



## Job Satisfaction and Gender in Tourism: A Case Study in Eskişehir

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### Abstract

This research aims to characterize and compare job satisfaction levels of workers in the tourism sector among a representative sample of male and female employers in Eskişehir which has a great domestic and international tourist potential, being a province that was chosen the Capital of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013 by UNESCO. This research is a survey-based, descriptive study. Within the study, an online self-completion survey and a cover letter were given to 80 male and 32 female employees in the tourism industry of the city. Respondents were asked for rating their work happiness on a 5-point Likert scale that had been previously constructed and tested as a measure. The data were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; Version 24.0). Findings show that women have a higher level of job satisfaction than men, similarly to the literature. However, this difference is not at a meaningful degree, statistically. As a result, unlikely the previous studies, neither a correlation nor statistically significant relationship between gender and the job satisfaction in tourism sector is found in Eskişehir province.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Working is a significant component of people's lives, and most individuals spend a significant portion of their working lives at their work. It includes a monetary component and provides the person with an identity that enables the individual to register their existence in society. In other words, a job plays a significant role in daily life due to its means of survival for individuals. In this regard, job satisfaction is a critical component of overall life happiness. Therefore, the interest of economists and academics in the empirical analysis of subjective factors for job satisfaction has increased in recent years. These analyses show that job satisfaction is seen as a critical issue since it directly correlates with workers' physical and mental well-being.

Although there is no standard definition of job satisfaction, it often refers to an individual's positive emotional responses to a job. The amount of internal and external outcomes and the employee's perspective affect an individual's job satisfaction level. However, the data of correlation between the job satisfaction and gender has not been clear, yet.

Tourism is one industry that gender equality is actively encouraged, and employment rates have been steadily increasing with the growing importance of women in modern economies. Therefore, this paper focuses on comparing job satisfaction levels in the tourism sector among a representative sample of male and female employees in Eskişehir.

## **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Choosing a career that fits an individual's personality and character provides happiness and success to people (Seymen & Bolat, 2010). Additionally, numerous experts think job satisfaction may impact employees' behavior (Mabekoje, 2009). As Gaddam (2008) said, employee satisfaction is a result of employer branding, which leads to employee commitment, customer satisfaction, and ultimately, profit for the company as a whole. For the organization, the more pleased employees provide an opportunity to reduce turnover and to increase production (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

Job satisfaction is described as "a good emotional status or a pleasurable as a result of evaluating one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1970). In the study of Morgan (2010), job satisfaction comprises three fundamental components: professional desire, professional balance, and professional adaptation. Additionally, it is attempted to characterize the harmonization of the profession's characteristics with the individual's capabilities (Recepoğlu & Tümlü, 2015) and people's positive or negative assessments of their work (Weiss, 2002).

The amount of internal and external outcomes and the employee's perspective on those outcomes affect an individual's job satisfaction level. Therefore, two people doing the same work may have different degrees of job satisfaction. For instance, the employee will be satisfied if he or she considers that work-related values have been reached, and if the person feels the principles have been broken, he or she will be dissatisfied. According to researchers, the employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs are more likely to experience exhaustion than those who are satisfied with their jobs (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley 1991). Moreover, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, job level, and experience in an organization were identified as possible predictors of organizational commitment and work satisfaction (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Women's participation in the labor force has increased significantly in recent years, and several scholars have been interested in exploring the gender issue across national and institutional boundaries. As the number of women in the profession increases, it is more critical than ever to keep track of the differences in men's and women's working lives (Ayers et al., 2008). As a result of this tendency, much interest has been raised in the relation between the job satisfaction and gender. Gender, in particular, has often been explored as a biographical aspect in the job satisfaction field (Mabekoje, 2009). Actually, women labor and discrimination in working life against to women are independent and extensive fields within the gender studies, but the job satisfaction perspective is focused in this study.

