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PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS: A SURVEY IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between psychological hardiness and demographic factors and management characteristics on hospitality management employees.

Methodology - Quantitative methodology was adopted to achieve the aim of this study and data were collected via questionnaire through hospitality management employees in four and five stars hotels. 450 questionnaires were distributed and 390 were collected for analysis. A four-item scale is benefited in the study, which is developed by Personal View Survey-PVS III–R of Maddi and Khoshaba adopted into Turkish culture by Durak (2002) in order to evaluate the pyshological hardiness of the participants. The data obtained were analyzed by statistical programs IBM SPSS 20.0.

Findings- The study shows that there is a positive relationship between psychological hardiness and position in management, working shift, occupational commitment, advancement opportunity, self-development opportunity, job safety, attending to social activity off the job, being appreciated/rewarding and satisfaction of physical working environment of employee. On the other hand there is no relationship between psychological hardiness and gender, age, marital status, educational level, department, tourism education, sector experience, accommodation condition, using off day, monthly income and being contact with supervisor off the job of employees.

Conclusion- As a result, the psychological hardiness level depends on more about the management characteristics than the demographical features. Therefore deciding on how to choose an employee, the person-job fit should be considered as an important fact and managing the companies with new and modern methods become an important role.

Keywords: Psychological hardiness, hospitality management, tourism, Alanya region
JEL Codes: M10, D23, L20

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing world, it has become vitally important that employees are able to adapt and cope with changing conditions at the same pace. The rapid change in new technologies, equipment, and systems has also changed the way in which many business tasks can be accomplished. In addition to changing technology, the rise of globalization also means that many company employees learn foreign cultures and languages effectively (Bartone, Kelly & Matthews, 2013: 203). The changes in whether inside or outside of the organization are enforce the individuals' limits. Therefore, the psychological hardiness of the individuals as well as their knowledge, skills and experiences gain importance in the work places.

Hardiness is a phenomenon that emerges as attitudes that transform potential threats in stressful situations into growth opportunities (Maddi, Khoshaba, Harvey et al., 2011: 370; Maddi, Ervin, Carmody et al., 2013: 128). Thereby, instead of the prejudiced ways of understanding life by holding onto the past, it provides continuum for creating new experiences and appreciating the meaning of experiences (Maddi, Khoshaba, Harvey et al., 2011: 370).

Tourism, on the other hand, takes place within the service sector and has labor-intensive characteristics. Understanding that the basis of success in the sector is based on the human factor and that the person is composed of psychological

factors based on the state of mental and social well-being necessitates the research of human factor in tourism on the basis of organisational behaviour which emerges from positive pyschology. Positive organizational behavior is evaluated as a reflection of the psychological capacity of the workforce to the organizational environment (Kanten & Yeşiltaş, 2013: 85).

People are faced with many physical and mental stimuli at every instant of their lives and these stimuli can affect the balance and harmony state of the individual. If the encountered event is in quality of bothering the individual, requiring readaptation, questioning or changing the accustomed life and solution types, the individual will struggle to come over this challenging event and to relax and accord (Özarslan, Fıstıkçı, Keyvan et al., 2013: 130). At this point psychological hardiness is gaining importance.

There are surveys about psychological hardiness when the literature is analysed. There are surveys especially between psychological hardiness and coping strategies (Hwang, Seo & Park, 2013; Bartone, Hystad, Eid et al., 2012; Soderstrom, Dolbier, Leiferman et al., 2000; Mehrparvar, Moghaddam, Raghibi et al., 2012; Cash & Gardner, 2011; Harvatin, 2009; Kurt, 2011; Aydoğdu, 2013), psychological hardiness and health (Bartone, Valdes & Sandvik, 2016; Hashemi, Ahadi & Yekta, 2017; Yamaguchi, Kawata, Shibata et al, 2017; Kardum, Hudek-Knežević & Krapić, 2012; Sandvik, Bartone, Hystad et al., 2013) psychological hardiness and stress (Lambert, Lambert &Yamase,2003; Pitts, Safer, Russell et al, 2016; Abdollahi, Talib, Yaacob et al., 2014) in the literature. Moreover, there is limited survey psychological hardiness of employees in tourism business (Chia & Chu 2017) and this survey contribution to the literature in this direction.

