Working Life is an issue that allows assessing the effects of information technology usage on business practices comprehensively. Determining the effects of information technology on Quality of Working Life which has dimensions as career, salary, job satisfaction, safe working conditions, work-life balance and education enables to discuss in accordance with multiple findings.*

*Purpose: In this study, determining the effects of information technology usage on quality of working life is aimed. The growth of businesses and growing amount of work in hospitality industry has required information technology use. In addition, hospitality businesses seek to achieve a high quality of working life for influencing and retaining the qualified employees. The high rate of labor turnover in hospitality industry shows more clearly the importance of this purpose.*

*Materials/Methods: The survey technique has used within the scope of this study. While the technology scale has been formed by drawing inspiration from different studies (Gürler and Güler, 2011; Lam et al., 2007; Ham et al., 2005); the quality of working life scale has been adopted from Walton's study (1973). In this context, the data obtained from the employees of a five-star hotel have been analyzed by means of using structural equation modeling.*

**Keywords:** *Quality of working life, hospitality industry, information technology, structural equation modeling.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism sector involving hospitality businesses contains activities which is the first thing coming to mind in terms of service concept. In more

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detail, tourism activity involves trips taken with the aims of business, curiosity, religion, health, sport, rest, fun, culture, family visit, attendance the congress and seminars. It is also defined as a consumption event, an integrative service and culture industry related to staying in an accommodation establishment at least one night (Oral, 2005). About all segments of society are included in tourism activity. Consumer satisfaction and image of hospitality industry are determined with behaviors of employee dealing with consumer compared to physical opportunities.

To service excellently is impossible without a good employee portfolio in hospitality industry. Employees are the most important factors of service encounter and corporate image and it is difficult to find and keep these factors because employee turnover is very high in hospitality industry. This affects the product and service quality and income that will be earned (Kandasamy and Ancheri, 2009). Therefore, companies are required to make an effort about strength and continuity of employee motivation in hospitality industry. The activities related to increasing the quality in workplace environment where employees spend most of their time are the most important ones. This phenomenon called as quality of working life will be ensured by means of realizing employees to have a meaningful and satisfactory job and to participate in decisions about job (Downing et al., 1995). Quality level of relationship between employees and all workplace environment formed by technical and economic dimensions defines quality of working life (Kandasamy and Ancheri, 2009).

Quality of working life has different definitions in literature. For example according to Islam and Siengthai (2009), this concept is defined as suitable conditions about advantages given employees, welfare of them and attitudes of managers toward them. Additionally, Demirbilek and Türkan (2008) states that this phenomenon accommodates employee to work environment by means of discussing all factors affecting work life directly or indirectly and empowers employee. Quality of working life is conceptualized in terms of satisfaction of employee requirements, as well. As much as the employee requirements are met, level of working life quality improves, too. In other words, quality of working life is stated in the context of interaction between personal and organizational factors. The personal factors are related to psychological requirements of employees essentially, whereas organizational ones are associated with

organizational mission, control type and wage (Efraty and Sirgy, 1990). Vinopal (2012) suggests that the concept of quality of working life has dual nature. Accordingly, the fact that quality of working life has both objective and subjective aspects completing each other is determined. These two aspects differ at individual, organization and national or international levels. While objective characteristics are grouped as wage and job specifications at individual level, subjective ones focus on employee satisfaction about wage and relationships in work place at the same level. Because subjective characteristics are characterized by individual perceptions, these characteristics do not correspond at organization and national or international levels. However, objective characteristics at organization level are matched up with some points such as average wages; objective characteristics at national or international levels are matched up with some issues such as unemployment rate and protection of employees legally. When explanations in literature are evaluated completely, the fact that quality of working life is a comprehensive concept including the topics such as job satisfaction, participative management and improving of work environment can be determined. In other words, quality of working life which is a multidimensional field is related to the topics of job satisfaction; job involvement; motivation; productivity; health, security and welfare; job security; competency development and work life balance (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2012). However, the concept of quality of working life is discussed in consideration of different dimensions in different fields. In this context, while economists assess quality of working life in relation of economic topics such as working hours and wages, health insurance and pension incomes; sociologists emphasizes the points of position, control and ability and psychologists focus on job satisfaction and its elements in terms of quality of working life (Dahl et al., 2009). In brief, components of quality of working life are discussed by many researchers (Walton, 1973; Baba and Jamal, 1991; Lau and May, 1998; Rose et al., 2006; Saraji and Dargahi, 2006; Hosseini et al., 2010; Sinha, 2012). On the other hand, the classification suggested by Walton is based in our study. In this context, according to Walton (1973) the criterions of quality of working life are satisfying and fair wage, secure and healthy working conditions, available opportunities related to utilization and development of employee capacities, prudential opportunities enabling continuous

development and security, social integration in organization, working and total living space, social meaningfulness of working life.