Hodson (1989) was one of the first researchers who conduct a comprehensive evaluation of gender in the job satisfaction research and discovered so few change between the sexes in the job satisfaction factors when personal expectations, family responsibilities, and characteristics of job were considered. In the following years, numerous empirical studies have shown that women employees report much greater levels for the satisfaction of job than males. Despite earning less than men, working in less favorable conditions, having fewer opportunities for advancement, and experiencing workplace discrimination, women frequently report greater levels of job satisfaction (Perugini & Vladislavljevi, 2019). This situation has been also called as the gender/job satisfaction paradox (Kaiser, 2002) refers that women employees generally address a greater job satisfaction level than men, although they have disadvantageous position in labor, especially within the recruitment, earnings, career prospects or promotion. According to previous studies, it is said that this might be because women have lower expectations, which are affected by many things that happen in their current and previous jobs (Perugini & Vladislavljevi, 2019). Chui (1998) similarly presents three explanations for this job satisfaction-gender paradox: - women may be trained not to show their dissatisfaction; - women have reduced expectations than males; thus, they are pleased with less; and - men and women may value distinct job features.

However, the data of correlation between the job satisfaction and gender has not been clear, yet. Despite several studies generally indicating that women are more satisfied than males, not all conclusions are clear. Many studies also indicate no substantial gender difference in work satisfaction (Westover, 2009; Robst et al., 2003). For instance, regarding Crossman and Harris (2006) study, male teachers were more pleased than female colleagues within their research on the teachers from different schools. In 14 different European Union states, Kaiser (2007) measured job satisfaction-gender gaps then discovered that the paradox does not stand in more gender-equal countries like Portugal, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Finland, in which men have higher quality laboring conditions so they are more satisfied with their jobs. Sousa-Poza (2000) looked at gender- job satisfaction differences of the 21 different countries. According to their findings, women employees were more pleased with their professions in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Hungary and the United States. However, this gap was not statistically significant for other countries.

With the becoming more significant of women participation in economies, tourism has become one of the sectors in which gender equality is actively promoted, and employment rates have been continuously rising (Alrwajfah, Almeida-Garca, & Cortés-Macas, 2020). Although the tourism is often thought as men dominated industry (Segovia-Pérez vd., 2019), according to the World Tourism Organization's report (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2019), the average percentage of female workers in all other industries is 39%, compared to 54% in tourism. The same report shows that the tourism and travel sector accounted for 10% of total employment worldwide, directly and indirectly providing 330 million jobs (WTTC, 2019). Despite the contunity of gender-based discrimination against women in the workplace, it is evident from both statistics records and the developed levels of nations that tourism remains a significant source of employment for women (Boyacioglu & Elmas, 2019). In the countries where tourism and travel income contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product, women's employment increased significantly in between 2007 and 2017 (WTTC, 2019). For instance, Turkey, which increased by 7.5% during the relevant period and provided women 23,1% as tourism professions in 2017, leads the list of countries that made the most progress in closing the gender gap in the industry (WTTC, 2019).

Nevertheless, today, despite the worldwide improvements and positive steps in gender equality, the obstacles of women's participation in the tourism sector have not been eliminated (Koç & Uşaklı, 2022). In terms of wages and responsibilities, it is well-known that women who find more employment options in the tourism industry than in other sectors face with negative gender discrimination in the sector. In the tourism sector of the most countries, women are particularly involved in mid-level positions and finding a place among senior officials (Fan et al., 2021). According to World Bank (2017) statistics, women dominate the tourism industry, while they struggle to earn in part-time, informal, seasonal, and day-to-day jobs. Women in tourism earn approximately 14.7% less than their male colleagues (World Tourism Organization, 2019).

In addition to human capital factors, such as education and job experience, there are also gender-based variables in the rates of employees' payment (Kortt, Sinnewe, & Pervan, 2018). Gender wage inequality in the sector may be related with social gender norms (Cotilla & Campos-Soria, 2021). It is specifically thought that women's employment is interrupted by several events such as marriage, maternity leave, and children (Kortt, 2018). Within the social gender norms, Cotilla and Campos-Soria (2021) demonstrates that the glass ceiling metaphor in tourism is a significant indicator. Moreover, in the tourism industry, where service providers have close contact with customers, it is believed that abuses are growing more prevalent and that women are often allocated more feminine positions and are subjected to sexually (Lucena, Vorobjovas-Pinta, & Cai, 2021).