In the study, the concept of psychological hardiness is tried to be explained by reviewing the literature initially and developed with hypotheses by model building in the application part. The data obtained with the questionnaire technique and analyzing the hypotheses tested. In the conclusion parts results of the hypotheses and suggestions for the hospitality management are explained.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Additionally, the theoretical background of hardiness term goes back until the works of existential philosophers such as Heidegger, Frankl and Binswanger and psychologists (Bartone, 2012: 7), the concept of hardiness was first given by Suzanne C. Kobasa (1979) which is defined as "personality style or pattern associated with continued good health and performance under stress" (Mud, 2017: 139). According to Bonanno (2004: 25); psychological hardiness is an important dimension of resilience. Also, hardiness makes a contribution to resilience, not only in the sense of persevering, but also thriving under stress (Maddi, Ervin, Carmody et al., 2013: 128). Put in differently hardiness forms the pathway for resilience in stressful environments (Maddi, 2006: 160).

Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn (1982: 169), define psychological hardiness as "a constellation of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource in the encounter with stressful life events". Moreover, Bartone, Roland, Picano et. al. (2008: 78), define it as "Hardiness is a psychological style associated with resilience, good health and performance under a range of stressful conditions". Hardiness is a phenomenon that emerges as attitudes that turn potential threats in stressful situations into development opportunities.

When literature is considered, hardiness is conceptualised through the combination of attitutes defined as; commitment, control and challenge (Maddi, 2006: 160; Maddi, Ervin, Carmody et al., 2013: 128; Maddi, Khoshaba, Persico et al., 2002: 73).

Commitment, which involves the belief that no matter how bad things get, it is important to stay involved with whatever is happening, rather than sink into detachment and alienation (Maddi, 2013: 8). Stayed in other words if you are strong in commitment, you believe that no matter how bad things get, it is best to stay involved with the people and events going on around you (Maddi, Erwin Carmody et al., 2013: 128). Hardiness-commitment provides a sense of internal balance and confidence, which is important for realistic assessment of stressful and threatening situations (Bartone, Kelly & Matthews, 2013: 202).

Control, which leads you to believe that no matter how bad things get, you need to keep trying to turn the stresses from potential disasters into growth opportunities. It seems like a waste of time to let yourself sink into powerlessness and passivity (Maddi, 2013: 8). Control should likewise lead to greater adaptability since people high in control approach novel situations with the belief they can respond well and influence outcomes (Bartone, Kelly & Matthews, 2013: 203). People who are strong in the control attitude believe that trying to influence outcomes by the decisions they make is more likely to lead to meaningful outcomes than sinking into powerlessness in the face of stresses (Maddi, Khoshaba, Harvey et. al., 2011: 370).

Challenge, you accept that life is by its nature stressful, and see those stressful changes as an opportunity to grow in wisdom and capability by what you learn through trying to turn them to your advantage. In this, you think that you can

