

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO NAVIGATE THE GREAT RESIGNATION IN THE
HOTEL SECTOR:

Empowering Talent Retention via Training

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Abstract:

Talent-related challenges have long persisted within the hotel industry, yet research into technology's influence on talent attraction and retention remains scarce. Given the phenomenon of the Great Resignation, exacerbated by COVID-19, this study seeks to provide insights into utilizing technology to navigate talent shortages, focusing on the highly impacted hotel sector. Qualitative and quantitative methods were chosen to investigate the impact of technology on this challenge. This particular research emphasizes the potential of training programs and technology in talent retention. Results show that technology and its strategic implementation present great potential in addressing the attraction and retention of hotel employees.

Keywords: Technology Adoption, Great Resignation, Talent Attraction, Talent Retention, Engagement, Training Programs, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Digital Platforms, Digital Employer Branding, Automation, Employee Commitment, Leadership, Change Management

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1 Introduction

The following study is a collective output obtained from a work project conducted for Westmont Hospitality Group.

The work project targeted identifying and exploring opportunities for technology implementation within the operational framework of four hotels within the Westmont portfolio. It was motivated by a selection of main challenges intricate to the hotel sector and presented a focus on two key domains: guest-facing technologies and staff management solutions.

The present research is a more specific exploration of one singular challenge encountered within the broader spectrum of the work project: the challenge of effectively attracting and retaining talent within Westmont Hospitality Group. The large scale and complexity of the original work project imposed a more focused approach in this research; therefore, while this research delves deeply into this particular challenge, it does not encompass the entirety of the work project. As such, the study presented is a combination of data collected from Westmont Hospitality Group in the context of the work project, as well as external research and data collection, to provide a generalized response that could benefit Westmont and other hotel industry players.

Considering the post-Covid context of the work project and the consequent challenges specific to Westmont Hospitality Group's context, the main challenge associated with the difficulties experienced in attracting, acquiring, and retaining talent inspired the decision to develop research on proposed strategies aimed at leveraging technology to address it.

Parallel to the work project with the Westmont Hospitality Group, this research represents a group effort that delves into the nuanced landscape of leveraging technological interventions to navigate the challenges presented by the Great Resignation within the hospitality industry, characterized by workforce attrition and its negative impact on hotel operations.

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Structured with a combination of both collaborative and individual research contributions, this study comprises four distinct yet connected individual research:

- Leveraging Technology to Navigate the Great Resignation in the Hotel Sector:
Digital Employer Branding as a Tool for Talent Attraction and Engagement
- Leveraging Technology to Navigate the Great Resignation in the Hotel Sector:
Empowering Talent Retention via Training
- Leveraging Technology to Navigate the Great Resignation in the Hotel Sector:
Streamlining Operational Workload
- Leveraging Technology to Navigate the Great Resignation in the Hotel Sector:
The Role of Leadership in Technology Adoption

Each topic presents its unique exploration within the overarching theme, followed by the product of a comprehensive group analysis, integrating the collective insights from individual research endeavors.

For an all-encompassing and accurate understanding, it is essential to consider this research alongside the respective individual topics contributed by each research group member. The result of this collaborative effort blends a multifaceted perspective, combining distinct insights and observations collected from personal research, thereby enriching the depth and breadth of the analysis presented within the present study.

1.1 Problem Statement

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many industries have faced an enormous challenge regarding their workforce (Debata, Patnaik, and Mishra 2020; Fontinelle 2022), known as “The Great Resignation,” a current trend characterized by a substantial increase in companies’ workforce turnover rates (Lai and Wong 2020). The hospitality industry, particularly the hotel sector, is no exception and has been significantly impacted in recent years by this phenomenon,

worsening the already historically existing issues of the sector's attractiveness and ability to retain its talent.

This phenomenon, motivated by the change of modern workforce needs and preferences amplified by socio-economic shifts and globalization, not only represents a source of direct and indirect costs for companies but also poses a challenge to the organizational stability and sustainability of the hotel sector as it compromises the availability of current and future staff working in the hotel industry (Fontinelle 2022; Kwok 2022). Therefore, it is urgent to identify effective strategies to help hotel companies navigate this phenomenon and effectively attract, retain, and engage their workforce to reduce the high turnover rates currently observed in the sector.

Moreover, amidst this phenomenon, accelerated by the COVID-19 outbreak, recent technological advancements have opened new possibilities and opportunities for several industries globally, including the hotel industry (Palermo 2021; Balfe, Sharples, and Wilson 2015). Technology adoption has become increasingly popular in recent years, and it represents a critical factor in facing the ongoing challenges and continuous innovation that characterize the modern era (Soares, Mendes-Filho, and Gretzel 2020).

This research explores the potential role of technology in helping hotel companies navigate the Great Resignation phenomenon and better attract, retain, and engage hotel employees by focusing on critical areas such as digital employer branding, employee training programs, workload reduction, and leadership strategies needed for successful technology adoption.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

This research delves into current and urgent challenges confronting the hotel industry and their tangible consequences on the sector's sustainability. The hotel industry is essential to global economies, posing an expansive reach, scale, and integral role in international commerce and societal engagement. Moreover, it is one of the oldest industries worldwide (Khan et al. 2020).

In this context, it is essential to continue studying, evaluating, and strategizing alternative ways to ensure its sustained development and growth (Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022). By addressing the complex and immediate issues it faces, this research seeks not only to provide academic insights but also actionable strategies that may have the potential to fortify the hotel industry's resilience, stability, and continual relevance amidst evolving socio-economic landscapes, ensuring that future generations can experience the full scope of opportunities it offers.

Albeit tied to research-specific contexts and limitations, this research is aimed at enabling the leadership teams at Westmont Hospitality Group and other industry professionals an extra layer of information to better capacitate their teams to leverage technology to overcome persistent talent-related challenges and continuously improve their leadership teams' impact, at senior, corporate and property-levels, in the success of future technology implementations.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The focus of this research encloses four areas intending to analyze different technologies that may help fight the phenomenon stated before:

- (1)** Leveraging a robust online presence to attract and retain top talent;
- (2)** Creating effective training mechanisms to reinforce employee retention;
- (3)** Streamlining operational workflows for increased efficiency and reduced workload;
- (4)** Understanding the critical success factors and leadership best practices in implementing and optimizing new technologies;

In the joint part, an analysis of the sector attractiveness is done, combining, in the end, all individual insights to propose a comprehensive framework on how to leverage technology better to navigate the Great Resignation in the hotel sector and how to implement technology successfully.

1.4 Research Structure

The present research starts with a detailed overview of Westmont Hospitality Group, outlining its position and contribution to the international hotel landscape, followed by the specifics of the work-project collaboration with Westmont, highlighting the most relevant experiences and events. The following chapters set the stage, offering critical insights into the industry's historical significance and current state. An examination of the prevailing issue of the Great Resignation and its profound implications follows, highlighting the urgency to address talent retention challenges.

Following, an exploration of the technological landscape within the hotel industry includes an analysis of how technology is not merely a supplement but may be a fundamental tool in mitigating the previously identified challenges. Afterward, an empirical examination of the sector's attractiveness is made to provide additional insights into the research.

Following the initial group exploration, individual themes are developed, each comprised of a topic-specific literature review, diverse methods of data collection, and data analysis. Building upon these individual explorations, collective findings and insights derived are consolidated. This group analysis serves as a crucial combination of relevant information, allowing for the research of varied perspectives into a cohesive framework. Here, a comprehensive guide is proposed to facilitate technology adoption within the hospitality sector applied to the context of navigating the Great Resignation.

Concluding the research, a forward-looking perspective offers insights into anticipated industry trends and provides actionable recommendations for organizations. This section serves as a compass for future considerations, providing a roadmap for sustained growth and adaptability within the dynamic landscape of the hotel industry.

2 Work Project Context

2.1 Westmont Hospitality Group (WHG)

Westmont Hospitality Group is a multinational real estate company primarily focused on the hospitality industry, namely in the hotel sector, being an owner and operator of hotels worldwide. It is one of the most extensive global management and ownership groups, acquiring, developing, and managing hotel properties in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Majid Mangalji manages Westmont Hospitality Group, which operates on several continents and has over 500 hotels in its portfolio.

Westmont properties are mainly operated as a franchise, relying on several partnerships that the company was able to achieve with global hotel brands such as Fairmont, Hilton, Hyatt, Intercontinental (IHG), Marriott, Pan Pacific hotels, Radisson Hotels and Renaissance hotels, for example. Westmont Hospitality Group is one of the largest franchisees and co-owners of IHG and Hilton hotels worldwide.

This diversification allows Westmont to cater to a wide range of guest preferences and travel needs, with properties spanning from budget and aparthotels limited service, extended stay, and mid-market to full service, boutique, luxury hotels, and upscale resorts.

Across its properties, Westmont Hospitality Group is focused on providing valuable experiences to guests while being committed to quality and innovation.

Being a global company focusing on expansion, the company is concerned with the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry and the assurance of the implementation of excellence standards.

For that reason, not only environmental sustainability and social responsibility are a concern that Westmont Hospitality Group currently addresses, but also the attraction and retention of skilled workforce and the rapid technological advancements that characterize the modern era and that are being implemented in several industries, the hotel industry not being an exception.

2.2 Westmont Hospitality Group Work Project Overview

As stated in the introduction, the carried-out work project with Westmont targeted identifying and exploring opportunities for technology implementation within the operational framework of the hotel group and presented a focus on two key domains: guest-facing technologies and staff management solutions.

Considering the size and scale of the hotel group, with more than 500 properties in its portfolio, at the time of the project, the focus was narrowed down to four selected limited-service hotels owned and managed by Westmont Group while under the Holiday Inn and Hampton by Hilton brands, namely: Holiday Inn Oxford Circus in London, and Holiday Inn Arena Towers, Holiday Inn Express and Hampton by Hilton in Amsterdam.

Field trips to the properties were organized, and the student group spent one week in each city to get to know the properties, thoroughly diagnose the “state as is” of technology and understand first-hand the needs and wants of each one. During the field trips, the following main activities were carried out: property tours, meetings with key stakeholders (both management and operational employees), hotel operations observation, staff interviews, and competitor analysis. The field trips allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the technological landscape of each property, the leadership teams’ involvement, and implemented processes regarding the typical technology roll-out, as well as their main associated pain points.

The work project deliverables consisted of an initial diagnosis of existing technologies and associated pain points, an overview of solutions being used by competitors, and the group’s proposal of technology solutions for the following areas:

- Inside the scope of Guest Facing Technology: pre-arrival communication, check-in and check-out, concierge services, general hotel services, guest engagement, and contactless payments.

- Inside the scope of Staff Management: property management system (PMS), inter-departmental communication, shift organization, benefits and incentives, casual staff training, and automation options.

During the work project, the Holiday Inn Oxford Circus property faced a refurbishment project to convert the property from limited service to upscale. This change was considered in the project deliverables and presented an exciting opportunity to diversify the technology proposal due to the context change of the property.

Although more details cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality agreements, the delivered work project significantly contributed with insightful examples of technology, possibly being considered in the group's decisions and rollouts.

Different contexts and processes were identified, namely, the existence of a heterogeneous organization and the involvement of motivated stakeholders in diverse technology implementations, which, combined with the collectively shared difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified talent, motivated the group to develop the present research as a complementary response to the work project deliverables.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Overview of the Hotel Industry

The most significant growth in the supply-demand of tourism can be traced back to the period of “Fordism,” which extended from the 1940s until the 1960s (Christou 2022). The exact timeframe in which the airline industry experienced unparalleled growth, and travel opportunities grew to a broader spectrum of destinations, in addition to the common favorite ones of Europe and North America, by becoming more accessible to the public (Jayawardena et al. 2013). Within the same period, hotel chains, considered the hotel industry's backbone, emerged. This cleared the path for hotels to become international (Strand 1996), driven by companies such as Holiday Inn and Hilton, which, following World War II, were at the frontline

-Group Part-

of globalization in the hotel sector (Ivanova, Ivanov, and Magnini 2016). Hotel products and services became more standardized, with management and franchise agreements being utilized to encourage ongoing expansion (Chathoth and Olsen 2003) to target consumers from different market segments.

The evolution of hotels went through three different stages that significantly impacted the development and expansion of hotels (Economist 2013):

- Stage 1: Grand Hotels
- Stage 2: Standardization
- Stage 3: Market Segmentation

The first stage was defined as the “age of the grand hotel” (Economist 2013). In which the means of transportation were mainly ocean liners and railroads, and wealthy tourists were the main customers. This resulted in the creation of “Grand hotels” that were either independent or part of small chains, such as the known Waldorf Astoria in New York, the Ritz in Madrid, and the Savoy Hotel in London (Ivanova, Ivanov, and Magnini 2016).

The second stage witnessed the expansion of hotel chains and their internationalization with the entrance of new players in the market, such as Intercontinental, Marriott, and Hyatt hotels, which remain some of the biggest competitors today.

The third stage began with the birth of new hotel typologies, such as boutique hotels, catering to individual guests' specific and unique needs and desires (Aggett 2007). The emphasis shifted to a customer-centric approach to create distinctive and unforgettable experiences (Chathoth and Olsen 2003).

Following six decades of intense travel, the hotel sector is increasingly associated with entertainment and continuously growing. Guests are more traveled, demanding, and not easy to please; hotel managers are chosen based on their ability to blend in the business culture and

local environments, and hotel owners are more involved and knowledgeable (Jayawardena et al. 2013).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, travel and tourism accounted for approximately 1 in 5 new jobs created and 10.3% of all global jobs. In 2022, economies started recovering from it, with travel and tourism contributing 7.6% of global GDP, only 23% under 2019 levels (World Travel & Tourism Council 2023). Currently, international tourism is set to regain almost 90% of pre-Covid levels at the end of 2023, with an estimation of 975 million international travelers between January and September and estimated receipts to reach 1.4 trillion USD until the end of the year (UNWTO 2023). According to Statista (2023) latest analysis, the leading hotel brand classified according to brand value in 2022 was Hilton, followed by other major hotel brands such as Marriott, Holiday Inn, and Hyatt. In addition, a forecast of 2,707 hotel openings is set for 2024 worldwide.

3.2 Overview of the Great Resignation in the Hotel Industry

The Great Resignation can be described as the superior rate at which workers resigned from their jobs in the spring of 2021 (Fontinelle 2022). While opinions differ amongst diverse authors on the actual start of the phenomenon (some sources state it originated from a growing trend that started one decade ago (Fuller 2022)), there is a general agreement on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on escalating the phenomenon. This impact is considered more of a catalyst than a creator (Fuller 2022; Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022) and was mainly derived from a natural response to the pandemic, where amongst diverse factors, individuals reevaluated life priorities, reduced working hours or left the labor force entirely (Fontinelle 2022).

While the pandemic had an evident impact, the top reasons identified by quitting workers were low pay, poor working conditions, burnout, and lack of career growth opportunities. In that sense, it is suggested that most of the workforce that quit did not irrevocably do so but changed

their professional path in search of better working conditions (Fontinelle 2022; Fuller 2022; Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022).

Economists considered this a natural response to the observed increase in job openings, boosting competition among players (Fontinelle 2022). Although generally global, this phenomenon was highly predominant in the North American continent, specifically the United States of America, where “in 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 47 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs” (Fuller 2022) followed by around 50.5 million in 2022 (“JOLTS Home: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics” 2022).

Accommodation and Food Services were the industries with the highest resignation rates in the Spring of 2022 and those with the highest job openings (Fontinelle 2022). According to the 2022 Work Trend Index by Microsoft Corporation, 60% of U.S. workers hired during the pandemic stated that they were highly likely to consider changing employers in 2022.

Some sources report that the hospitality industry might have been one of the most impacted since care obligations fall disproportionately on women, and women comprise most hourly workers in hospitality, causing a higher number of quits during the pandemic. A “Women in the Workplace” report by McKinsey (2023) also found that one-third of the female workforce was considering quitting, switching jobs, or reducing working hours in 2022 due to their necessity to meet caregiving obligations (Women in the Workplace 2023; Fuller 2022).

The hospitality and tourism industries are generally characterized by a combination of intensive labor and low wages, which heavily contribute to workforce shortages and historically high turnover and absenteeism rates (Zagorsky, 2022; Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022). Although frontline operational staff plays a crucial role in the quality-of-service delivery and the success of the hotel business, directly impacting revenues, guest satisfaction, and loyalty, they frequently report emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout, lack of appreciation, and low pay. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have been a catalyst in worsening talent-related challenges,

with a survey by Joblist showing it drastically impacted job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Joblist, 2021). However, highlighted workforce issues have existed in the hospitality and hotel sector long before the pandemic (Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022; Huertas-Valdivia, Gallego-Burín, and Montes 2019).

When the hotel sector re-opened following the pandemic lockdowns, most companies prioritized creating a safe environment for guests over the evolving needs of its employees, leading to a generalized feeling of neglect that could have a direct impact on employee performance, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Croes, Semrad, and Rivera 2021).

This trend naturally varies across hotel companies, as not all display the same challenges in attracting and retaining talent, and some organizations associated with a positive reputation and healthy workplace culture have been identified to experience below-average attrition during the Great Resignation (Baum et al. 2020; Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022).