Even though there has been much interest in gender inequality in the workplace and tourism sector, previous studies have had several deficiencies, such as not comparing male and female employees. In the literature, job satisfaction is also discussed, but the objective evidence is limited to employees' job satisfaction in the tourism sector. When the tourism sector is discussed, the outputs have to be consumed where they are produced. Actually, it is becoming more challenging to find and retain skilled people in the tourism sector and keep employees committed to the profession (Avcı, 2011). These negativities of the tourism sector and its working conditions may lie behind the employees' dissatisfaction (Seymen et al., 2017). Moreover, the tourism industry is critical because of its significant role in attracting and retaining young, educated, well-equipped, and customer-focused workers necessary for the industry's growth and sustainability.

In the studies that have been done on job satisfaction of several groups were also established according to gender, experience, education level, and employment status (Koğar, 2021). However, they were not to measure job satisfaction within the tourism sector. On the other hand, the previous studies that were done in the tourism field focused on the tourism industry's workforce, particularly in a field where the phenomena of employment, and they did not try to examine the employee's job satisfaction level from a gender perspective in this kind of touristic provinces, such as Eskişehir. Therefore, the present article sheds light on the significant additions to the current literature by addressing the levels of worker satisfaction within the gender in a touristic province of Turkey.

The study area of the research was decided accordingly to all these dynamics of the tourism sector, gender, and job satisfaction. Eskişehir, in where the study was done, is a province located in northwestern of Turkey and near the capital, Ankara. As the crossroads of the country's roadways and railways, it has great tourist potential. The city has been ruled by various civilizations throughout history. As a result, it now has a variety of historical and cultural attractions, including Seljuk and Ottoman artifacts and museums welcoming to both domestic and international tourists. Additionally, with its natural spas and caverns, it was named the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World in 2013 and functioned as a centerpiece for the Turkic world's conferences. Eskişehir, which was also chosen as the UNESCO Capital of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the same year, became a major focus for scientific, cultural, and creative activities. Due to these qualifications, Eskişehir was taught as a suitable city to measure the tourism employees' job satisfaction.

Finally, this paper focuses on comparing job satisfaction levels in the tourism sector among a representative sample of male and female employees in Eskişehir. With the findings of the research, establishing a roadmap for policymakers to increase the job satisfaction level in the industry and eliminate the satisfaction differences between male and female workers is aimed. Then, with better policies in the sector, the tourism industry, not only in the region but also in the whole country, will be able to improve in the long term.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This is descriptive research conducted by a survey. A survey model is used to establish a previous or current situation as it really is (Karasar, 1999). General survey models are used to look at the whole population, a group of samples, or samples that will be taken from the population. This allows for a general assessment of the sample in a population with many different perspectives. Kuzgun et al. (1999) utilized a 20-item scale to assess professional satisfaction, which included the categories of "suitability for qualifications" (D1) and "desire for development" (D2). The scale's first dimension, "fitting to qualifications," has 13 items and is a strong predictor of satisfaction. The second dimension, "the desire for improvement" has five expressions. The occupational satisfaction survey collected data using a 5-point Likert scale (1-Never, 5-Always). Since the scale was prepared in Turkish and was applied in different service sector enterprises, no revalidation study was carried out.

An online self-completion survey and a cover letter are applied to 80 male and 32 female workers in the tourism sector. According to data of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, there are 88 tourist agencies and 31 hotels, officially registered, in the city. The sample was randomly chosen and the participants are asked to score their job satisfaction levels using a 5-point Likert scale that has been previously designed and validated.

The data are entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; Version 24.0). Firstly, the gender distribution of participants was analyzed, and then reliability statistics of dimensions (D1 and D2) were completed. With the tests of normality (Shapiro-Wilk and the Kolmogorov Smirnov), the data was found not to be normally distributed, so Mann-Whitney U and Spearman's correlation tests are utilized. The significance level is set at  $p < .05$ . Through Cronbach's alpha values, reliability analysis of the scale is measured for both the suitability of qualifications and the desire for improvement dimensions and are found as ,916 and ,649, respectively.

Hypothesis<sub>1</sub>: There is a considerable statistical correlation between gender and job satisfaction.

Lastly, this research was completed with the ethics committee approval (Ethics Committee Decision No. 2/5, dated 02/02/2022) of Eskişehir Technical University.