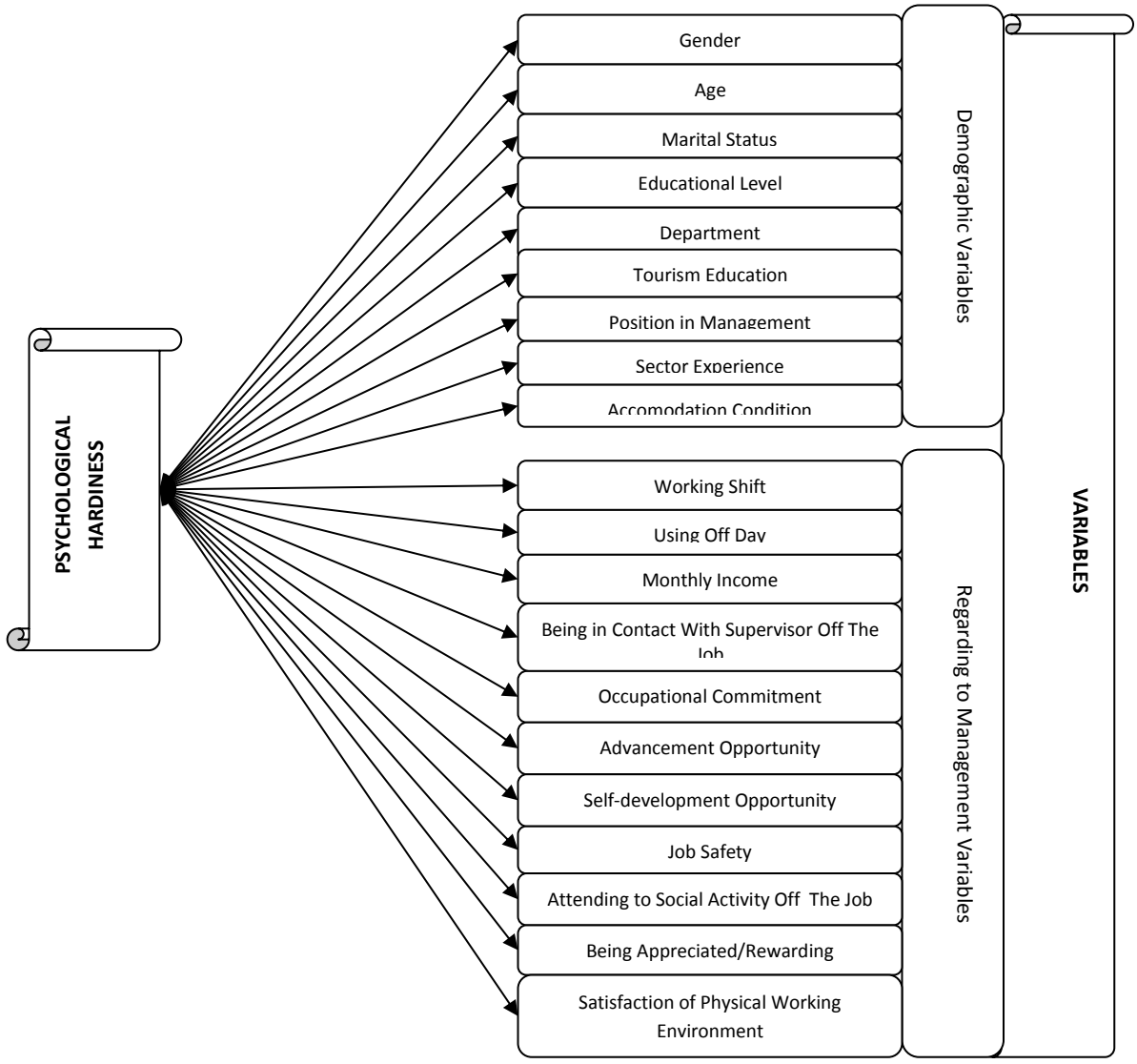
learn from failures as well as successes. You do not think you are entitled to easy comfort and security. Instead, you feel that fulfilment can only be gained by having turned the stresses into growth opportunities (Maddi, 2013: 8).

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Model of The Research

The purpose of this study is to reveal the differences between the psychological hardiness of hospitality employees in terms of demographic factors and management characteristics variables by examining. The model developed in this context is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Model of the Research



The main hypotheses that have been tested in the research are;

- **H_1:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and gender of employees.
- **H_2:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and age of employees.
- **H_3:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and marital status of employees.
- **H_4:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and educational level of employees.
- **H_5:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and department of employees.
- **H_6**: There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and tourism education of employees.
- **H_7:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and position in management of employees.