Studies also show that attracting new talent may be a better solution to address the high attrition, as former hospitality and tourism workers appear to generally be hesitant to return to the industry, with 25% to 33% wishing to pursue a career in alternative industries (Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022). The temporary layoffs faced during lockdown often resulted in permanent decisions to opt out of the hospitality industry, motivated by the employment uncertainty aligned with the unsatisfying conditions, and has provided an opportunity for a lot of these workers to seek additional education to enable a more promising career path (Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang 2022).

To this day, the hotel sector has not recovered from these challenges, facing a shortage of both skilled and unskilled professionals due to its remaining reputation as a less attractive, less innovative, and less tech-savvy sector (Venzin 2023).

Following this information, empirical research will follow to measure and understand the current attractiveness of the hotel sector among students and professionals from within and outside the sector.

3.3 Technological Landscape in the Hotel Industry

Technology innovations are being implemented in the hotel industry. As per Law, Sunny, and Chan (2019), it began with the first in-room telephone and hardware technology introduced to the hotel industry in 1894. Fast forwarding, after technological developments such as websites, booking engines, hotel applications, Wi-Fi networks, and software developments, the hotel industry has arrived at a new paradigm regarding technology adoption. In 2015, the first hotel operated by robots was opened, which marked an essential step towards innovation in the industry (Law, Sunny, and Chan 2019). Part of this new paradigm is several other technology innovations, where self-service technologies should be highlighted due to their numerous advantages, not only financially, but for guest service personalization (Buhalis and Leung 2018).

As mentioned, technology adoption in the hotel industry has been gradual. Law, Sunny, and Chan (2019) have divided technology development in the hotel industry into three phases. The first is characterized by hardware development and implementation. The second phase is Information Technology, characterized by software development and programming. Examples of innovations part of this phase, according to the authors, are mobile technology and apps, where services/communication is centralized and easy to access, mobile reservations instead of solely desktop reservations, self-service procedures, such as check-in, check-out, and faster connectivity. The third phase, Data Technology, has already started, allowing hotels and other businesses to automate and offer more personalized experiences due to the data available and its analysis. All these phases had technology implementation both in front of the house departments (Front Office, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, Spa, Maintenance, among others)

and back of the house (Administration, Finance, Commercial, and HR, among others), which has been shaping the industry throughout these years of evolution.

The hotel industry, like many industries, did not put all of its trust in technological innovations when they first started to be implemented (Law, Sunny, and Chan 2019) due to its lack of credibility, as its positive consequences were still not available to the eyes of industry stakeholders. Although trust in technology adoption has been growing throughout the years (Kazandzhieva, Ilieva, and Filipova 2017), the hotel industry has the reputation of being a late adopter when it comes to adopting technology (Chan, Okumus, and Chan 2015) since owners of hotels businesses are usually cost-oriented and adopt a strategy of second mover advantage, instead of first mover advantage. This brings advantages to owners as they are less exposed to risk and can observe the first mover's actions before deciding (Grepperud and Pederson 2021). However, it delays technology adoption in the hotel industry.

Recently, the implementation of specific technologies has accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a tremendous impact on the hotel industry (Lau 2020; Jiang and Wen 2020). Several scholars have mentioned this technological impact through the COVID-19 pandemic as an advantage, and McKinsey & Company (2020) has stated that the pandemic accelerated digital transformation by ten years. In this renewed technological landscape, self-service technologies should be highlighted, as some were mandatory and pivotal for the industry's continuity during critical times of the pandemic (Pillai et al. 2021). Thus, despite this acceleration having brought technologies that represented quick-fix solutions for hotel operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic operations have been using and benefiting from them. Some examples are automation technologies, such as self-check-in and check-out, food ordering and pay software, and automated messaging (Kucukusta, Heung, and Hui 2014). In hotels, automation technologies were implemented mainly on the guest-facing side to reduce face-to-face interaction. However, some changes in the back of the house were

implemented, such as work-from-home technologies - video conferencing, and communication software (Chi, Saldamli, and Gursoy 2021). The latter-mentioned technologies were mainly used by management-level employees who do not need to be face-to-face with guests.

Therefore, despite being a late adopter in comparison with other industries, the hotel industry is already implementing technologies in several areas.

Specific technological innovations such as automation robots, generative and predictive AI, and big data, are essential for the industry's future (Law, Sunny, and Chan 2019). If implemented, hotel competitiveness can be positively impacted (Chevers and Spencer 2017).

3.4 The Role of Technology in Addressing the Great Resignation

Following the impact of the Great Resignation phenomenon on the existing issues of the hotel sector, a question arises on the potential within technology to possibly address it.

The Great Resignation, especially the one continuously experienced in hospitality, can generally be dissected by the workforce wanting change: a better lifestyle or improved working conditions and pay (Kite-Powell 2021).

The primary problem with this scenario seems to be that larger companies are set up in a way that hinders appropriate response: the lack of data, insight, and structural agility to make better-informed decisions on how much they can offer adapted working models and realistically increase salaries or safely modify pay, where needed, without compromising rules, is lacking (Kite-Powell 2021). Experts identify data and technology as the tools to pave the way for changing this dynamic. Data and technology can be applied to improve and enable organizations to accurately assess the present rewards and benefits structure across multiple businesses and properties to support the development of proactive, strategic approaches (Kite-Powell 2021).

While technology is not a quick fix for shortcomings, diverse opportunities exist to tackle talent attraction and retention.

Regarding automation, its increasing adoption is both fueled as a response and a consequence of the labor shortages brought about by the Great Resignation, as many companies cannot fully operate under their current labor conditions, which is also true in the hotel sector.

Long working hours and work-life balance are directly connected, as automation technology poses several opportunities to address it directly, with existing literature confirming its potential to reduce workload by eliminating repetitive, monotonous tasks (Palermo 2021; Balfe, Sharples, and Wilson 2015).

The lack of or the inconsistent nature of current employee training in the hotel sector is mentioned as an obstacle to employee retention, providing a further avenue for scholars to study how technology can further improve training (Ameliya and Febriansyah 2017). Providing access to career growth paths and mentorship opportunities is easily done today via digital platforms. Personalizing and delivering training is also increasingly more accessible and easier to implement in fully digital or hybrid contexts, accommodating diverse needs (Wickstead 2023). E-learning platforms allow employees to improve their skills remotely, making the process easier and more user-friendly, as per Kim et al. (2011). Artificial intelligence has been shaping employee training in several industries, as it personalizes training to each employee (Maity 2019), bringing employee engagement and value. Moreover, employees will feel valued as companies invest in their professional careers.

Optimized and improved onboarding experiences powered by the proper technological structure can impact employees' experience. Harvard Business Review estimates that over 60% of managerial tasks have the potential to be replaced by automation, leaving managers more available to focus on employee experience management, further supporting employees' professional development goals, work-life balance, and other necessities (Shapiro 2022).

Together with employee turnover ratio or talent retention, the hotel sector faces challenges with talent attraction. As automation technologies and training can be addressed as potential

solutions for talent retention, other solutions can be investigated to attract talent better. Employer branding is a potential solution, as it is known to be a significant influence in the recruitment process (Wilden, Gudergan, and Lings 2010). Moreover, employer branding has been evolving to a digital paradigm, which has made communication much prompter and more updated (Chhabra and Sharma 2014), able to reach higher numbers of potential applicants through several digital channels (Mičík and Mičudová 2018). Leveraging technology as a platform to build stronger connections between employees and the organization holds the potential to improve working environments and morale (Wickstead 2023).

As per Shapiro (2022), technology is critical for employee retention and attraction and should be considered a tool part of the solution. However, after highlighting potential technological solutions for employee attraction and retention, it is essential to mention the role of leadership in its implementation, which should be active and prepared to embrace innovation with their teams, as technology adoption will continuously increase, regardless of the size of companies or the industries they are part of (Cortellazzo, Bruni, and Zampieri 2019).

4 Methodology

Different data collection methods were used to gather relevant information about the attractiveness of the hotel sector and to collect insights to propose a comprehensive framework on how to leverage technology better to navigate the Great Resignation in the hotel sector.

To assess the sector's attractiveness, quantitative data was collected through a survey created via Microsoft Forms. The survey was sent to university students and professionals currently employed in the labor market in different industries in Portugal.

In the first part, the survey included questions regarding the demographics of the respondents. Then, questions assessing relevant factors and challenges when choosing a job were addressed. After, questions specific to the hotel sector were assessed, such as the interest in pursuing a hotel career and perceptions of the hotel as an employer/ potential employer, as well as possible

appealing aspects of the sector and perceptions of career growth opportunities. The last part assessed perceptions of the best strategies hotels could implement to attract and retain talent. Survey questions were asked in a multiple-choice, multiple-response, and 5-point rating scale format.

After closing the survey, the final sample consisted of 135 responses for analysis.

To create a comprehensive framework on how to leverage technology to better navigate the Great Resignation in the hotel sector, quantitative and qualitative data were collected through surveys and interviews with professionals in the hotel industry. The methodology used to assess each part of the framework is explained more in-depth within the study of each topic: digital employer branding, training, workload, and leadership.

5 Data Analysis: Attractiveness of the Sector

The demographics of survey respondents were first analyzed (Table 1 in Appendix). Please refer to the Appendix for further Tables and Graphics mentioned.

Most participants are between 18 and 35 years old. 72,6% of total respondents are between 18 and 24 years old, while participants between 25 and 34 years old represent 18,5% of the sample. The gender distribution of respondents is relatively balanced, with 52,6% male and 47,4% female respondents. Regarding education level, the group is split mainly between bachelor's (43.7%) and master's degree holders (47.4%) and answered mainly by hospitality students, who represented 61,5% of the sample.

After being asked about their interest in a hospitality career, 54,1% of respondents said they were not interested. In comparison, only 31,1% stated an interest in pursuing a professional path in the hotel sector (Graphic 1).

The most popular reasons for being interested in pursuing a hotel career indicated by respondents were guest interaction (25,3%) and work environment (24%) (Graphic 2), also confirmed by the collection of qualitative data where respondents mentioned "passion for the

industry and dealing with guests” and the existence of a “multicultural environment.” On the other hand, qualitative data collected concluded that low salaries, high working hours, lack of attractive work conditions such as flexibility, and lack of career growth opportunities were indicated as reasons for not having an interest in pursuing a hotel career.

When asked about important factors they consider when choosing a job, salary was the most chosen option (23,4%). In comparison, career growth (21,2%) and work-life balance (19,1%) were also indicated by most respondents as necessary (Graphic 3). Regarding how these factors align with actual opportunities in the hotel sector, 55,6% of respondents found a misalignment (Graphic 4).

Career growth opportunities were only perceived as good by 27,4% of respondents (Graphic 5). Moreover, the general perception of hotels as employers was considered “Somewhat poor” by 50,4% of respondents and “Extremely poor” by 5,9% (Graphic 6), which shows the low attractiveness of the hotel industry, confirming expectations from the literature.

When asked about strategies hotels could implement to attract and retain talent, the three most indicated were the existence and promotion of growth opportunities (22,8%), better salary compensations (22,3%), and good leadership (19,2%) (Graphic 7), strategies that are aligned with the factors considered as important when choosing a job by respondents.

To conclude, a concerning lack of interest among young, educated individuals in pursuing careers within the hotel industry is identified. Reasons for this disinterest include low salaries, demanding work conditions, and limited career growth opportunities. Respondents perceive a significant misalignment between factors they value in a job and what the hotel sector offers. This discrepancy contributes to a negative perception of hotels as employers. To improve attractiveness, the industry should address these issues to better align with the expectations of the current workforce, yet if not possible, other strategies may be considered to help change this perception, namely leveraging technology to tackle attraction and retention.

6 Empowering Talent Retention via Training Programs

6.1 Introduction

In recent years, technological advancements have revolutionized how businesses operate in the hotel industry (Zhu, Wang, and Cheng 2021), from guest-facing areas to back-office operations. These advancements created new opportunities for the development and delivery of training programs, offering a wide range of potential benefits for employee training (Lee et al. 2016). This research explores the field of training in the hotel sector, focusing on how current training programs are being provided, how they relate to employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions, and to what extent technology-based training might improve talent retention.

6.1.1 Problem Statement

In light of the Great Resignation phenomenon, the hotel sector faces an ongoing challenge regarding employee retention, particularly skilled and motivated staff, as this sector is traditionally characterized by its demanding nature, with employees often dealing with low compensation, inflexible schedules, and the constant need to deliver exceptional service.

Training programs can help solve this phenomenon, offering opportunities for skill improvement and career development. However, traditional training approaches frequently lack accessibility, flexibility, and engagement (Reynolds and Dolasinski 2020), making them unable to meet employees' varied learning needs. As a result, it is crucial to investigate innovative training strategies that address these issues and promote employee engagement and satisfaction. Moreover, the sector's high levels of turnover urge a thorough examination of the potential of using technology-based training programs as a feasible solution for this ongoing issue.

6.1.2 Relevance of the study

By exploring if training programs can act as a possible solution to retain talent and if technology can act as an accelerator of that process, the present study addresses the ongoing challenges in the hotel sector posed by the Great Resignation phenomenon, becoming particularly relevant

regarding the hotel sector's competitiveness and sustainability. Moreover, by assessing how employees value the potential benefits of technology-driven training, this study can help businesses refine their training strategies, better align them with the changing needs of the modern workforce, allocate training resources effectively, and indirectly enhance employee performance and guest satisfaction.

6.1.3 Objectives of the Research

This research aims at (1) analyzing how training is currently being done and what are the employees' satisfaction and engagement levels with the training received, (2) examining if training programs can act as a possible solution to retain talent and (3) assess how technology-based training is valued by employees and what their impact is on employee retention.

Therefore, the following research questions are formulated:

- **RQ₁:** How is training currently being implemented within the hotel industry, and what are the employees' perceived levels of satisfaction and engagement regarding training?
- **RQ₂:** What is the relationship between training programs and the employees' levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions within the hotel industry?
- **RQ₃:** How do hotel employees perceive the advantages of technology-based training programs, and what role do these programs play in enhancing employee retention rates?

6.1.4 Structure of the Research

Firstly, a literature review will explore existing research on training programs, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and the relationships between those variables. Then, the Methodology section will outline the research approach and data collection methods. Afterward, sample demographics and findings on the associations between training, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions are presented, as well as the relationship between technology-based training and training engagement and satisfaction. Lastly, conclusions are presented, as well as some limitations that should be addressed by future research.

6.2 Literature Review

6.2.1 Training and Employee Turnover

Employee training programs concentrate on determining, verifying, and assisting in the development of the essential competencies that people need to execute their current or future professions through organized learning (McLagan 1989) and represent one of the most crucial methods for helping staff members acquire the new knowledge and skills needed to meet competitive standards (Tsai and Tai 2003).

Employee's voluntary turnover, defined by Mobley (1983) as an individual's self-initiated and permanent termination of membership in an organization, represents the exit of knowledge, skills, and abilities to competitors (Benson, Finegold, and Mohrman 2004; Haines, Jalette, and Larose 2010) and has not only direct costs for companies that need to recruit, hire, place and train new employees, but also indirect costs, as firms are unlikely to get a return on their training investment if employees leave the company (Haines, Jalette, and Larose 2010; Trevor and Nyberg 2008).

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between training programs and employee voluntary turnover (Jun and Eckardt 2023), but different conclusions were found. On one hand, some authors defend that there is a positive association between training and turnover (Cao and Hamori 2020; Haines, Jalette, and Larose 2010; Trevor and Nyberg 2008) since training makes employees more employable in other higher-paying companies by enhancing their skills and proficiency and increasing their mobility options. In Human Capital Investment Theory, despite proposing that education and training increase an individual's productive capacity, Becker (1962) presents the idea that general training makes workers more employable in other firms, which can increase their turnover intentions.

On the other hand, a significant number of studies found that employee training is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions (Kampkötter and Marggraf 2015; Ng et al. 2022;

Wang 2022), and that is regarded as one of the most important factors in reducing voluntary turnover (Owens 2006; Raj and Arokiasamy 2013; Zhao and Zhou 2008).

In several studies, this negative direct association between training and turnover intentions results from reciprocity and can be explained by Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). According to this theory, turnover intention results from management or coworkers failing to follow formally or implicitly established rules, which means an employee may freely opt to leave the business if prior agreements are broken. As a result, efforts by management to reinforce established rules might be viewed as a retention strategy (Ngo-Henha 2018). By receiving training, employees feel valued by their company and act reciprocally towards it, showing an increased commitment to it (Gouldner 1960; Leuven et al. 2005; Memon et al. 2014).

In this study, training programs were divided into three sub-variables: Training sessions attended (number of sessions attended last year), training satisfaction, and training engagement, as previous literature does not study the connection between these three variables and job satisfaction and turnover. Turnover intention is used as it has frequently measured anticipated workplace turnover in prior research and has been proven to be a strong predictor of actual turnover behavior (Memon et al. 2014). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Training programs are negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

H1 a): Training Sessions Attended are negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

H1 b): Training Satisfaction is negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

H1 c): Training Engagement is negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

6.2.2 Training and Job Satisfaction

Although Social Exchange Theory can help explain the direct relationship between training and turnover intentions, several studies mention job satisfaction as a relevant mediator (Chiang, Back, and Canter 2005; Choi et al. 2014; Dardar, Jusoh, and Rasli 2012; Jehanzeb, Hamid, and

Rasheed 2015; Kolarova, 2010). Job satisfaction is defined by Locke (1976) as the state of emotions that positively arise from an individual job's appreciation, and, according to the Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg 1966), is driven by several factors known as "motivators" such as achievement, advancement, work itself, recognition, and growth (Tan and Waheed 2011; Yousaf 2019).