However, technology as a determiner of quality of working life and effect of technology on quality of working life along with the factors mentioned above are discussed in our study. Firstly, technology can be defined as a tool, equipment and movements emerging from each information, experience and idea which enable inputs transform into outputs. Technology can be stated as advantages originating from information, ideas, inventions and innovative activities comprehensively (Gürler and Güler, 2011). Technology has some advantages such as (a) to increase public welfare by means of enabling to produce more qualified and various products and services for consumers and (b) to make possible income growth by means of reducing costs and increasing productivity (Do an, 2007). On the other hand, basic concept which is included in the scope of technology management is information technologies. Laudon and Laudon (2000) states that information technologies are systems ensuring interrelated data to be gathered, processed, hidden and used in period of transition into information. Tekin et al. (2010) classifies the advantages of information systems as to gain information without any loss of time, to increase consistency and accuracy degree of decisions, to create a regular management approach along with increasing intra-organizational knowledge sharing, to develop efficiency of market activities, to reduce personnel costs, to give reaction to competitor strategies more quickly and to save time. Information technologies practices are very effective in hospitality industry as well. In this direction, information systems can be implemented in some fields such as sale of rooms, reservation, reception and customer facing, accounting, follow-up of phone calls, control of information about housekeeping, budget and cost control (Ö üt et al., 2003; Lam et al., 2007). These practices bring about successful promotion, distribution and participation activities (Ham et al., 2005). In other words, efficiency in service processes of hospitality industry will improve, decision-making process will be supported and productivity will increase thanks to information technologies (Kim et al., 2008).

When the effect of information technologies on quality of working life is mentioned, the fact that external factors originating from uncontrolled national and global changes and developments affect working life as well as personal and organizational factors can be stated.

Additionally, that technological developments are one of these factors along with legal arrangements, labor structure, social values and union activities can be suggested. In other words, it is discussed that technological developments affect quality of working life considerably because they enable speed and efficiency to management system and employees (Demir, 2011). Also, technology usage is a significant factor in terms of increasing operational performance and productivity of employees, job satisfaction of them and improvement of their communication skills. Usage of information technologies increases participative decision making level and quality of working life by means of expediting intraorganizational communication (Öüt et al., 2003). Additionally, some characteristics of technology such as reducing unhealthy and dangerous working conditions, encouraging continuous learning, enabling man-machine balance in workplace, rewarding employees with better wage and job security, increasing control power of employees, improving work-life balance along with its flexible practices can be stated as determiner of quality of working life (Güvenli, 2006).

However, there are not so many studies analyzing the effects of information technologies on quality of working life in Turkish literature. Methodology details of our study which aims to contribute to literature in the context of relationship between information technologies and quality of working life are discussed below.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Complete inventory was taken in a five-star hospitality business and it was aimed to determine information technologies' effects on quality of working life of employees working in hospitality industry in the study.

**Table 1. The Number of Employees According to the Tasks of Hospitality Business**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Number of People</b>
Animation	12
Garden	12
Security	19
Head Office	4

Room Services	26
Laundry	10
Fieldsman	12
Human Resources	2
Accounting	7
Reception	16
Service	55
Purchasing and Storage	7
Sales Representative	4
Technical Service	18
Cuisine	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>254</b>

The questionnaire prepared by using Google Drive form preparation application was applied online to employees of hospitality business comprising the sample of the study.\* The first part of questionnaire is quality of working life scale comprised by means of selecting Walton's criteria (1973) as the baseline and benefiting from the research of Campos and Souza (2006). The second part consists of question forms called "perceived value in use of information technologies" and "perceived ease of use of information technologies" which are comprised by inspiring from studies of Gürler and Güler (2011), Lam et al. (2007) and Ham et al. (2005).