- **H_8:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and sector experience of employees.
- **H_9:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and accomodation condition of employees.
- **H_{10}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and working shift of employees.
- **H_{11}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and using off day of employees.
- **H_{12}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and monthly income of employees.
- **H_{13}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and being in contact with supervisor off the job of employees.
- **H_{14}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and occupational commitment of employees.
- **H_{15}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and advancement opportunity of employees.
- **H_{16}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and self-development opportunity of employees.
- **H_{17}**: There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and job safety of employees.
- **H_{18}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and attending to social activity off the job of employees.
- **H_{19}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and being appreciated /rewarding of employees.
- **H_{20}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and satisfaction of physical working environment of employees.

3.2.Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of employees of four and five star hotel enterprises in the Alanya Region. In the study, 450 questionnaires were sent and 390 questionnaires were received feedback. According to Sekeran (2003: 294) in the case of population's number is 1.000.000, 388 questionnaires are considered as sufficient.

3.3.Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic information and regarding to management variables of the employees with 20 questions. The second part included "Psychological Hardiness Scale" (Personal View Survey-PVS III–R), have been Likert type scale consists of 18 items developed by Maddi and Khoshaba and adopted into Turkish culture by Durak (2002). PVS III–R, is a 4 point Likert type with 18 items and a scale between 0-3. 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11^{th}. items of the scale are reverse scored. The higher scores indicate that the psychological hardiness increases whereas the lower scores indicate that psychological hardiness decreases. For reliability of PVS III–R, internal consistency coefficient is calculated as .68. The total correlations of total item coefficient, which are calculated for reliability of the study, are varying between 23 and 50.

3.4.Statistical Analysis of The Data

The data obtained from the research was analysed by the statistical software package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows 20.0. number, percentage, mean, standard deviation is used as a descriptive statistical methods in the evaluation of the data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied and the results show that the distribution of scores is not normal so that decided to use non-parametric tests. The Mann Whitney-U test was used to compare quantitative continuous data between two independent groups, and the Kruskall Wallis-H test was used to compare quantitative continuous data among more than two independent groups. The findings were evaluated in the 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Reliability of the Research

As a result of the validity and reliability analysis performed on the data obtained by using the 18-question questionnaire in the research, four items were extracted from the scale with the item total correlations lower than 0.20.Thereby, 14 items are listed in the scale and Personal View Survey-PVS III–R, Cronbach's Alpha value is calculated as 0, 69.

4.2.Test of Hypothesis

When Table 1 is analysed; the psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the position in management (p=0,014<0,05). While the employees with the highest level of psychological hardiness are the mid-level managers (x=239,01), the employees with the lowest level of psychological hardiness are senior executive (x=164,76). It can be conceivable that senior executive of hospitality management is take the overall responsibility of the hotel, especially for profitability and have primary liability for accounting to the hotel stakeholders because of the low level of psychological hardiness of senior executive compared to the other employees. No significant difference could be found between psychological hardiness and variables as gender (p=0,143>0,05), marital status (p=0,201>0,05), educational level

(p=0,103>0,05), department (p=0,249>0,05), tourism education (p=0,803>0,05), sector experience (p=0,205>0,05) and accomodation condition (p=0,063>0,05).