Factors such as company policies, relationship with peers, work security, relationship with supervisors, salary conditions, and working conditions (Ngo-Henha 2018; Tan and Waheed 2011; Yousaf 2019), although valued by employees, are considered by Herzberg as "hygiene factors," and its presence is considered not to lead to higher job satisfaction, but instead to a decrease of job dissatisfaction (Alfayad and Arif 2017; Ngo-Henha 2018).

By actively fostering the development of new skills and knowledge, training programs enable actual promotion and personal growth opportunities for employees, which are directly linked to work growth and opportunities for advancement (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, and Maude 2017). Therefore, as these are drivers of job satisfaction (motivation factors), training and job satisfaction seem positively correlated.

Moreover, previous empirical studies also state the positive association between employee training and job satisfaction (Jehanzeb, Hamid, and Rasheed 2015; Chiang, Back, and Canter 2005; Choi et al. 2014; Wang 2022). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Training programs are positively associated with Job Satisfaction.

H2 a): Training Sessions Attended are positively associated with Job Satisfaction.

H2 b): Training Satisfaction is positively associated with Job Satisfaction.

H2 c): Training Engagement is positively associated with Job Satisfaction.

6.2.3 Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

According to Herzberg's theory, when an employee's overall satisfaction is negatively impacted, one begins to respond to turnover intentions (Ngo-Henha 2018). Therefore, it is

crucial for management to optimize motivation factors to prevent employees from intending to leave their jobs (Ngo-Henha 2018).

This idea shows the negative relationship between job satisfaction and employees' turnover intentions that is also shown in previous literature (Choi et al. 2014; Dardar, Jusoh, and Rasli 2012; Jehanzeb, Hamid, and Rasheed 2015), namely in the hotel industry (Wang 2022; Chiang, Back, and Canter 2005). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Job Satisfaction is negatively associated with Turnover Intentions.

6.2.4 Technology Adoption in Training Programs

In recent years, technological innovations have significantly transformed the landscape of training programs' development and delivery to employees, and the COVID-19 pandemic has acted as an accelerator of technology adoption in training (Reynolds and Dolasinski 2020).

Instructional technologies can play a pivotal role and strategically amplify access to education, reduce costs for organizations, enhance students' engagement, and optimize learning outcomes (Hirumi, Ratliff, and De La Mora Velasco 2021) while offering other advantages such as flexibility, availability, or the personalization of learning (Lee et al. 2016).

Using Learning Management Systems or other e-learning platforms enables organizations to provide employees continuous access to training programs regardless of location, enhancing the convenience of attending training sessions (Sisson and Kwon 2020). This aspect is particularly relevant since staff often lacks time or schedule availability to attend training programs (Kalargyrou and Woods 2011).

Furthermore, through technology implementation, organizations can address the low staff engagement and interaction that characterize traditional training approaches and that lower knowledge retention (Green, Tanford, and Swift 2018). This is particularly true with the implementation of technology such as Virtual Reality (VR) simulations, which enhance staff engagement and motivation with training and are already being used in industries such as

pharmacy and healthcare to provide immersive and compelling learning experiences on how to handle specific scenarios (e.g., patient counseling or emergencies) (Trenfield et al. 2022), while offering a safe environment for practice (Ferguson et al. 2015; Foronda et al. 2017).

Moreover, using adaptive learning platforms enables the personalization of the learning experience, tailoring it to an individual learner's preferences, specific interests, and needs, improving the effectiveness and usefulness of learning (Aberbach et al. 2021). These platforms, which are being used in K-12 and higher education classrooms in the US, created a sense of control over the learning process, helped skill development, and led to significant improvements in their work while also developing learning practices, reducing time spent on learning tasks, and helped users manage information overload (Leone 2013).

Social learning tools, including knowledge-sharing and discussion forums, are also used to promote skills development while focusing on employee collaboration.

Despite bringing several benefits to employees, technology-based training also benefits organizations. It enables employees' progress and performance tracking, identification of learning patterns, and assesses effectiveness and employees' potential need for support. This contributes to refining content, delivery strategies, and overall learning outcomes in training programs (Berkes 2022). However, it is crucial to realize that technology-based training also comes with obstacles, such as the need for investment in software and hardware, required training to understand the use of the new technologies, security and privacy concerns, and employees' resistance to change (Durbin 2020).

6.2.5 Technology Adoption in Training Programs in the Hotel Industry

The hotel industry is usually characterized as a late adopter (Okumuş et al. 2017). However, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the spread of technology adoption (Reynolds and Dolasinski 2020). E-learning platforms like Learning Management Systems allow scalability and cost reductions by eliminating in-person instructors, travel expenses, and printed materials. In

addition, their use has increased in recent years. Moreover, trends seen in other sectors, such as AI and VR, have brought new opportunities for training in the hotel sector and are being implemented by some players in the industry. For example, Hilton Hotels implemented VR Oculus for empathy and soft skills training and partnered with an AI-powered platform for personalized safety, leadership, and customer service training. This approach catered to individual learning styles and paces, offered immediate feedback, improved retention, and allowed ongoing skill development (Kover 2020; Ikonik Digital 2022). Hilton claimed that using this platform led to an 18% increase in employee engagement, a \$1 million cost savings in training expenses, and a 5% improvement in guest satisfaction (Ikonik Digital 2022).

Although technology-based training brings several benefits to training programs, as seen previously, its adoption is not even across the industry. Therefore, it is relevant to assess how training is currently being provided and how technology can facilitate training programs, by impacting employee engagement and satisfaction, and ultimately leading to higher employee turnover intentions. For that purpose, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H4: The use of technology in training increases training engagement.

H5: The use of technology in training increases training satisfaction.

6.3 Methodology

Quantitative data was collected through an anonymous survey created via Microsoft Forms and sent to hotel employees of several hotels, including hotels within the Westmont Hospitality Group portfolio, to generate results and gather relevant information.

The survey was divided into four sections and comprised 38 questions. Part 1 comprised questions regarding demographic factors; Part 2 assessed the number of training sessions attended last year (TSA), the way training is currently being provided, the type and topics of training programs being implemented, as well as the use of digital platforms for training, and the overall perception of employee training satisfaction (TS) and training engagement (TE)

levels. Part 3 assessed employee job satisfaction (JS) and turnover intention (TI) levels, while Part 4 assessed the perceptions of hotel employees regarding the impact of technology-based training benefits in their TE and regarding their TS with the use of technology-based platforms for training. The questions were asked in a multiple-choice, multiple-response, and 5-point Likert scale format (“Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neutral”, “Agree”, “Strongly Agree”). Other 5-point rating scales were also used.

After closing the survey, the final sample consisted of 162 responses for analysis.

The JS variable was computed as a mean of six 5-point Likert scale items corresponding to the Herzberg Two-factor Theory motivators mentioned previously and an overall job satisfaction item. TI variable was computed as a mean of three 5-point Likert scale items. The reliability of both variables was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha, presenting values within the recommended range of 0.7-0.90 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011), 0.90, and 0.82, respectively.

Descriptive statistics and Spearman rank correlation were used to analyze the collected data to assess existing relationships between TSA, TS, TE, JS, and TI.

6.4 Data Analysis and Results

6.4.1 Demographics of the Respondents

Before a deeper analysis, the demographics of the respondents were analyzed (Table 2 in Appendix). Please refer to the Appendix for further Tables and Graphics mentioned. This study's sample comprises employees of the hotel sector, with a significant majority working in branded hotels (85.2%). The gender distribution indicates a higher representation of males (63.0%) than females (37.0%). The age of respondents is concentrated within the 35-54 age range, with 34.0% of respondents being 35-44 years old and 29,6% being 45-54 years old. Regarding education level, most participants possess a higher education course (72,3%). Although occupational roles vary within the sample, there is a higher presence of employees in managerial positions (43,2%) when compared to administrative roles (29,0%) and operational

staff (27,8%). Regarding tenure, there is a diverse range of experience within an employee's current company and the hotel sector. Company tenure of about 1-3 years was the most current case for respondents (34,0%), as well as more than 20 years in the hotel sector (37,7%).

6.4.2 Current Training Programs Analysis

After the characterization of the sample, an analysis of the current training programs deployed in hotels was conducted.

The number of training sessions attended last year varied significantly between participants. While most respondents (62,3%) attended between 1 and 10 training sessions within the past year, being the 1 to 5 training sessions the most current case (41,4%), a significant number of participants attended more than 20 training sessions in the last year (14,62%) (Graphic 8).

Training sessions attended by employees were mainly provided by their company (64,1% of total responses) in comparison to self-provided training sessions (35,9% of total responses) (Graphic 9), which can be a reason why most respondents (63,0%) reported a lack of autonomy choosing training courses, being the training sessions attended indicated by their company rather than chosen according to each employee's interests (Graphic 10).

Regarding the topic of training sessions, most training sessions attended by respondents last year were about safety (26,3%), soft skills (25,0%), and leadership (21,4%) (Graphic 11).

When analyzing the type of training employees received, 80,9% of respondents attended online training sessions last year. This type of training was followed by in-classroom training sessions, with 45,1% of participants attending this type of training and on-the-job training by 44,4%. Based on this sample, results show that online training is already being widely used in the hotel industry, being the most attended training type among participants (Graphic 12). It is also important to note that VR Training was indicated as a type of training that 7,4% of the respondents attended last year, showing evidence of the increasing implementation of innovative training technology by the hotel sector mentioned previously.

Regarding the use of digital platforms for online training, basic LMS (basic e-learning platforms that provide access to courses, materials, and sometimes assessments but lack features of personalized learning, social interaction, or extensive tracking capabilities) were indicated by 69,5% of respondents as a platform used in training. Although not equally representative, as expected, 18,3% of participants reported attending online training sessions via Social Learning Platforms (digital platforms having collaboration tools that allow learners to share knowledge and learn from peer interaction) and 21,4% via Adaptive Learning Platforms (digital platforms that tailor the training content to the individual learner according to their interests, need, goals and experience, adapting the pace of learning accordingly). AI chats that can provide instant support and guidance and allow for personalized learning during training were only used by 2,3% of the respondents. Additionally, 2,3% of participants mentioned attending other forms of training - all of those reported attending live training sessions via Microsoft Teams (Graphic 13). The adoption of social learning and collaboration features and personalized and adaptive learning paths show that these new platforms, although not used as widely as basic e-learning platforms, are already being used in the hotel sector for employee training.

Regarding TS and TE levels, although most respondents reported being satisfied and engaged with the current training programs implemented, 35,8% of respondents do not feel satisfied with the training received (Graphic 14), and 32,7% do not feel engaged in training sessions attended (Graphic 15), which shows a possibility of improvement.

One of the possible reasons for the absence of TS and TE might be the employees' perceptions of organizational support for training. 37,0% of respondents did not recognize organizational support for training in their company (Graphic 16), a variable found to be highly correlated to TS $r(160) = .827$, $p < 0,001$ and TE $r(160) = .751$, $p < 0,001$ (Table 3). The low employee perceptions of organizational support for training may also produce undesirable effects on

employees' TI and JS since the perceived lack of support for skill development might lead to low perceptions of career growth opportunities and advancement.

6.4.3 Training Programs, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intentions

Descriptive statistics were used to assess employees' levels of JS and TI. The respondents of the survey tended toward the higher end of the Likert scale, suggesting a relatively positive level of JS ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .82$) (Graphic 17). Contrarily, data collected suggested relatively low values of TI among the surveyed employees ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .92$) (Graphic 18).

To investigate some of the proposed hypotheses, Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between TSA, TS, and TE with employee TI and between each training variable and JS. The relationship between JS and TI was also tested (Table 4).

Negative significant correlations were found between employee TI and TSA, $r(160) = -.252$, $p = 0,001$, as well as between employee TI and TS $r(160) = -.337$, $p < 0,001$, and between TI and TE, $r(160) = -.305$, $p < 0,001$, confirming the previously proposed hypothesis *H1a*), *H1b*) and *H1c*). Although the correlation coefficients are not very high, there is a base to believe that the direct effect between training and turnover intentions, suggested by Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005), is true. When employees are dissatisfied and disengaged with training, feeling that their company does not support training or offer better and more engaging training sessions, employees do not feel valued by their company and might act reciprocally, increasing their turnover intentions.

Furthermore, results showed no significant correlation between TSA and JS, $p = 060$, meaning that having a higher number of training sessions attended in the last year is not associated with higher values of JS. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm the previously proposed hypothesis *H2 a*).

Contrarily, a positive significant correlation between TS and JS was found, $r(160) = .515$, $p < 0,001$, as well as between TE and JS, $r(160) = .517$, $p < 0,001$. These results mean that

employees with higher levels of TS and/or higher levels of TE are also associated with high levels of JS, confirming the previously proposed hypothesis *H2 b)* and *H2 c)*. Employees with high levels of TE and TS can more effectively learn new skills and are more likely to perceive career growth opportunities and advancement, which might explain the relationship between these variables.

JS and employee TI were also negatively correlated, as expected and proposed in hypothesis *H3*, $r(160) = -.485$, $p < 0,001$.

Therefore, as expected, results show that training programs relate to employees' JS and TI. Employees' perceptions regarding the importance of training also sustain this, since 75,3% of respondents indicated positive levels of agreement towards training programs and career development opportunities being important factors that affect employee commitment and, therefore, reduce turnover intentions (Graphic 19). Furthermore, 57,4% of respondents also agreed that career advancement is more important than monetary incentives (Graphic 20), which shows the importance of training programs for employee retention.

6.4.4 Technology-Based Training Benefits

According to previous literature, as mentioned above, technology-based training has several benefits that might improve the training experience. When asked about the extent to which each benefit associated with technology-based training would impact their TE, the most valued aspects of technology-based training (showing a high percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing) were the continuous access to training (85,2%), instant feedback and assessment (84,6%), the personalization of the learning path (82,7%) and the existence of collaboration features to share knowledge among employees (81,5%). The least valued benefit was the reduction of training sessions' time, which was only considered to impact employees' TE by 50,0% of the respondents. These results (Graphic 21) show that employees clearly stated that technology positively impacted TE, confirming hypothesis *H4*.

Besides increasing TE and its effects on JS and TI, using technology in training can also enhance the relationship between training programs and employee turnover intentions, as shown in the literature and confirmed in this study.

67,9% of respondents indicated that if their company provided innovative technology-based training programs, they would feel that it would be investing in their development and future career growth (Graphic 22). As seen by Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005), these perceptions lead employees to act reciprocally towards their organization and show an increased commitment to it. Additionally, this can lead to perceptions of a higher possibility of skill advancement and career growth, increasing job satisfaction (Herzberg 1966).

Although technology-based training has several benefits, only 45,7% of respondents agreed that they would be more satisfied if the training were done mainly through digital platforms (Graphic 23), which is insufficient to confirm hypothesis *H5*. On the other hand, 18,5% indicated that this would cause them more dissatisfaction. Reasons indicated for this are related to perceptions that this type of training can be less effective regarding practical training, that difficulties in dealing with technology can arise as well as a possible lack of social interaction. As seen previously, technologies such as VR and social learning platforms can help to overcome these obstacles, however, it is natural that employees present resistance to change and a hybrid approach is recommended. Additionally, leadership is crucial for a successful implementation.

6.5 Conclusion

The analysis of current training programs revealed varying attendance rates, with a majority attending 1 to 10 sessions last year. Most training sessions were indicated by the employee's company, resulting in limited autonomy for employees in choosing courses. Safety, soft skills, and leadership were the most attended topics, mainly via online sessions, followed by in-class and on-the-job training. Increasing acceptance of VR Training was also observed. Regarding online training, while basic LMS were predominantly used, social learning platforms

and adaptive learning were also used for employee training. Although most employees reported positive training satisfaction and engagement, a substantial minority did not, potentially due to a perceived lack of organizational support for training, found to be strongly correlated with lower training satisfaction and engagement.

Additionally, a positive level of JS was found among the surveyed employees, contrary to their TI level, which was found to be relatively low even during the Great Resignation phenomenon. All proposed hypotheses (except *H2 a*) were confirmed, meaning that TSA, TS, and TE are negatively associated with employee TI, that TS and TE are positively associated with JS, and that JS and TI are negatively associated.

Although it was not possible to confirm that technology-based training can increase TS, its effects on TE were proven and, as such, technology-based training by increasing TE and enhancing employee's perceptions of organizational investment in their development and future career growth can help to increase JS and reduce TI, enhancing employee retention rates.

6.6 Study Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

The present research comprises some limitations such as the significant representation of branded hotel employees and of employees in managerial positions among the participants of this study, which might influence results. Besides, the use of a survey to collect data is also potentially subject to some bias, such as neutral response bias or confirmatory bias.