Structural equation modeling technique was used as a method in order to achieve the goal of study. Structural equation modeling is a statistical technique which is used to test models consisting of both causal and correlational relationships between observed variables and latent variables (Dursun and Kocagöz, 2010). The objective of this modeling technique is to explain pattern of dependency relations between

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\* [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19jo-Pw3n31gG2UAcJwmeM-g7\\_GELOXxRcPQLtIW1REw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19jo-Pw3n31gG2UAcJwmeM-g7_GELOXxRcPQLtIW1REw/viewform)

observed variable or variables and unobserved latent structure sets with each other synchronously (Yılmaz, 2004).

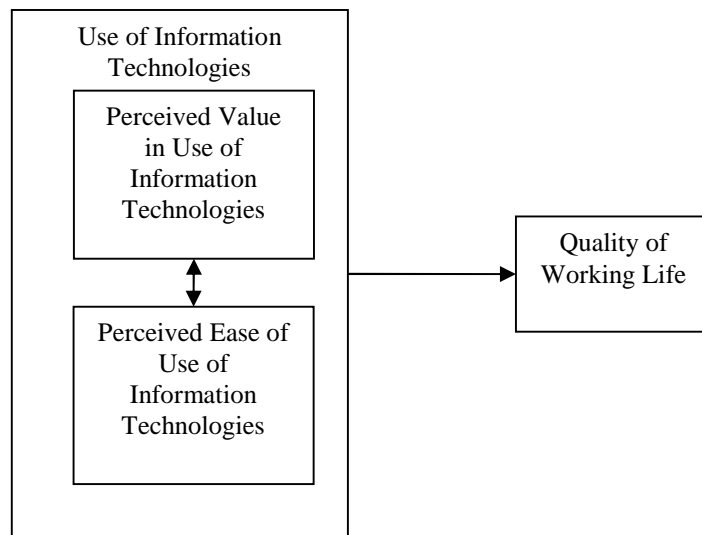
The effect of perception and use of information technologies on employees' quality of working life as structural equation modeling is showed in Figure 1. However, following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

H1: Perceived ease of use of information technologies affects quality of working life statistically significant and positively.

H2: Perceived value in use of information technologies affects quality of working life statistically significant and positively.

H3: There is statistically significant and positive relationship between “perceived ease of use of information technologies” and “perceived value in use of information technologies”.

**Figure 1:** Representation of the Research Model



Dimensions of quality of working life are determined for hospitality business which is discussed by means of making reliability and factor analysis in SPSS in the analysis phase. Structural equation modeling was done by using AMOS add-on of SPSS and outcomes which were presented under the title of “results” were discussed under the title of “conclusion”.

## **FINDINGS**

Questionnaires which were applied online as complete inventory in a five-star hospitality business were gone through a process in SPSS. 204 questionnaires were answered wholly and completely in hospitality business whose total number of employees is 254. Some employees who didn't participate in survey were on seasonal leave and the other part of them were attendant to work in other subsidiaries of hospitality business. Accordingly, analysis carried out through 204 questionnaires are as follows.

- ✓ 23% of participants are females, 77% of them are males. According to age distribution 13% of participants are at the age of 25 and below, 80% of them are between 25 and 34 ages, 3% of them are between 35 and 44 ages and 3% of them are at the age of 45 and over.
- ✓ 73% of participants consist of people with a bachelor's degree and 10% of them consist of people with a master's degree. It can be stated that much of the business staff is highly educated. 17% of participants is high-school graduate.
- ✓ When participants are analyzed according to their working years in hospitality business, it is determined that 53% of them has been working for 1 to 5 years and 20% of them has been working for 6 to 10 years in this business. Therefore, the fact that corporate structure affects labor turnover and most of employees has been working for a long time for this corporation can be stated.
- ✓ While 83% of employees has been working in permanent status, 17% of them has been working in seasonal/temporary status.
- ✓ It is seen that 60% of employees has been working for 41 to 50 hours, 27% of them has been working for 51 to 60 hours and 10% of them has been working for more than 60 hours in a week. Therefore, the fact that only 3% of employees has been working for normal working hours in a week and rest of them has been working in overtime and shift system can be stated.
- ✓ Result of reliability analysis related to 32 propositions creating quality of working life scale (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0,908. Accordingly, the fact that reliability is very high can be stated.
- ✓ Result of reliability analysis related to propositions creating ease of use and perceived value of technology items (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0,760. Because Cronbach's Alpha is higher than the acceptable limit, good degree of reliability can be mentioned.