Table1: Examining the Hypotheses Regarding Demographic Variables

Variables	Groups	n	Mean Mark	S.S.	Difference
Gender	Female	147	184,76	0,48524	p=0,143
	Male	243	202,00		
Age	18-25	166	184,03	1,132125	p=0,204
	26-30	107	194,63		
	31-40	75	205,47		
	41-50	24	212,79		
	50+	18	241,83		
Marital Status	Married	146	204,93	0,48458	p=0,201
	Single	244	189,86		
Educational Level	Secondary Education	37	172,80	1,02651	p=0,103
	High School	81	172,70		
	Vocational High School	190	199,07		
	Faculty	51	213,58		
	Postgraduate	29	219,59		
Department	Housekeeping	70	170,91	1,56953	p=0,249
	Front Office	82	195,71		
	Food and Beverage	160	204,20		
	Accounting	22	223,27		
	Security	15	157,83		
	Animation	20	190,58		
	Other	21	212,83		
Tourism Education	Yes	188	196,97	0,50032	p=0,803
	No	202	194,13		
Position in Management	Senior Executive	47	164,76	0,68022	**p=0,014**
	Mid-level Manager	34	239,01		
	Employee	309	195,39		
Sector Experience	Less than 5 years	230	192,36	0,82567	p=0,205
	5-10 years	115	189,12		
	11-15 years	25	219,38		
	16 years +	20	238,40		
Accomodation Condition	Staff Hostel	168	188,55	1,73675	p=0,063
	Alone	30	194,52		
	One/Several Friend	31	155,23		
	Parents	50	195,17		
	Partner	111	217,68		

p<0,05

When Table 2 is examined; the psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the working shift (p=0,032<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee of working between 16:00-24:00 and 24:00-08:00 (x=219,29) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee of working between 08:00-16:00 (x=199,71) and alternately (x=181,03). Working between 08:00-16:00 hours is considered more intensive in the hotel business as check-in, check-out and room change etc. is done at those time of the day quite more often. Therefore it can be said that employee working between 16:00-24:00 and 24:00-08:00 hours have a higher psychological hardiness levels. The psychological hardiness levels of employee of working alternately are the lowest (x=181,03) which can cause different job descriptions in each shift and when there is a change in the work process, there may be a problem of adaptation and at the

same time off the job life can change by working alternately. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the occupational commitment (p=0,000<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have occupational commitment (x=211,76) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who have not occupational commitment (x=149,59). This conclusion indicates the importance of person-job fit. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the advancement opportunity (p=0,004<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have advancement opportunity (x=207,58) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who is considered not to have any advancement opportunity (x=172,93). It can be said that enabling the advancement opportunity in the work place increases the psychological hardiness level by providing the motivation for the employee. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the self-development opportunity (p=0,000<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have self-development opportunity (x=209,43) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who is considered not to have any self-development opportunity (x=153,99). There is no doubt that every employee desire is to enlarge knowledge, skills and experience at the workplace. Hence, it can be said that there is an important variable strength in the level of psychological hardiness. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the job safety (p=0,000<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have job safety (x=206,15) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who is considered not to have any job safety (x=157,28). It can be said that changing the economical, social and individual condition of the employee by the job safety affects, the living conditions might affects the psychological hardiness level by causing the feeling of insecurity for the future and the business in uncertainty. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the attending to social activity off the job (p=0,005<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who is attending to social activity at off the job (x=207,54) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who is not attending to any social activity off the job (x=174,70). Amusement, having a good time in social activities off the job allow for relaxation the mind. In addition, social activities that affect quality of life can also be considered as a component that increases psychological hardiness level. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to being appreciated/rewarded (p=0,020<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have been appreciated/rewarded (x=207,48) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who haven't been appreciated/rewarded (x=180,79). Being appreciated/rewarded is obviously effectively increases the morale and motivation hence performance level as well as the increasing in psychological hardiness level. The psychological hardiness levels of tourism workers show a significant difference according to the satisfaction of physical working environment (p=0,000<0,05). The psychological hardiness levels of employee who have satisfaction of physical working environment (x=210,42) are higher than the psychological hardiness levels of employee who doesn't have satisfaction of physical working environment (x=162,73). Based on these data, it can be said that the physical working environment is important for who work under very difficult conditions in hospitality business. No significant difference could be found between psychological hardiness and variables as using off day (p=0,510>0,05), monthly income (p=0,117>0,05), being in contact with supervisor off the job (p=0,095>0,05).