Additionally, to study the relationship between TSA, TS, TE, JS, and TI, only Spearman correlation was used. Pearson correlation, ANOVAs, and linear regressions were not used due to the violation of their assumptions, such as JS and TI variables not being normally distributed.

Employees' perceptions regarding technology-based training challenges were not addressed.

Future studies might address these limitations while focusing more on operational employees and independent hotels. Besides, as technologies for training are evolving, further research must address the potential of other forms that technology-based training might assume.

7 Collaborative Analysis of Individual Findings

This chapter presents a joint interpretation of individual findings applied to the problem statement of the research, comprising a comparison and synthesis of commonalities and differences in the findings across the individual chapters.

This chapter aims to answer:

- a) Are companies in the hotel sector aware of the opportunities that lie with technology implementation to address the challenges brought by the Great Resignation?

From the companies surveyed and interviewed in the individual chapters, there is reason to state that most hotel organizations are aware of the existing technology opportunities to address talent-related challenges worsened by the Great Resignation.

From the context of digital employer branding, the participants interviewed are aware of the opportunities presented by technology, especially using digital platforms such as social media, job posting websites, and career pages to attract and engage with talent. However, they recognize that the hotel sector is far behind in terms of innovative approaches in comparison to other industries due to a more traditional mindset and the financial availability needed to set their presence in motion within digital platforms.

From the context of training, hotel companies are aware of the potential of technology to benefit the training experience. According to the study, 75,3% of respondents indicated that training programs and career development opportunities are important factors that affect their commitment to the company and, therefore, reduce their turnover intentions. Moreover, 57,4% of respondents agreed that career advancement is more important than monetary incentives.

This shows the importance that training programs, by increasing employees' skills and enhancing their career growth, have in helping to fight the Great Resignation in the hotel sector. It was then possible to conclude that technology-based training, increasing training engagement, and enhancing employees' perceptions of organizational investment in their

development and future career growth can help increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover intentions.

From the context of automation, some of the biggest challenges faced by the workforce, such as intensive workload, stress, and poor work-life balance, were identified as predominant in operational departments, essentially Front Office, Food and Beverage, Maintenance, and Housekeeping, and data collected showed a variety of automation technologies implemented across diverse properties, in a possible effort to tackle these challenges.

Thus, hotels seem to be aware of opportunities for technology implementation despite existing room to grow.

- b) Are companies investing in these technologies to overcome the challenges brought by the Great Resignation in hospitality?

Hotel companies seem to be investing more in technology that directly impacts talent-related challenges. However, they are still behind other industries in regard to investment allocation.

Hotel companies are starting to fund the referred technologies and DEB strategies as part of their expansive talent management focus. Larger hotel companies are more open to it and are already implementing strategies, while smaller companies still focus a lot on traditional recruitment options.

According to the data collected, online training was the most popular method among respondents. Therefore, technology-based training is being used, followed by in-class and on-the-job training. Although still not very significant, virtual reality training was also used by 7,4% of the respondents, showing evidence of the increasing implementation of innovative training technology by the hotel sector.

Regarding online training, while basic learning management systems were predominantly used, more advanced platforms such as social learning platforms and adaptive learning were also used

for employee training, further showing companies' increasing implementation of technology-based training.

Additionally, hotels surveyed indicate investing in automation technologies, betting on innovation, and fighting financial and human resources obstacles. According to the data collected, hotels use automation technologies to streamline workload. It seems to tackle employee retention by decreasing workload, improving work-life balance, and increasing employee commitment.

From a leadership research context, the focus of the interviews was not on which technologies but instead on the role of leadership in successfully implementing new technologies and positively influencing their adoption. Still, the interviewees' insights suggest that the focus can often be on implementing the latest technologies available rather than considering the specific business needs and challenges first. In this sense, if one of the central business challenges is attracting and retaining talent, that may not be one of the first considerations when planning new technology rollouts.

c) Were these investments successful?

From the context of digital employer branding, the success of the strategies varies, with several companies reporting positive outcomes. The combination of both digital and traditional strategies proved to be the best choice. A significant increase in curriculums per job post was identified since the implementation of digital strategies, as well as more substantial engagement with the current workforce through the execution of storytelling with real employee stories.

Technology-based training was proven to potentially increase training engagement and employee's perceptions of organizational investment in their development and future career growth, factors that are negatively correlated with employees' turnover intentions. However, it was not possible to conclude that mainly using technology-based training could lead to higher

training satisfaction. Therefore, for successful implementation a hybrid approach to training is recommended.

Regarding automation technologies, challenges brought or worsened by the Great Resignation seem to be being addressed and partially mitigated, as a positive correlation between automation technology, workload, work-life balance, and employee commitment was identified.

From the context of leadership, the insights showed that implemented technologies' success is sometimes somewhat subjective. A relatively poor job of measuring success was identified. While opinions on this topic vary, there was a consensus that improvements can be made regarding accurately measuring the success of technology implementation. This practice needs a higher rigor to represent the actual impact generated.

d) Reasons for success: do they align with theoretical studies on each topic?

The successes described by implementing digital employer branding strategies, in the interviewed companies, are consistent with the theoretical studies on the topic. As seen in the interview results, strategies related to integrating employees within the campaigns, leveraging technologies for a more targeted messaging, and fostering a culture of internal recognition are aligned with the studies stating that a strong employer brand can significantly impact attraction, and engagement. The continuous and authentic storytelling content was emphasized on both sides (theory and real cases). The literature also states that there is a need for both external and internal approaches to employer branding. Although the study understood that digital employer branding helps with attraction and engagement, the retention aspect was not fully and homogenously agreed upon.

According to the data collected, training engagement is positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with turnover intentions, relations that are enhanced by the use of technology-based training as it increases employees' training engagement. Furthermore, the use of technology-based training enhances employees' perceptions of

organizational investment in their development and future career growth, which can lead to employees acting reciprocally and, therefore, reduced turnover intentions. These factors align with theoretical studies regarding training programs that show that they are essential in increasing job satisfaction and reducing turnover intentions, as well as with Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005).

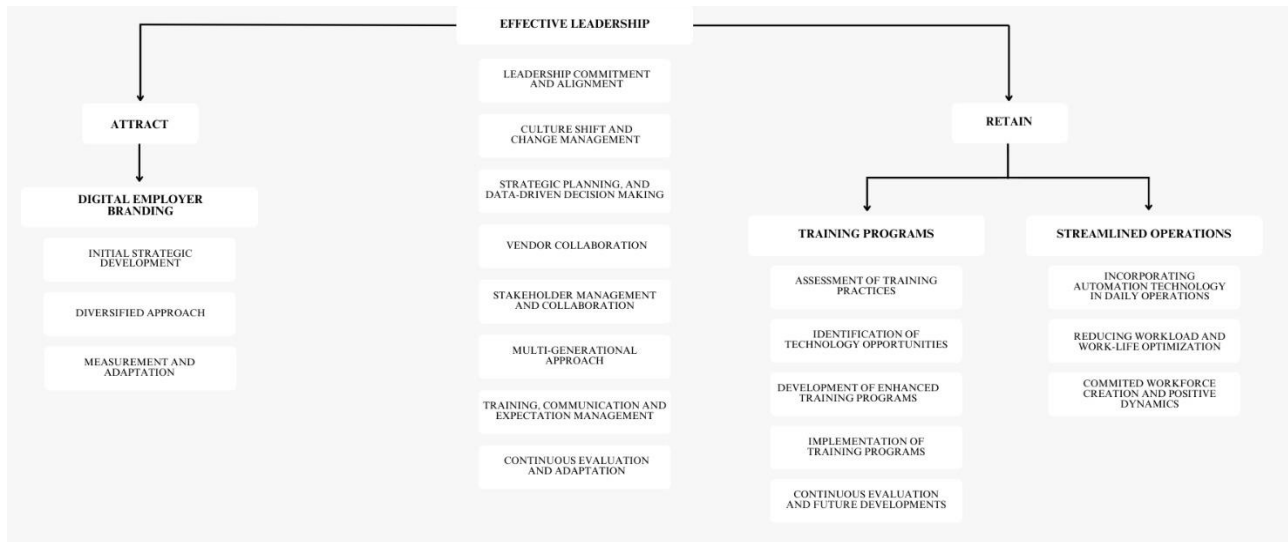
The insights obtained regarding automation technology affirm that the strategic implementation of such technologies has successfully streamlined operational workload by enhancing efficiency, improving employees' work-life balance, and fostering a more committed workforce, which aligns with and supports the literature on this topic. The data also indicates a positive reception of technology among at least some survey respondents and an openness to future technological advancements, suggesting a cycle of continuous improvement and innovation within the hotel industry.

Generally, the main reasons for successfully implementing and adopting technologies align with theoretical studies and literature on leadership to guide the change. The challenge remains in the thoroughness and consistency in which they are applied in real-life settings and operational contexts, and this will also highly depend on the type of technologies being implemented and the challenges they intend to address.

8 Framework Proposal

Given the evident challenges related to the attractiveness of the hotel industry, this chapter proposes a comprehensive framework, drawing from collective and individual research efforts, aiming to facilitate technology adoption within the hotel sector applied to the context of navigating the challenges heightened by the Great Resignation. The following figure visually represents the framework.

Figure 1: Proposed Framework



The framework follows four main chapters, namely:

1. Effective Leadership for Successful Technology Adoption
2. Attracting and Engaging Talent through Digital Employer Branding
3. Training Programs to Improve Talent Retention
4. Leveraging Automation Technologies for Streamlined Operations

Inside each chapter, steps are highlighted to help guide the successful execution of each one.

8.1 Effective Leadership for Successful Technology Adoption

The role of leadership has been identified and demonstrated as central to the success of any technology implementation and adoption, as navigating the digital transformation within the hotel sector demands more than the mere integration of cutting-edge systems, but robust and informed leadership teams to steer the course toward effective technological implementation successfully. Effective leadership should launch and guide change while inspiring the workforce to embrace technological innovations.

In this sense, engaging capable leadership through the adoption and implementation journey is a crucial investment and a success enabler.

The following steps were formulated to better guide leaders in achieving this success.

Step 1: Leadership Commitment and Alignment

Throughout the technology adoption and implementation process, organizations should aim to establish a cross-level alignment between all stakeholders: senior, corporate, and property leadership, owners, managers, and technology vendors.

Step 2: Cultural Shift and Change Management

Any successful technological advancement needs a fostered culture of innovation, openness, and adaptability toward inherent change. The “champion approach” through the identification and empowerment of key internal stakeholders (especially at the levels that will be using the new technology) to positively drive and sustain technological change is key for this cultural shift, as it encourages the workforce to follow and adapt to change confidently. Resistance will likely always occur, and transparent communication strategies to recognize and mitigate it are crucial across all organizational levels. Furthermore, promoting a culture that sees failure as an opportunity for learning and continuous improvement may further reduce resistance to change and enable adaptive growth based on insights from successes and failures.

Step 3: Strategic Planning and Data-Driven Decision-Making

Considering the likelihood of a continuous increase in the pace of change, strategic road mapping is advised. Balancing long-term strategic plans with adaptable short-term implementation strategies lowers the chances of business disruption and may help mitigate resistance to change without compromising innovation and a competitive edge.

Leveraging data-based insights to make informed decisions in technology investments is a necessity, both for accuracy in appropriately adjusting the solutions to each business context, as well as to mitigate resistance.

Step 4: Vendor Collaboration and Technology Selection

While the relevance and importance of unbiased vendor decisions can be discussed, establishing strategic partnerships with technology vendors may facilitate the development of tailored solutions that cater directly to specific business objectives and needs, adaptability, and scalability. Rigorous assessments should be carried out to mitigate biased decisions.

Step 5: Stakeholder Management and Collaboration

Hotels are collaborative ecosystems and should, therefore, be managed as such, especially regarding technology implementation, where systems should be connected and communicate across all parts of the business. Facilitating collaborative relationships among brands, owners, management organizations, properties, technology vendors, and other stakeholders will likely foster this and ensure seamless implementation.

Step 6: Multi-Generational Approach

Hotels have different profiles of guests and employees and should offer an inclusive technological approach. Incorporating diverse age group perspectives helps bridge digital literacy gaps and meet varied expectations. If possible, establishing a multi-generational support team can further mitigate resistance to change as it allows more employees to feel involved and understood in the different ways they approach technology.

Step 7: Training, Communication, and Expectation Management

Clear, all-level, transparent communication has been established as decisive in the success of any technology implementation. Still, early communication may further aid this success as hotel business operations are demanding and intense. Providing knowledge of change before the implementation may support operational teams in getting used to change and providing timely operations adjustments to accommodate this change. Expectation alignment is also essential and should be done across all organizational tiers. Gathering this feedback and input from the internal end user is a great practice to maximize expectation alignment. Finally, while most

organizations will provide training for new tools, not all organizations customize and adapt this training to their property-level reality. Customized training programs for varying digital literacy levels empower staff to learn to use new tools effectively.

Step 8: Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation

As with any strategy deployed, establishing continuous reporting, monitoring, and measurement mechanisms is fundamental to assessing its success. This is true for any technology adoption and will enable continuous improvement and adaptation based on real-time insights and feedback loops through constant evaluation.

8.2 Attracting and Engaging Talent through Digital Employer Branding

To build a successful company, one of the starting and most essential points is to have the right people working for it. The right employees understand the company deeply, stand for its values and find satisfaction in their workplace. In exchange, they offer loyalty and exceptional performance, ultimately contributing to the firm's success in the long run. However, the initial challenge is knowing how to find and attract the right talent from a sea of job seekers. It takes creative and effective strategies to navigate the complexities of the job market and attract the right talent for a company. In this study, Digital Employer Branding was proven to be an effective and powerful tool to address this challenge. The following steps provide a targeted list of considerations companies should account for when starting their DEB strategies.

Step 1: Initial Strategic Development

The first step starts with developing the clear goals and objectives a company wants to achieve. Defining the profile of the candidates they want, reflecting on the company's culture and benefits provided, and comparing them to the ones offered by other firms within the same market. The goal will be to give the best opportunities compared to the competition's. After this, authentic and truthful storytelling needs to be created, with a strong Employer Value Proposition to differentiate the brand and show the company culture in an evident and enticing way to

potential candidates. This narrative must be captivating and customized according to each market, considering local culture, expectations, and talent pool characteristics - acknowledging that what works in one region may not work in another. After the strategy is created and aligned, the company can start researching digital platforms to which the strategy can be applied based on the target demographics, budget, and defined goals. The research showed that in the hotel sector, LinkedIn was a better fit for senior roles, Instagram and TikTok for younger talent, and mass-market job platforms for operational positions.

Step 2: Diversified Approach

After the platforms are chosen, the activation part of the process starts, where the human resources team, in alignment with the marketing team, create compelling content that demonstrates the available professional development opportunities, showcases real employee stories, celebration of achievements, and highlights, in the best way possible, the value of working for that unique company. Besides this, from the analysis done in this study, only having a presence on digital platforms is not enough. An integrated approach is needed by combining digital employer branding strategies with traditional recruitment methods, such as continuous appearances at job fairs and employee referral methods (standard in other industries), building a sustainable and diverse talent pipeline for both present and future needs. In addition to this, it was also stated that encouraging leaders and staff members to engage and maintain a presence on digital platforms was efficient and enhanced the company's efforts.

Step 3: Measurement and Adaptation

Lastly, after the implementation, there is a need for constant measuring, analysis, and monitoring of the content and strategies applied since there might be a need for refinement or changes. Many digital platforms already offer access to various analytics tools, simplifying processes and offering essential insights to make faster data-driven decisions on metrics such as click-through rates, drop-off rates, and actual cost-per-hire of each campaign (previously

talked about and very important to evaluate the success of a DEB strategy). In addition, there is also a need to stay up to date on the latest developments and emerging HR trends, which might revolutionize the way companies present themselves.

Although the framework can help companies thrive in the market if followed, during the analysis, some considerations companies need to be aware of were also brought up, mainly:

- The need to reshape and train HR teams on digital strategies
- Maintain brand coherence across different channels and hotels
- Expensive technological tools and need for attention to budget allocation

If these challenges are considered, and the framework's steps are taken into consideration, hospitality professionals can ensure that their Employer Branding strategies stand out in a competitive talent market. However, the new generation of workers relies on a new set of benefits and needs of great importance to them when choosing their next place to work, such as better salaries, work-life balance, flexible and hybrid work style, and support of diversity, equity, and inclusion, that also need to be taken into consideration by companies.

8.3 Training Programs to Improve Talent Retention

To fight the Great Resignation, training programs can act as a partial solution to the problem. By enhancing employees' skills and knowledge and providing the tools for employee career development and growth, training programs can help increase employees' job satisfaction and reduce their turnover intentions.

Technology-based training can further help solve this problem, as this type of training presents several benefits in addition to traditional training methods and increases employee engagement during training sessions.

Following, a five-step approach supports the strategic implementation of training programs, also including technology-based training.

Step 1: Assessment of Current Training Practices

The first step to leverage training programs is to assess how current training programs are being developed in the company. Having the as-is perspective of training programs is crucial to propose changes.

Some variables that can be assessed are the frequency and number of training sessions employees attended, the topics covered by training and possible gaps existing in the current programs, the type of training utilized to provide training sessions (online, in-class, VR training, on-the-job training) and the digital platforms used for online training, if any.