- ✓ A 6-factor result explaining 73,013% of total variance was achieved as a result of factor analysis applied to quality of working life items. The fact that KMO value is 0, 778 and Barlett significance level is 0,00 was determined. Because KMO level is higher than 0,5 and Barlett significance level is lower than 0,05, it can be stated that results are statistically significant. Related table is as follows.

**Table 2: Factor Analysis Results for Quality of Working Life Scale**

		1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Safe Working Conditions</b> (qwl_1)	Safe and healthy physical working environment	,868					
	Employee protection laws	,850					
	Enough leisure time for family and social life	,850					
	Unbiased evaluation	,802					
	Job security	,774					
	Equal distribution of work	,555					
	Equalization and stability in working time	,554					
	Being unprejudiced	,545					
	Business and labor laws	,514					
<b>Wage</b> (qwl_2)	Suitable wage system		,860				
	Distribution of profit margin		,837				
	Fairness in distribution of wages		,813				
	Fair behaviors in the workplace		,631				
	Less geographical and climatic changes		,575				
	Suitable working hours		,518				
<b>Career</b> (qwl_3)	Personal development opportunities			,819			
	Promotion opportunities			,816			
	Career opportunities			,768			
	Equity among employees			,684			
	Self-control opportunity			,511			
	Absence of unhealthy conditions			,464			

<b>Work-Life Balance (qwl_4)</b>	Interpersonal strong ties				,750		
	Freedom of self-governance				,717		
	Development of many different skills				,602		
	Freedom of expression				,595		
	The feeling of being together with other employees				,496		
<b>Social Responsibility (qwl_5)</b>	Responsibility towards products and services provided				,887		
	Corporate image				,874		
	Corporate social responsibility				,822		
<b>Job Satisfaction (qwl_6)</b>	Management's positive perspective on advance payment						,700
	Confidentiality of personal information and statute						,572
	Information sharing about business activities						,502

- ✓ The results of factor analysis applied to technology scale items related to “perceived value in use of information technologies” and “perceived ease of use of information technologies” are shown in the following table. A 6-factor result explaining 74,332% of total variance was achieved. The fact that KMO value is 0, 743 and Barlett significance level is 0,00 was determined. Because KMO level is higher than 0,5 and Barlett significance level is lower than 0,05, it can be stated that results are statistically significant. Related table is as follows.

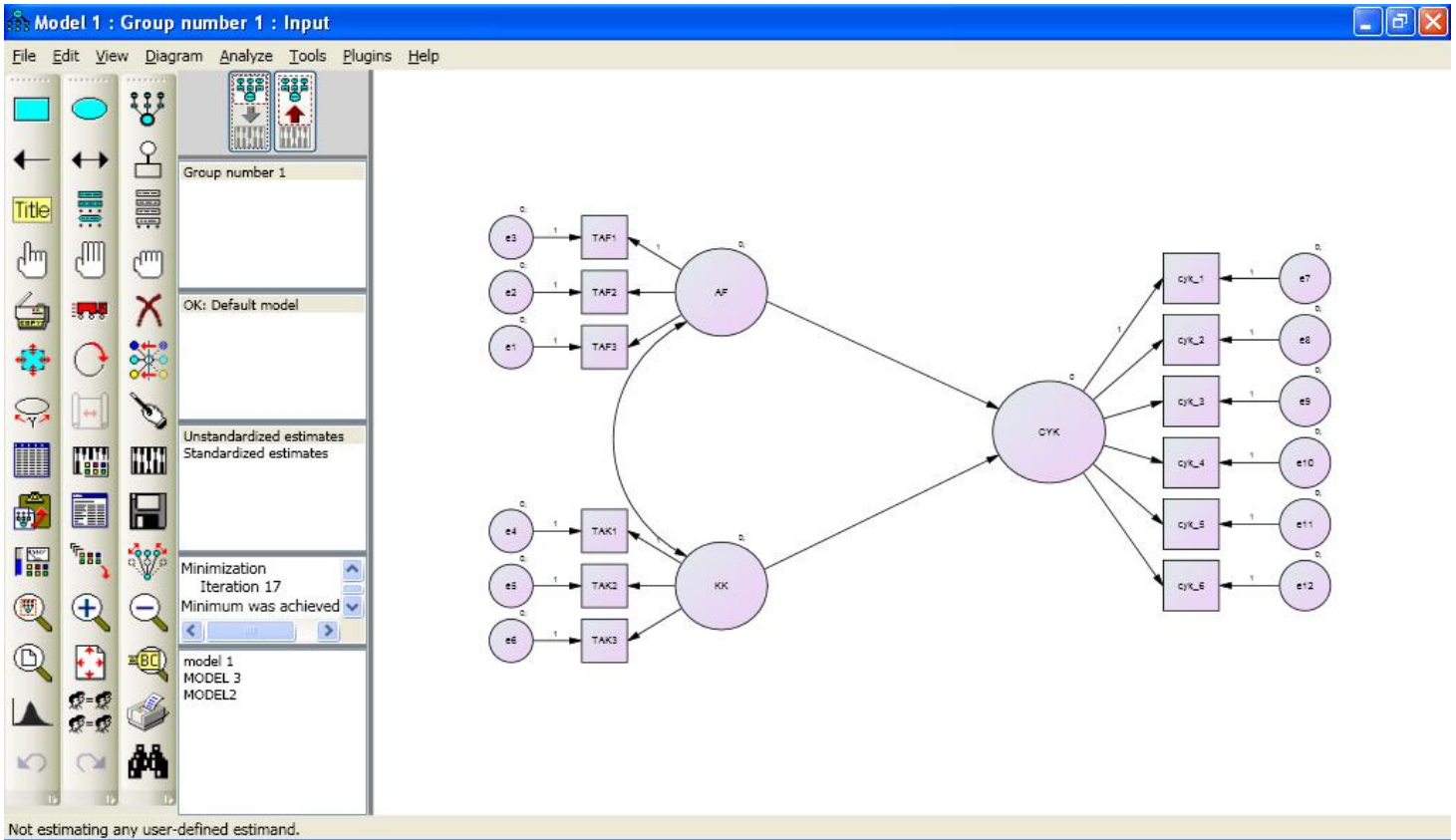
**Table 3: Factor Analysis Results for Technology Scale**