Table 2: Testing Hypotheses Regarding Business Variables

Variables	Group	n	Mean Mark	S.S.	Difference
Working Shift	08:00-16:00	213	199,71	1,32629	**p=0,032**
	16:00-24:00	55	219,29		
	24:00-08:00	5	219,29		
	Alternately	117	181,03		
Using Off Day	Yes	372	196,33	0,21009	p=0,510
	No	18	178,42		
Monthly Income	1000-2000 TRY	293	187,88	0,77740	p=0,117
	2000-3000 TRY	66	214,04		
	3000-4000 TRY	21	225,64		
	4000-5000 TRY	3	302,33		
	5000 TRY+	7	203,50		
Being in Contact With Supervisor Off The Job	Yes	172	206,22	0,49715	p=0,095
	No	218	187,04		
Occupational Commitment	Yes	288	211,76	0,44004	**p=0,000**
	No	102	149,59		
Advancement Opportunity	Yes	254	207,58	0,47718	**p=0,004**
	No	136	172,93		

Self-development Opportunity	Yes	292	209,43	0,43431	**p=0,000**
	No	98	153,99		
Job Safety	Yes	305	206,15	0,41338	**p=0,000**
	No	85	157,28		
Attending to Social Activity Off The Job	Yes	247	207,54	0,48251	**p=0,005**
	No	143	174,70		
Being appreciated/Rewarding	Yes	215	207,48	0,49800	**p=0,020**
	No	175	180,79		
Satisfaction of Physical Working Environment	Yes	268	210,42	0,46424	**p=0,000**
	No	122	162,73		

p<0,05

5. CONCLUSION

The concept of psychological hardiness, which is closely related to the positive psychological state of individuals, is an increasingly important issue in tourism organisations, which are seen as labour intensive especially emotional labour intensive. In the study, it was tried to reveal the relationship between the psychological levels of hospitality management employees by determining demographic variables and management variables. With this purpose, a model and hypotheses have been developed and tested. According to the obtained data;

- **H_7:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and position in management of employees.
- **H_{10}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and working shift of employees.
- **H_{14}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and occupational commitment of employees.
- **H_{15}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and advancement opportunity of employees.
- **H_{16}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and self-development opportunity of employees.
- **H_{17}**: There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and job safety of employees.
- **H_{18}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and attending to social activity off the job of employees.
- **H_{19}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and being appreciated /rewarding of employees.
- **H_{20}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and satisfaction of physical working environment of employees hypotheses were acceptanced.
- **H_1:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and gender of employees.
- **H_2:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and age of employees.
- **H_3:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and marital status of employees.
- **H_4:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and educational level of employees.
- **H_5:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and department of employees.
- **H_6**: There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and tourism education of employees.
- **H_8:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and sector experience of employees.
- **H_9:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and accomodation condition of employees.
- **H_{11}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and using off day of employees.
- **H_{12}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and monthly income of employees.
- **H_{13}:** There is a significant difference between psychological hardiness and being in contact with supervisor off the job of employees hypotheses were rejected.

When hypotheses are analysed; there is significant relationship between demographic variables and psychological hardiness level, only position in management variable. While the mid-level manager has the highest psychological hardiness level employee, the lowest psychological hardiness level employee has been identified as the senior executive. When the relationship between management characteristics and psychological hardiness level of hospitality management employees is examined; working between at 16:00-24:00 and 24:00-08:00 hours, have occupational commitment, advancement opportunity and job safety, attending to social activity off the job, considering they are being appreciated/rewarded at workplace and satisfaction of physical working environment were higher psychological hardiness level.

As a result, the psychological hardiness level depends on more about the management characteristics than the demographical features. Therefore deciding on how to choose an employee, the person-job fit should be considered as an important fact and managing the hospitality management with new and modern methods become an important role.

In addition, the study is limited only to hospitality management employees in the Alanya region. Different results can be obtained by working on city hotels and in different regions.

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