It is also important to measure the current levels of employees' training engagement and training satisfaction as these indicators can provide insights for training program improvement. Gathering employee data regarding their perceptions of current training programs attended is also crucial to understand potential problems or gaps that employees identify in training programs regarding their content or delivery method and to collect their suggestions for improvement. Employee perceptions regarding the several benefits that different digital platforms and technologies can offer during training (ex. flexibility, collaboration, personalization) should also be assessed during this phase.

Step 2: Identification of Technology Opportunities

After conducting a comprehensive analysis of the current state of training programs, collecting employees' suggestions regarding training programs, and how employees value the benefits each type of training platform can provide, companies should evaluate which type of technology-based training and/or digital platforms (VR training, LMS, Social learning platforms, Adaptive learning platforms, etc.) are aligned with suggestions proposed, gaps and problems identified and with the strategic vision of the company. Factors such as technology providers, costs of hardware and software, necessary integrations with company systems and infrastructure capacity must be accounted for in order for the implementation of technology-

based training to have a positive ROI estimation. This estimation, however, must account the potential impact technology-based training can have on job satisfaction, training engagement and reduced employee turnover intentions.

Step 3: Development of Enhanced Training Programs

After choosing which platforms are the most appropriate according to the criteria mentioned in the previous step, the design of training content and delivery must be done. HR teams must create training programs according to the diverse employee needs, focusing on areas that directly impact their day-to-day operations, but also on their personal development. Employees of hotel companies that receive training by their company report lack of autonomy choosing the topics of the training sessions they attend. The personalization of the learning path either by collecting suggestions of training topics from employees, creating a tailored training program for each employee according to their interests, needs and goals or using more advanced adaptive learning platforms to do it can be leveraged to potentially increase training engagement and effectiveness. Assessing this topic in the first step is important as it allows HR teams to understand the extent to which personalization of training programs is valued by company employees.

The creation of high-quality tailored programs that increase employee training engagement and satisfaction, using technology-based training potential is the ultimate goal of this step.

In this step it is also important to have in consideration that as presented in the research, a hybrid approach to training is recommended to cover the potential drawbacks of technology implementation that cannot be so effective as other training methods for some training topics.

Step 4: Implementation of Training Programs

After the design and plan of training programs, the rollout-phase must begin. The implementation of new technology-enhanced training programs must be done gradually, ensuring that proper briefing and initial training sessions are provided to employees on how to

utilize the new training platforms effectively. It is relevant, not only in this phase, but particularly in this one, that leadership and change management programs are deployed to overcome employees' natural resistance to change.

Step 5: Continuous Evaluation and Future Development

During and after the rollout-phase, feedback regarding the training experience, content, and quality of training as well as the effectiveness, engagement and satisfaction levels with the new training methods should be continuously monitored and adjustments made accordingly.

The impact of technology-based training on skills and employee development and on how employees perceive organizational support for their development and career growth must also be measured frequently as these are indicators associated to higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. KPIs for the variables mentioned above must be defined.

Additionally, using these metrics to continuously refine and adapt training strategies, addressing any identified limitations or gaps is crucial for the success of technology-based training implementation in the long-term. Also, as technology is constantly evolving, identifying further possible technological implementations is also very relevant.

As an end note for this five-step approach, it is important to state that leadership must be aligned with technology implementation and change management programs must be created accordingly. The existence of actual career growth opportunities and promotions resulting from internal employee development through training programs is also vital for employees to perceive training programs as effective and crucial for employee advancement.

8.4 Leveraging Automation Technologies for Streamlined Operations

Operational efficiency and employee commitment play a crucial role in shaping the success of the industry. Automation technology offers opportunities to streamline operations and reduce repetitive and monotonous workload, which enhances employee's work-life balance and their commitment towards the companies they work for.

The following steps help guide the strategic implementation of automation technology to streamline operations.

Step 1: Incorporating Strategic Automation Technology into Daily Operations

This step has the main objective of enhancing operations efficiency. Firstly, critical operational areas should be identified by assessing which departments are the most important for the healthy functioning of the property. Aligned with this, tasks which can be streamlined should be pointed out. Following is the type of technology that will be implemented, as there is an array of existing solutions. To ensure that the implementation of these technologies is helpful in streamlining operations, user friendly and intuitive solutions should be prioritized. This will ensure a smooth transition and employees will more likely not be an obstacle to this implementation.

Step 2: Reducing Workload and Work-Life Optimization

This step has the main objective of leveraging the implemented automation technology, to optimize workload and employee's work-life balance. To optimize workload, employees should properly get used and adapt to the implemented technologies, through proper training. Together with this, monitoring the impact of automation technology implementation is pivotal, so it is possible to measure quantitatively the improvement of workload and work-life balance. For this, key performance indicators are a great solution. Amongst different objectives, implementation of automation technology visions an improved work-life balance for employees. Thus, as workload is expected to decrease, employees should be encouraged by their managers/supervisors to have an improved work-life balance. Potentially, automation technology will enable hotels to offer flexible schedules, where employees will have greater control over their working hours. It is important to consider that automation technology itself is not the solution, but part of the solution.

Step 3: Creating a Committed Workforce and Positive Organizational Dynamics

This last step has the main objective of fostering a positive organizational dynamic or a positive atmosphere in the organization and assure employee's commitment with automation technology implementation. In this last step, assuming that implementation of automation technology was successful, and as consequence, workload and employee's work-life balance was positively impacted, hotels should maintain a constant feedback relation with the users of these automation technologies to know how commitment of employees is increasing throughout time, similarly to step "workload and work-life balance", where constant monitoring is necessary. KPIs such as employee turnover ratio in departments where automation technology should be measured. Additionally to reducing workload and improving work-life balance, automation technology can also improve guest satisfaction scores and increase revenues. Thus, hotels could improve benefits and bonuses of operational employees, since by streamlining workload, it is easier to measure several operational KPIs (Guest satisfaction index, upselling, cross selling, productivity, amongst others). With this, hotels will be maximizing employee commitment.

9 Conclusion

Technology offers countless opportunities to address pressing challenges and guide progress. Aiming to facilitate technology adoption within the hotel sector to better navigate the challenges heightened by the Great Resignation and the low attractiveness of the industry found both in literature and in this research's analysis, this study proposed a comprehensive framework that can be used by Westmont Hospitality Group and other industry players to leverage technology for the attraction, engagement, and retention of talent within hotels, particularly in the areas of digital employer branding, training programs, streamlining workload and leadership for successful technology adoption. This research concludes that the road to overcome talent-related challenges in the hotel sector goes beyond technological solutions, residing in the integrated synergy of people, processes, and technology, encompassing both technological

advancements and the fundamental human aspects intricate to the hospitality industry that drive this transformative journey.

10 Future Outlook

As technologies evolve, talent management strategies, mainly in the areas of attraction, retention, and engagement, will continue to advance as well.

The interviewees predict major changes on the topic of digital employer branding, with AI-driven customization and Big Data set to shape the way companies engage with prospective and current employees, allowing to target audiences that better fit their opportunities. In addition, monitoring of online reputation, real-time feedback and competitor benchmarking are expected to become automated processes and help increase brands' visibility.

Digital training will continue to evolve as well, with AI and VR tools enhancing the structure and implementation of training programs. A shift from traditional approaches to optimized personalization with higher levels of engagement will possibly happen, allowing for employees to further upskill and reskill themselves in a more efficient and streamlined way.

Hotels are yet to reach full capacity in automation and streamlining operations, but as technology evolves the opportunities to do so increase, improving not only the quality of the services provided to guests but also the quality of work delivered by employees.

In order for all of these new possibilities to succeed, efficient, strong, and visionary leadership is needed. Future leaders are expected to demonstrate agility, tech-savviness, and the ability to successfully foster and manage change, keeping an open mind when it comes to new implementations and the continuous evolvement of talent needs. A focus on a culture of innovation and improvement will be encouraged, with leadership being the bridge between technology and its employees, ensuring the overall satisfaction and well-being of all stakeholders.

11 Future Research Directions

Future research can focus on numerous avenues. Important areas to explore include new technologies that are still in an embryonic stage in the hotel sector such as the use of artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and Blockchain in talent management strategies. Further empirical studies are warranted to better understand the actual impact of specific technology implementation on talent attraction and retention.

12 Limitations

Parallel to the insights raised in this study, some limitations were identified. Firstly, the sample sizes are limited and do not fully represent the general population of the hotel industry. Moreover, the geographical location of respondents, different employee roles and degrees of responsibility, the potential bias of surveys and subjectivity of interviews further limit the interpretation of this study. As mentioned in the outlook, AI will be one of the main characters of future technological implementation in talent management and this study has not fully studied its current and future potential in addressing challenges worsened by the Great Resignation. Moreover, other technological solutions were not explored in depth, due to the vastness of the topic. Finally, as technology is rapidly evolving, this study will need to be complemented by further research to ensure its relevance throughout the years.

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14 Appendix

14.1 List of Abbreviations

AI Artificial Intelligence

DEB Digital Employer Branding

GDP Gross Domestic Product

HR Human Resources

IHG Intercontinental Hotel Group

IoT Internet of Things

JS Job Satisfaction

JOLTS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey

K-12 Kindergarten to Twelfth Grade

LMS Learning Management Systems

PMS Property Management System

ROI Return on Investment

RQ Research Question

TE Training Engagement

TI Turnover Intentions

TS Training Satisfaction

TSA Training Sessions Attended

UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organization

US United States

USD United States Dollar

VR Virtual Reality

WHG Westmont Hospitality Group

14.2 Overview of in-text figures

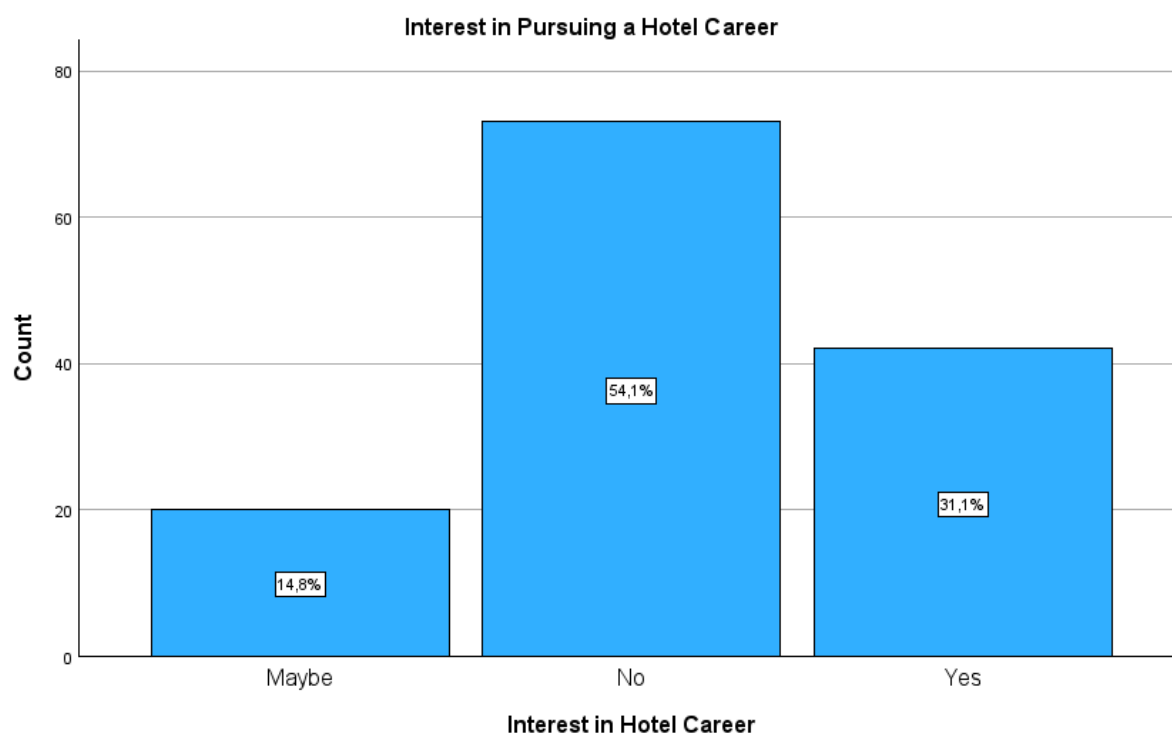
Figure 1: Proposed Framework

14.3 Tables and Figures

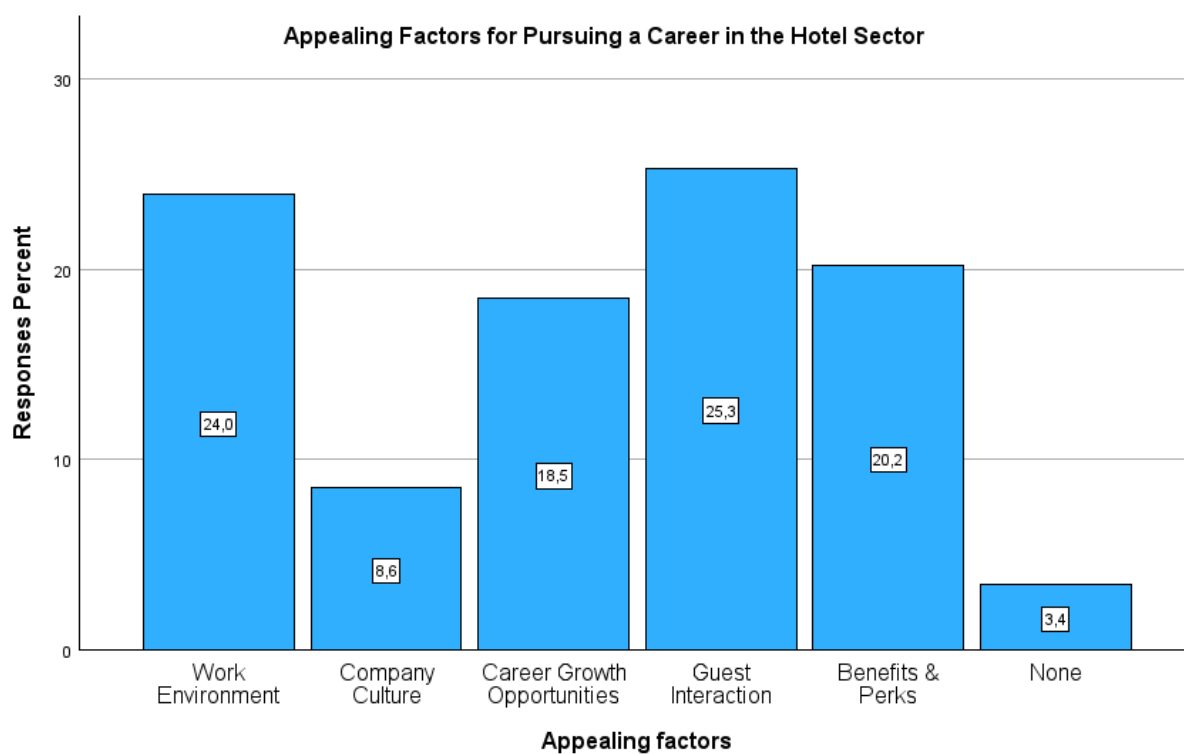
Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents - Attractiveness of the Sector

<i>Demographics of the Respondents</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Age group	
Under 18 years	3,0%
18-24 years	72,6%
25-34 years	18,5%
35-44 years	3,7%
45-54 years	1,5%
55-64 years	0,7%
Gender	
Male	52,6%
Female	47,4%
Education level	
Less than a high school diploma	0,7%
High school degree or equivalent	5,9%
Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)	43,7%
Post Graduation	0,7%
Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)	47,4%
Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)	1,5%
Hospitality Student	
Yes	61,5%
No	38,5%