		1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Ease of Use (TPU 1)</b>	I should get a for effort to become skillful at technology use.	,926					
	It is easy for me to use technology.	,857					
	My interaction with technology is clear, apparent and consistent.	,856					
	Learning how to use technology is easy for me.	,732					
<b>Support (TPV 1)</b>	It supports critical aspects of my task.		,777				
	It improves my efficiency at work.		,760				
	It improves my working performance.		,758				
	It makes my task easier.		,681				
	In my opinion, technology is useful for my task.		,607				
<b>Access (TPU 2)</b>	Interaction with technology requires too much mental effort.			,757			
	I remember easily how to perform duties thanks to technology use.			,704			
	Interaction with technology is inflexible.			,674			
	It is accessible while performing what I want (accessibility)			,616			

<b>Quality (TPV 2)</b>	It improves the quality of my task.					,870		
	It increases my ability to control over my task.					,744		
	It enables to complete tasks more quickly.					,700		
<b>Resistance (TPU 3)</b>	Interaction with tecnologia is quite disincentive.						,864	
	In my opinion, technology use is quite unwieldy.						,836	
<b>Productivity (TPV 3)</b>	It enables to perform more actions than other alternative ways do.							,785
	It increases my productivity.							,561

Structural equation model in which effect of technology on quality of working life is examined in the light of this information was established in AMOS structural equity SPSS interface program. Six observable dimensions of “Quality of Working Life” which is unobservable, observable dimensions related to variables of “Perceived Value of Technology” and “Perceived Ease of Use of Technology” which are unobservable and relevant error terms ( $e_i$ ) are shown in the model. Their relations with each other are shown by two-way or one-way arrows. The following figure is copied from AMOS program.

Figure 2: Representation of Model in AMOS Program



There are some fit ranges for fit indices of model in structural equation modeling. For example, the fact that Ki-kare value has quite low value and significance level is higher than zero is required. According to results obtained in consequence of analysis, the fact that Ki-Kare value is 2,667 was determined. Other fit ranges and parameter outputs are listed in the following table.