## 3. FINDINGS

Totally, 112 questionnaires were implemented to workers in the tourism sector of Eskişehir, and their gender based distribution is shown in Table 1;

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants**

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Male	80	71.4	71.4	71.4
Female	32	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Within the "suitability for qualifications" dimension (D1) of the scale, 13 statements are included to analyze and the Cronbach's alpha value is measured as ,916, and the reliability of the "desire for development" (D2), with its 7 statements, is measured ,649, as seen Table 2;

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics of D1 and D2**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
D1	.916	.912	13
D2	.649	.628	7

The normality of the data for both D1 and D2 were analyzed with Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, separately. According to Table 3, the data are measured as not normally distributed. Therefore, non-parametric tests are applied.

**Table 3: Tests of Normality**

	Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
D1	Male	.136	80	.001	.919	80	.000
	Female	.242	32	.000	.843	32	.000
D2	Male	.119	80	.007	.944	80	.002
	Female	.219	32	.000	.895	32	.005

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Regarding the Mann-Whitney U test which can be seen in Table 4, the p-value is measured as  $>.05$ , so a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of job satisfaction and gender is not found.

**Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Analyses**

**a.Ranks**

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
D1	Male	80	56.30	4504.00
	Female	32	57.00	1824.00
	Total	112		
D2	Male	80	53.90	4312.00
	Female	32	63.00	2016.00
	Total	112		

**b. Test Statistics**

	D2	D2
Mann-Whitney U	1264.000	1072.000
Wilcoxon W	4504.000	4312.000
Z	-.103	-1.347
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.918	.178

a. Grouping Variable: Cinsiyet

To establish the relations between the dimensions and gender, correlation tests are analyzed. According to the analyses, firstly, The relationship between the D1 & D2- and gender is not statistically significant.

**Table 5: Correlations between the Gender and Dimensions of Job Satisfaction**

**a. Correlations between the Gender and D1**

		Gender	D1
$r_s$	Gender	r	1000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	112
	D1	r	.010
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.918
		N	112

**b. Correlations between the Gender and D2**

		Gender	D2
$r_s$	Gender	r	1000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	112
	D2	r	.128
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.179
		N	112

A correlation between D1 and gender is found as not being statistically significant ( $r_s(8) = .010$ ,  $p = .918$ ). Secondly, there is also not any correlation between D2 and gender, which is statistically significant ( $r_s(8) = .128$ ,  $p = .179$ ).

**4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

Within the research, 80 questionnaires were received from men, giving a response rate of 71.4%, and 32 were received back from women, with a response rate of 28,6%. Although it does not refer to the distribution of the whole sector's workers' gender distribution, as a potential limitation of this research, the majority of participants were men, more than double the number of women, for this research. According to the findings obtained the Cronbach's alpha value is measured as ,916 for the "suitability for qualifications" dimension (D1) of the scale in which 13 statements are included to analyze, and this value level is accepted as significantly reliable. For the second dimension of scale, "desire for development" (D2) and its 7 statements, the Cronbach's alpha value is measured as ,649, that is statistically an acceptable level.

It is noteworthy that females' job satisfaction level is greater than males' level. It is shown within the gender, and job satisfaction categories that are "suitability for qualifications" (D1) and "desire for development" (D2) in Table 4, and for both categories (D1) and (D2), the mean ranks of women participants are higher than men's ranks. However, this does not refer to a statistically significant difference between gender and dimensions of job satisfaction. According to the Mann-Whitney U test, the p-value is measured  $>.05$ , so it can be safely said that a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of job satisfaction and the gender is not found, unlike the previous research. To achieve the research goals; the relations between the dimensions and gender, correlation tests are analyzed. According to these analyses, there are not any statistically significant relationship and correlation between the gender and the job satisfaction. Therefore, the findings reveal that hypothesis<sub>1</sub> is declared invalid.

Regarding to the women labor amount within the tourism sector, it is essential to make a scientific and sectorial analysis. On the contrary of the previous studies, there is not any statistically significant difference between the male and female employees' job satisfaction levels. However, it does not mean that the all problems, such as being a secondary position of women or having low wages and barriers in working life, are solved. To be able to see the bigger picture on the issue, there is a need for continuous monitoring of employees' work satisfaction in other cities and/or in other sectors.

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### **Ethical approval**

This article is completed with the ethics committee approval (Ethics Committee Decision No. 2/5, dated 02/02/2022) of Eskişehir Technical University.

### **Conflict of interest**

There is no potential conflict of interest or gain in the article.

### **Appreciation**

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