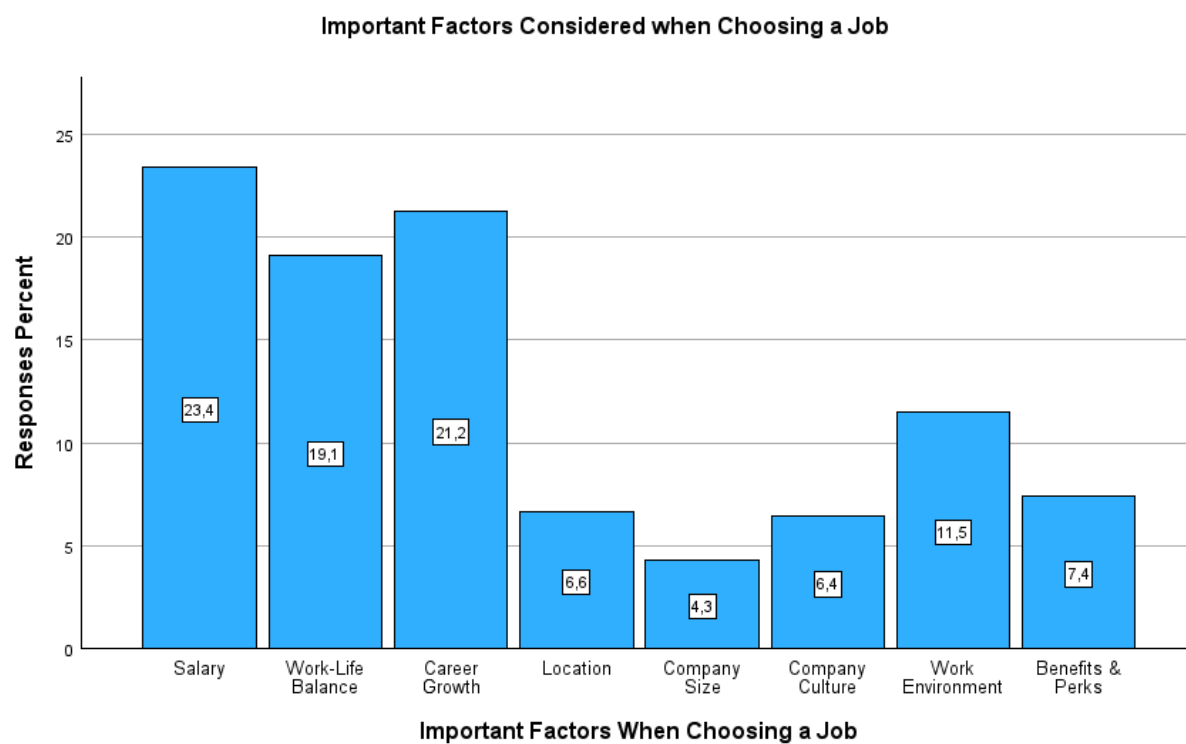
Graphic 1: *Interest in Pursuing a Hotel Career - Attractiveness of the Sector*



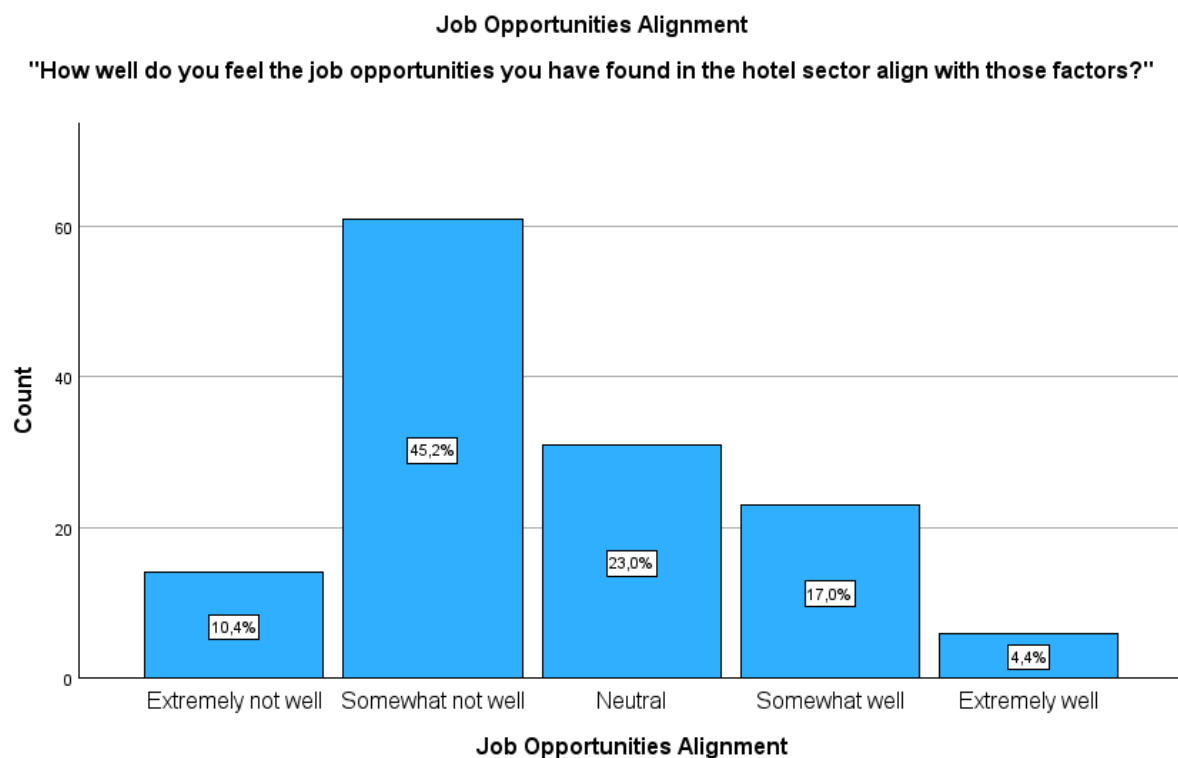
Graphic 2: *Appealing Factors for Pursuing a Career in the Hotel Sector - Attractiveness of the Sector*



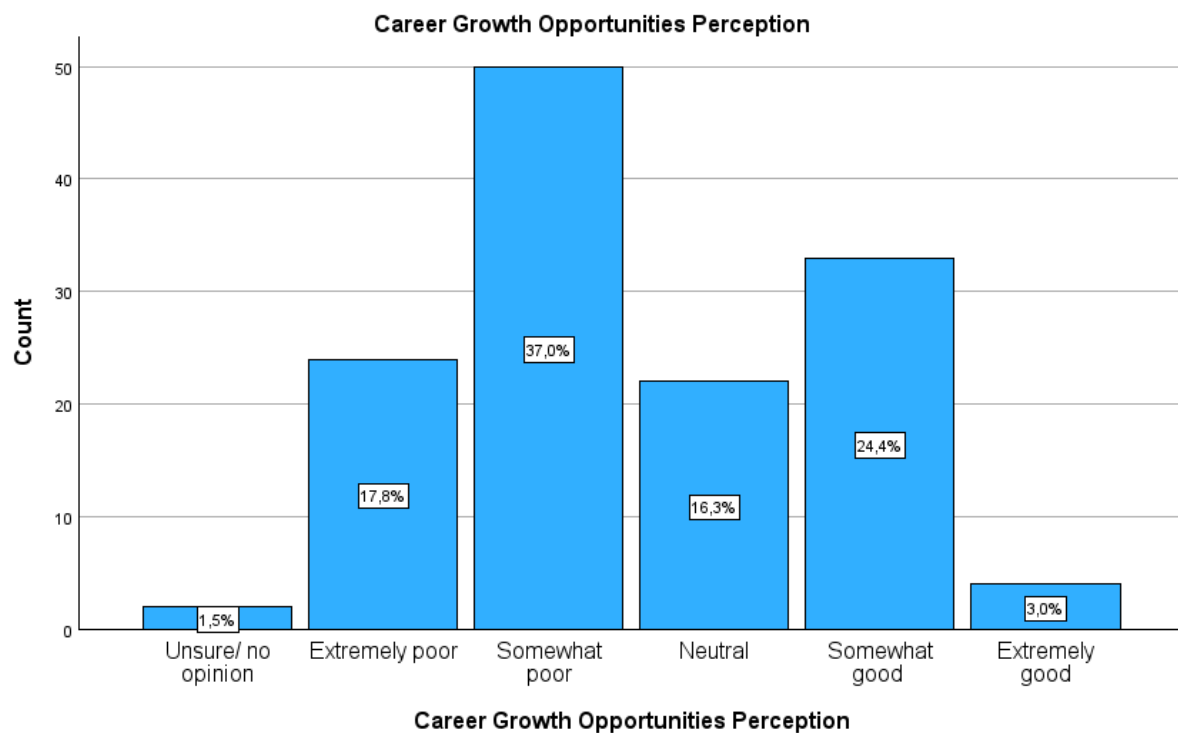
Graphic 3: Important Factors Considered when Choosing a Job - Attractiveness of the sector



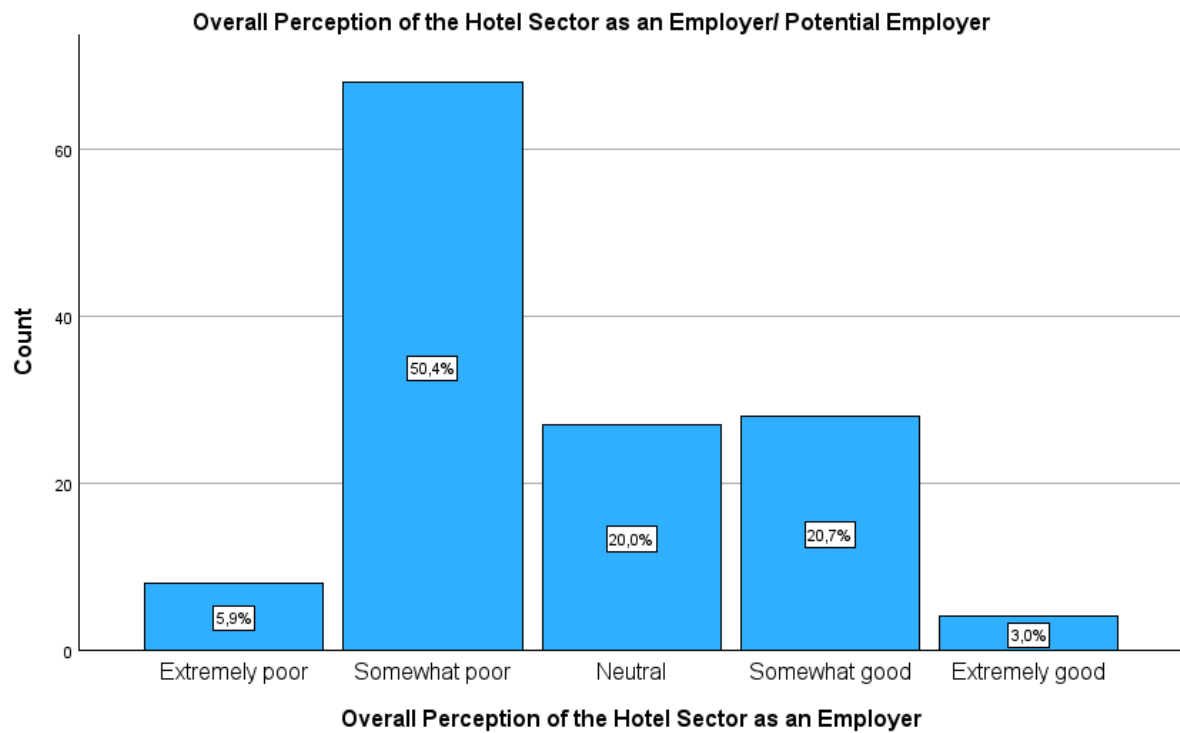
Graphic 4: Job Opportunities Alignment - Attractiveness of the Sector



Graphic 5: Career Growth Opportunities - Attractiveness of the Sector



Graphic 6: Overall Perception of the Hotel Sector - Attractiveness of the Sector



Graphic 7: Perceptions of what Strategies should Hotels Implement to Better Attract Talent

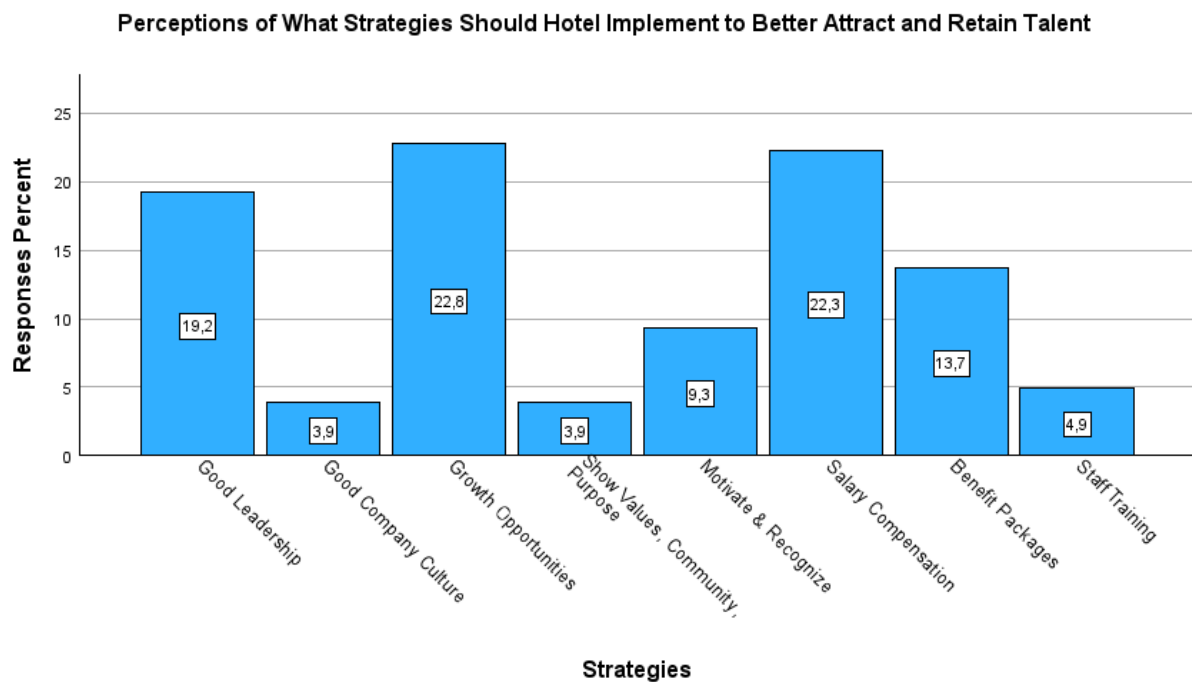


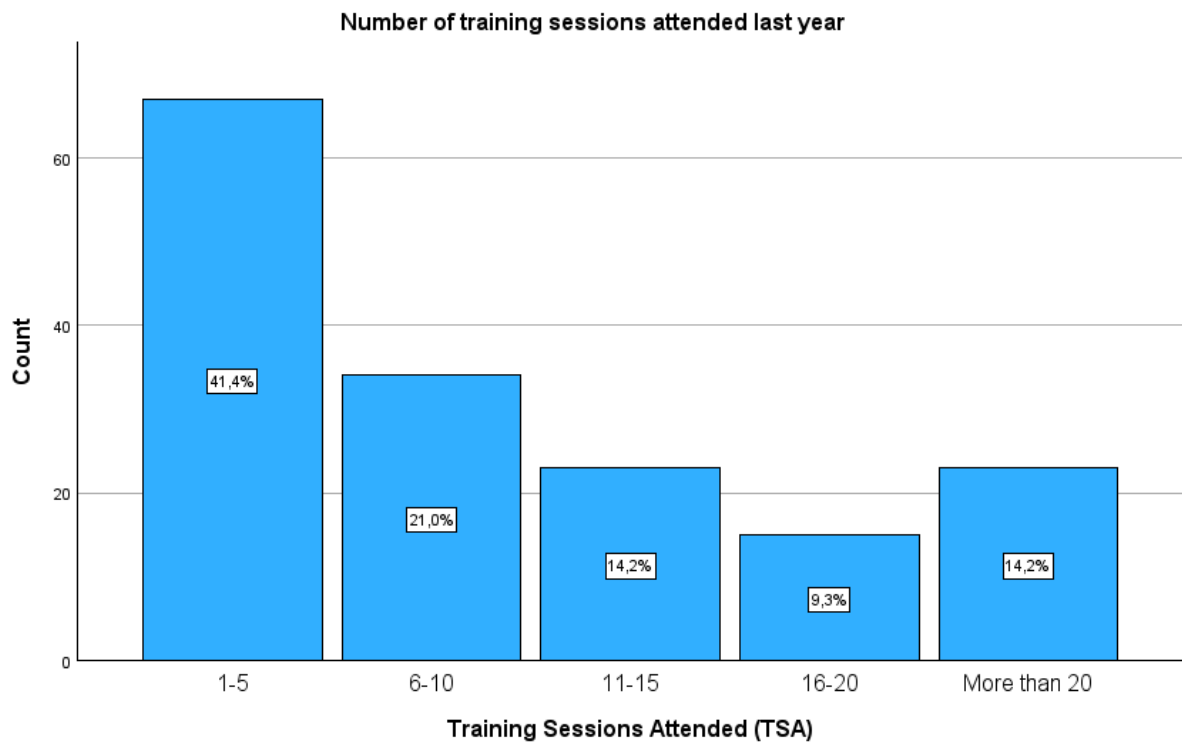
Table 2: Demographics of the Respondents - Training Programs

Demographics of the respondents	(%)
Type of hotel	
Branded hotel	85,2%
Independent hotel	14,8%
Gender	
Male	37,0%
Female	63,0%
Other/ I prefer not to say	0,0%
Age group	
Under 25 years	5,6%
25-34 years	19,1%
35-44 years	34,0%
45-54 years	29,6%
55 years or older	11,7%
Education level	
No formal schooling	0,0%
Elementary school	0,6%
Middle school	3,7%
High school	23,5%
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	48,8%
Master's degree or higher	23,5%
Role in the organization	
Operation staff	27,8%
Administrative backoffice roles	29,0%
Managerial roles	43,2%
Years of experience in the company	
Less than 1 year	17,3%
1-3 years	34,0%
4-6 years	10,5%
7-10 years	10,5%
11-15 years	10,5%
16-20 years	5,6%
More than 20 years	11,7%
Years of experience in the hotel industry	
Less than 1 year	0,0%
1-3 years	11,7%
4-6 years	4,9%
7-10 years	14,2%
11-15 years	17,3%
16-20 years	14,2%