**Table 4: Fit indices for structural equation modeling**

Fit Measures	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Analysis Results
RMSEA	between 0 and 0,05	between 0,005 and 0,20	0,026
RMR	between 0 and 0,05	between 0,005 and 0,10	0,002
NFI	between 0,95 and 1	between 0,90 and 0,95	0,945
NNFI	between 0,97 and 1	between 0,95 and 0,97	0,972
CFI	between 0,97 and 1	between 0,95 and 0,97	0,983
GFI	between 0,95 and 1	between 0,90 and 0,95	0,982
AGFI	between 0,90 and 1	between 0,85 and 0,90	0,909
CMIN/DF	between 2 and 3	5 and lower	2,326

When the table is examined, it is determined that values obtained as a result of analysis are in the range of good fit indicators. Additionally, results among factor groups are shown in the following table.

**Table 5: Relationship and Error Estimations Among Factor Groups**

	Estimation	S.D.
QWL ← PV	,675	,073
QWL ← PU	,741	,066
PV ↔ PU	,904	,025
TPV1 ← PV	,822	,049
TPV2 ← PV	,873	,030
TPV3 ← PV	,941	,072
TPU1 ← PU	,811	,058
TPU2 ← PU	,757	,064
TPU3 ← PU	,833	,035
qwl_1 ← QWL	,841	,036
qwl_2 ← QWL	,853	,056
qwl_3 ← QWL	,809	,041
qwl_4 ← QWL	,858	,068
qwl_5 ← QWL	,805	,055
qwl_6 ← QWL	,873	,079

Error	Estimation	S.D.
PV <sub>e</sub>	,432	,040
PU <sub>e</sub>	,367	,035
e3	,284	,044
e2	,139	,038
e1	,375	,042
e4	,367	,060
e5	,437	,063
e6	,215	,094
e7	,182	,040
e8	,344	,042
e9	,147	,048
e10	,298	,032
e11	,445	,074
e12	,395	,050

The fact that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between “perceived value of technology” and “quality of working life” and “perceived ease of use of technology” and “quality of working life” is determined in the light of information given in the above table. Additionally, the fact that there is a highly positive interaction

between “perceived value of technology” and “perceived ease of use of technology” is stated. Consequently, fore mentioned three hypotheses are supported by analysis results.

## **CONCLUSION**

Relationships among perceived ease of use of technology, perceived value of technology and quality of working life were evaluated in this study discussing technology variable separately as one of the factors affecting quality of working life. In this respect, it can be generated an idea related to employees’ perspectives on technology use in terms of management. Therefore, answers that will help to determine job performance and critical points of employees’ behaviors towards technology while making technology investments can be found.

Technology use contributes to businesses to provide competitive advantage against competitors and to do more productive jobs in business generally. Thus, businesses give importance to technology investments. To consider condition of internal customers and atmosphere as well as external environment while making these investments is required. It is possible to evaluate situation in terms of increasing satisfaction of internal customers especially in service sector and hospitality industry mainly. Because employee turnover is very high in hospitality industry. Either excess number of seasonal employees or the possibility of permanent employees to opt for economically better alternatives complicate the establishment of a sustainable relationship between employee and business.

Hospitality business discussed in this study is a link of a five-star corporate hotel chain. The fact that employee turnover is suitably low and employees are permanent in the business was determined statistically and stated during the interview as well. The first factor presented as a result of factor analysis related to working life is safe working conditions. Employees stated that working conditions are the first dimension affecting quality of working life. They determined the wage as a second important issue. These are followed respectively by career steps, work-life balance, social responsibility and job satisfaction. It can be stated that these results correspond to quality of working life dimensions of Walton (1973).

The fact that perception of information technologies affects quality of working life positively as a result of analysis made by structural equation modeling is determined in this study. It depends on

both employees' abilities related to adoption of and adaptation to technology and inclusion of technology in decision making process when business made a new technology investment.

Thus, technology investments which will be realized with participation of employees in decision process and information technologies will become more productive investments. Additionally, possible resistance to change originating from technology use in business can be minimized. This is an important indication of both valuing employees humanistic and institutionalization process. Therefore, both organizational commitments of employees will be able to increase thanks to participation in decision process and critical points in decision process won't be overlooked.

These results obtained by application in a five-star hospitality business can be compared to other equal or lower class businesses. In this respect, employees' perspectives on technology and differences in their working life qualities can be discussed in managerial terms. The fact that results obtained by examining only one hospitality business cannot be generalized for other five-star hospitality businesses is one of the limitations of the study. Both a more comprehensive field research can be done and job satisfaction and effects of participation level of people getting service in process on quality of working life as well as technology perception dimension can be examined structurally in future studies.



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