More than 20 years

37,7%

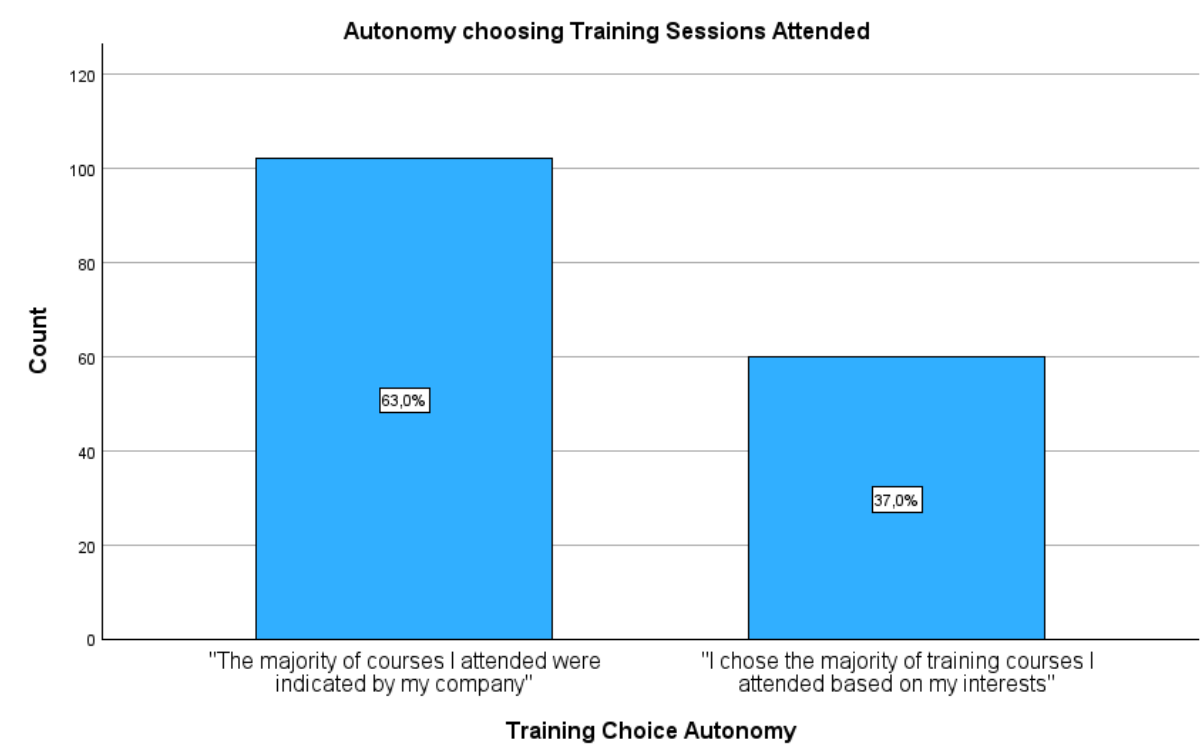
Graphic 8: *Number of Training Programs Attended Last Year - Training Programs*



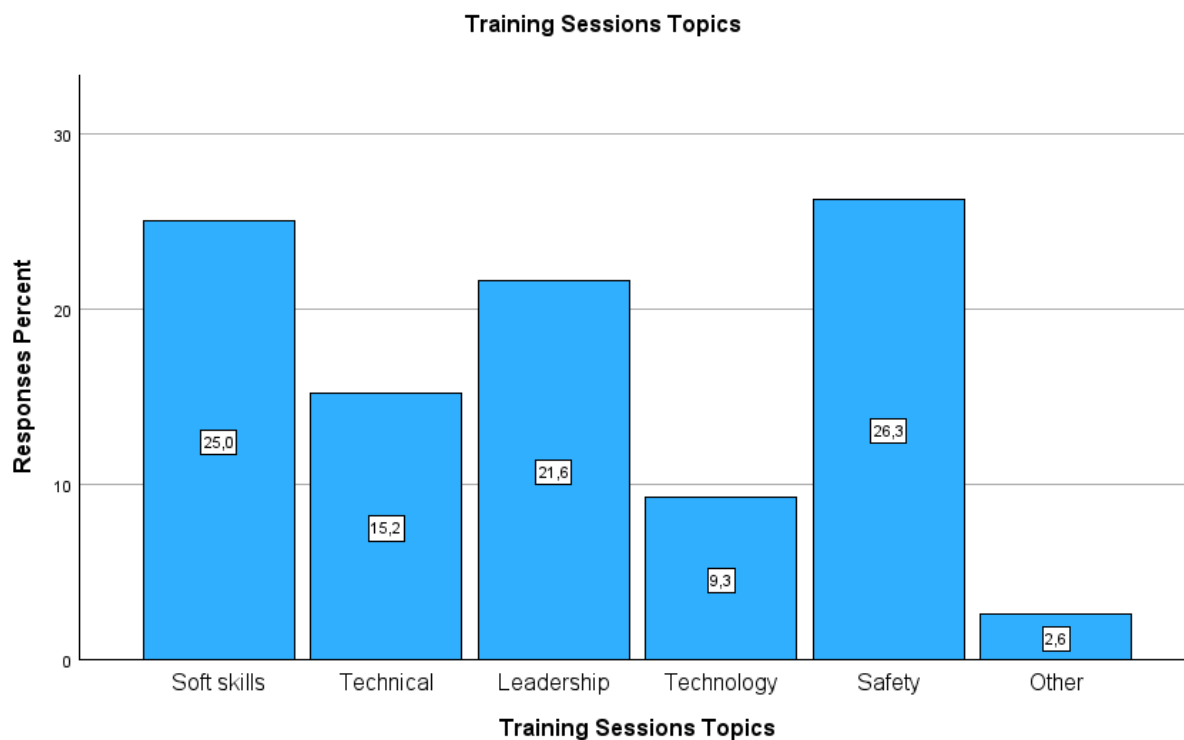
Graphic 9: Training Sessions Providers - Training Programs



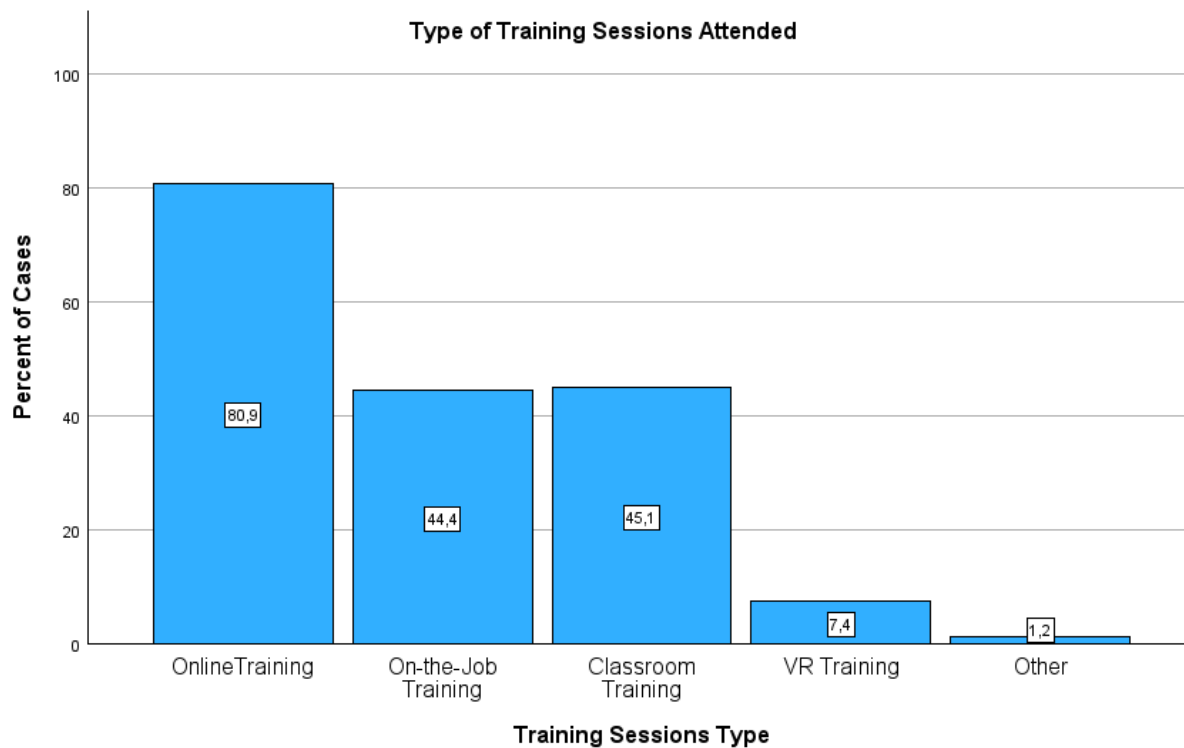
Graphic 10: Autonomy Choosing Training Sessions Attended



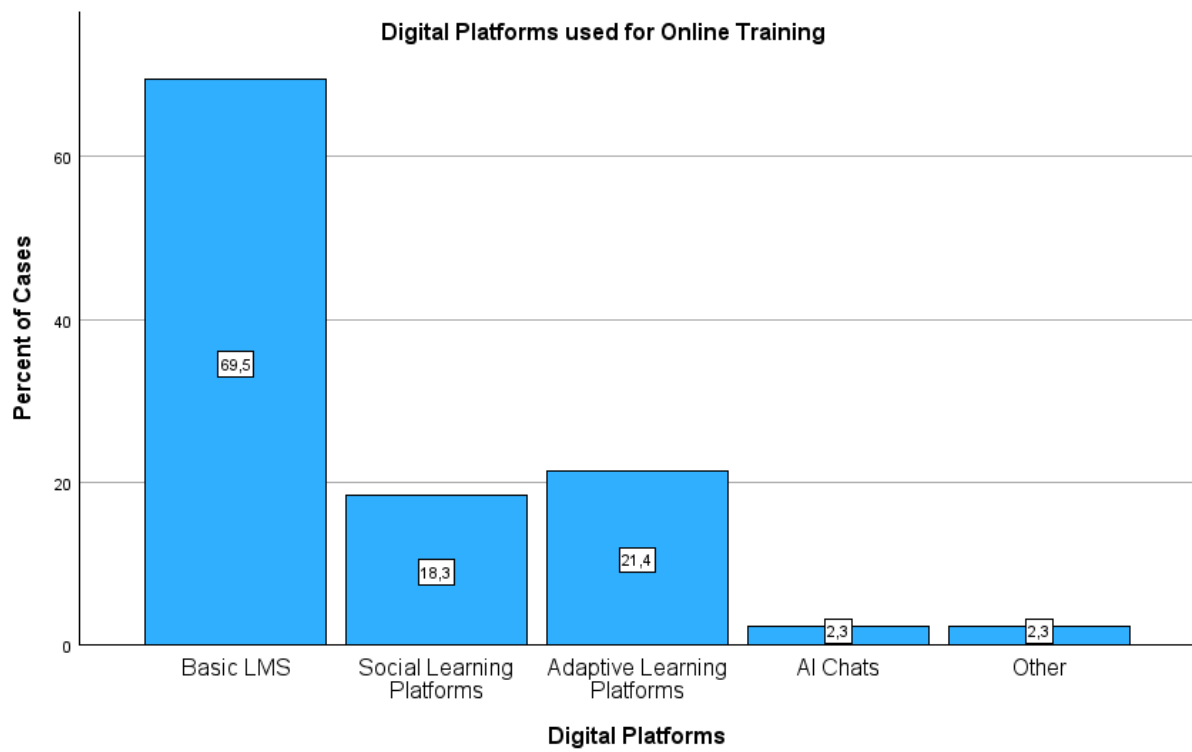
Graphic 11: Training Session Topics - Training Programs



Graphic 12: Type of Training Sessions Attended - Training Programs



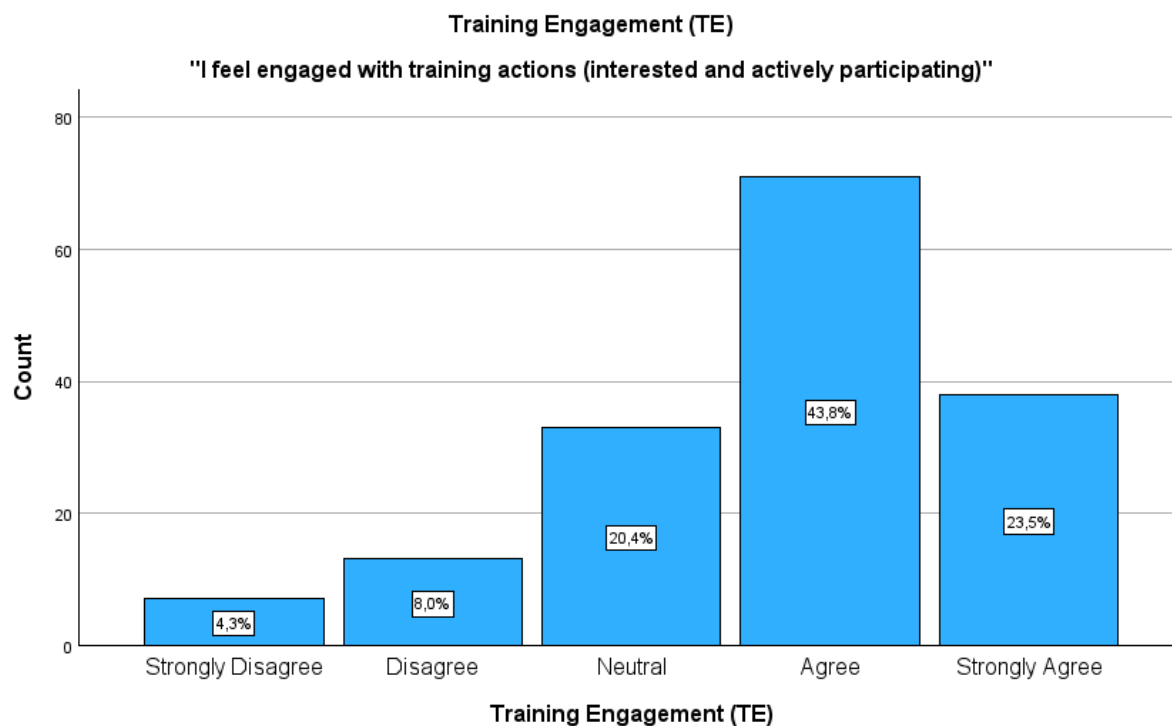
Graphic 13: Digital Platforms used for Online Training - Training Programs



Graphic 14: Training Satisfaction (TS) - Training Programs



Graphic 15: Training Engagement (TE) - Training Programs



Graphic 16: Perceived Organizational Support for Training - Training Programs

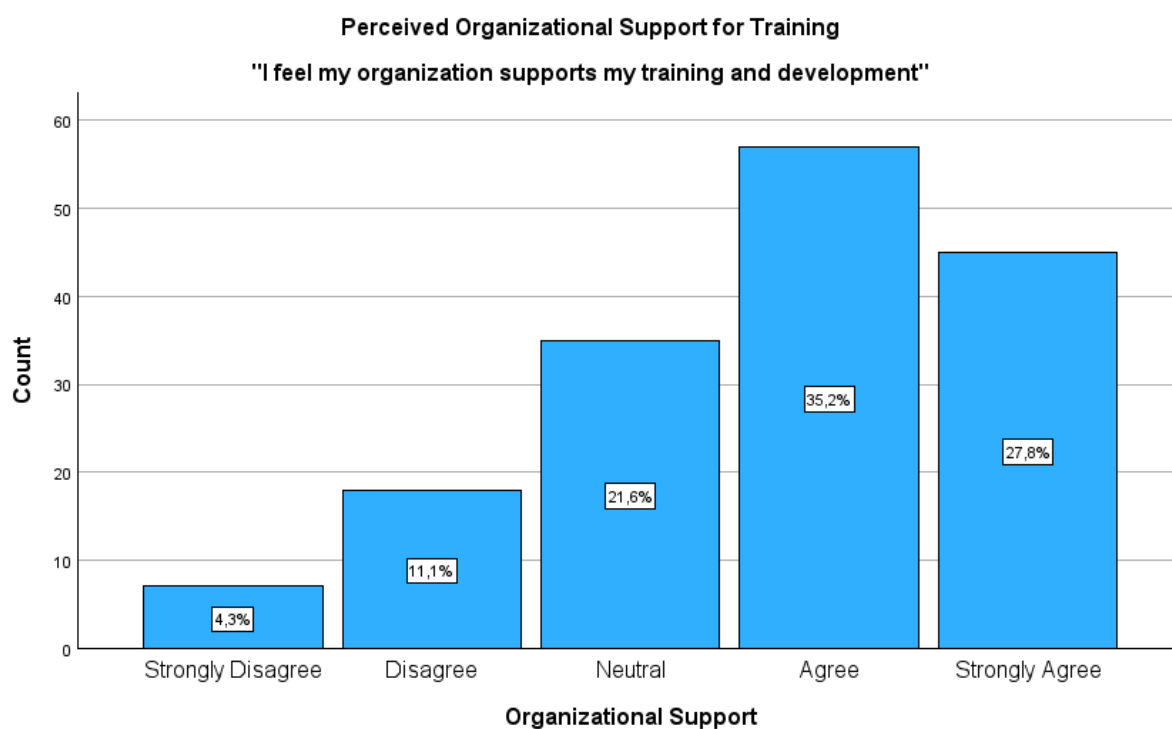
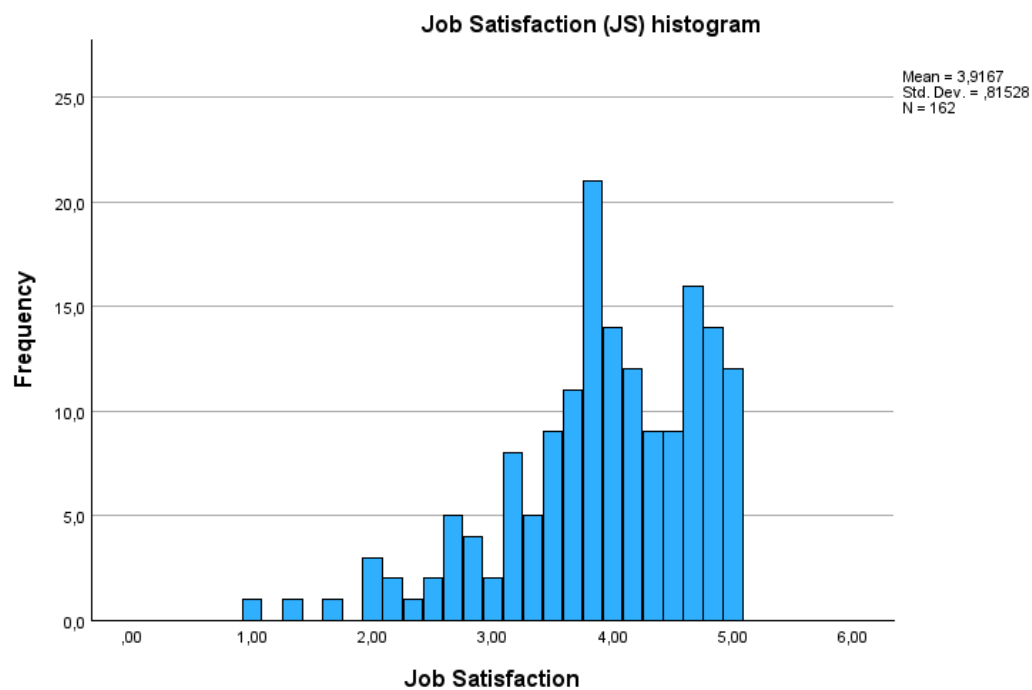


Table 3: Correlations Training Satisfaction, Training Engagement, Operational Support - Training Programs

Correlations			Organizational Support
Spearman's rho	Training Satisfaction (TS)	Correlation Coefficient	,827
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001
		N	162
	Training Engagement (TE)	Correlation Coefficient	,751
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001
		N	162

Graphic 17: Job Satisfaction (JS) - Training Programs



Graphic 18: Turnover Intention (TI) - Training Programs

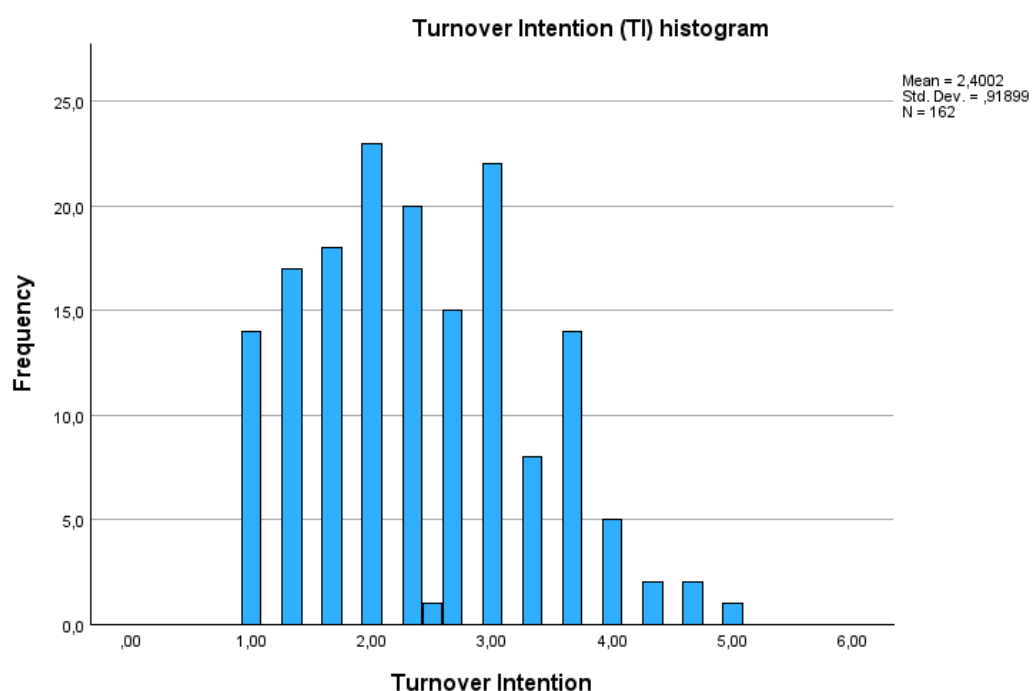
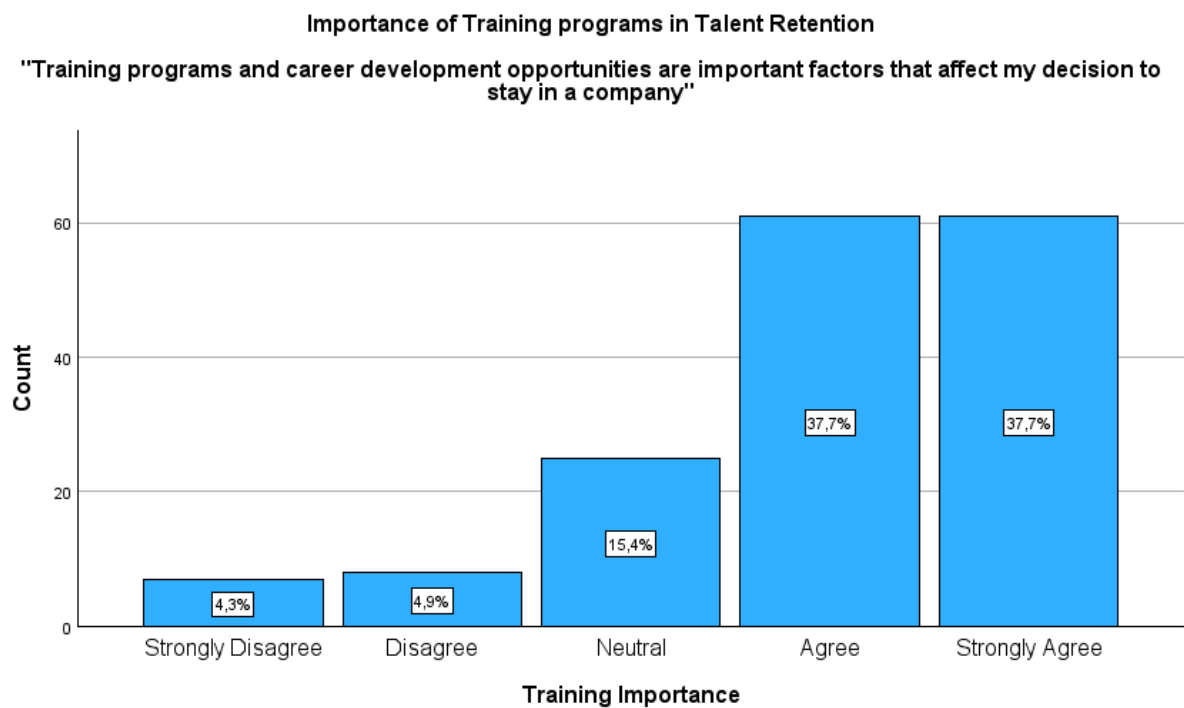


Table 4: Correlations: TSA, TS, TE, JS, TI - Training Programs

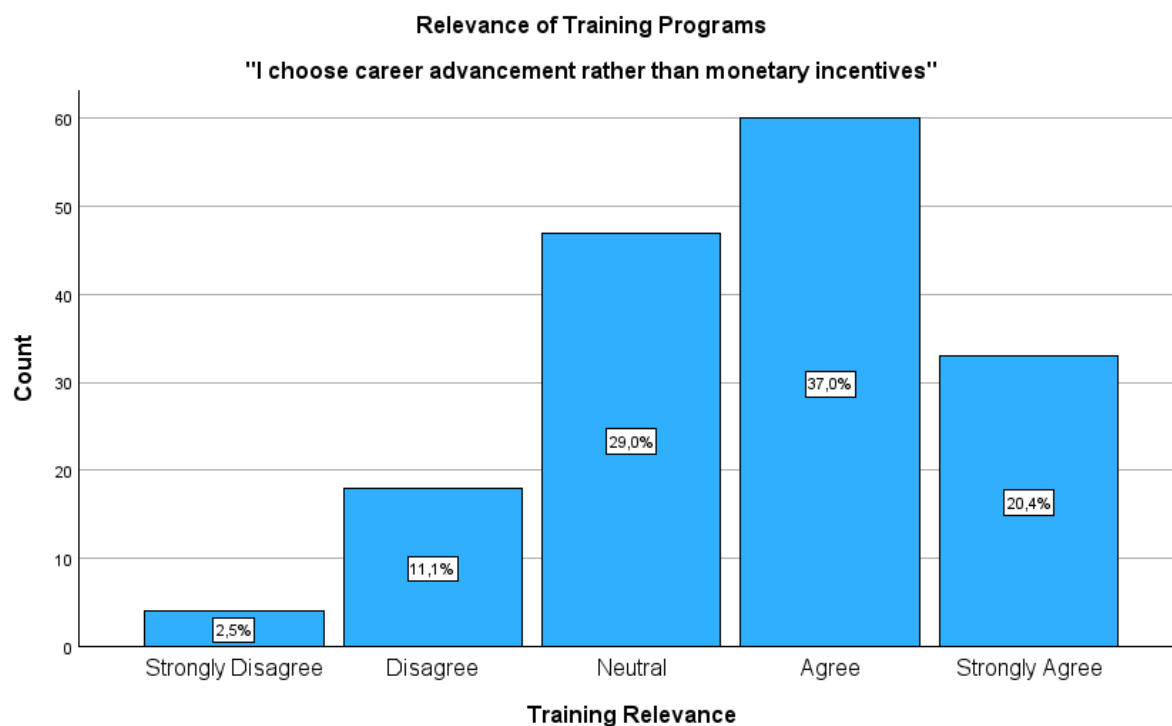
Correlations			Job Satisfaction (JS)	Turnover Intentions (TI)
Spearman's rho	Training Sessions Attended (TSA)	Correlation Coefficient	,148	-,252
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,060	,001
		N	162	162
	Training Satisfaction (TS)	Correlation Coefficient	,515	-,337
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001
		N	162	162
	TrainingEngagement (TE)	Correlation Coefficient	,517	-,305
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001
		N	162	162
	Job Satisfaction (JS)	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	-,485

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<,001
	N	162	162

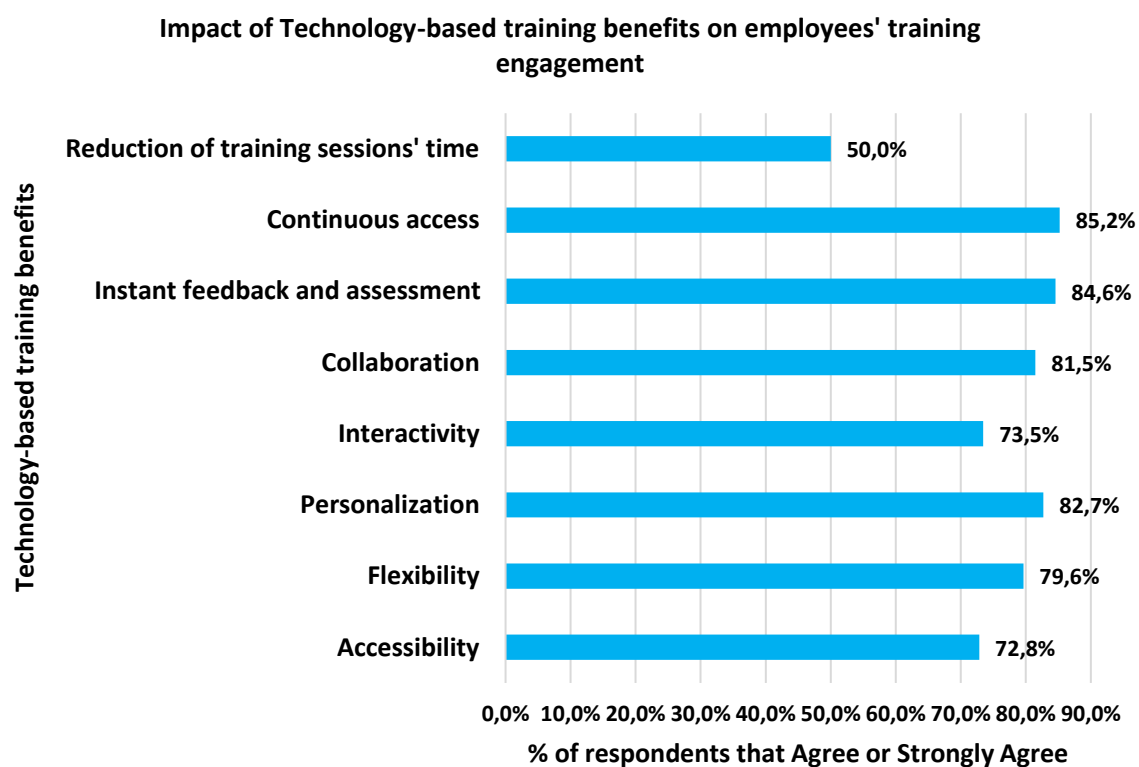
Graphic 19: Importance of Training Programs on Talent Retention - Training Programs



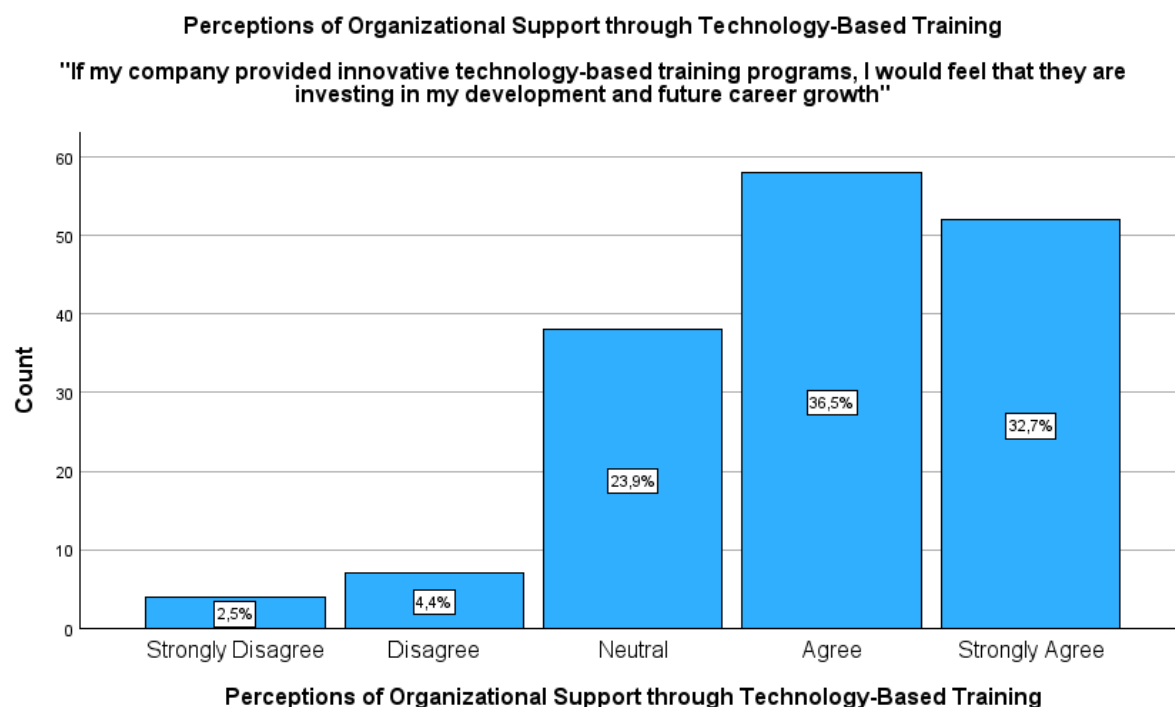
Graphic 20: Relevance of Training Programs - Training Programs



Graphic 21: Impact of Technology Based Training Benefits on TE - Training Programs



Graphic 22: *Perceptions of Organization Support through Technology-based Training - Training Programs*



Graphic 23: *Technology-based Training Satisfaction - Training Programs*

