

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:

Streamlining Operational Workload

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Abstract:

Talent-related challenges have long been inherent to the hotel industry, yet the absence of research exploring technology's impact on talent attraction and retention remains. Given the phenomenon of the Great Resignation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this study seeks to offer insights on how to leverage technology to navigate talent shortages, focusing particularly on the highly impacted hotel sector. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods incorporating interviews and surveys was chosen to investigate the impact of technology on this challenge. Results show that technology and its strategic implementation present great potential in addressing the attraction and retention of hotel employees.

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Keywords: Technology Adoption, Great Resignation, Talent Attraction, Talent Retention, Engagement, Automation, Employee Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention

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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 our 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 (Forbes 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 2021).

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).

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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.

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- 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

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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

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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,

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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)

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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 2018) 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.

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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 (Forbes 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 2012), able to reach higher numbers of potential applicants through several digital channels (Mičik 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 Forbes (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

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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

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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 Streamline Operational Workload with Automation Technology

6.1 Introduction

The hotel industry has experienced an important change, adopting technology to improve productivity and efficiency (Siguaw, Enz, and Namasivayam 2000). Over time, the integration of technology in hotel operations has proven to be beneficial in helping to manage the growing occupancies over the decades, excluding COVID-19. After the COVID-19 epidemic struck, several industries were impacted, including the hotel industry (Debata, Patnaik, and Mishra 2020).

6.1.1 Problem Statement

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the existing problem in the hotel industry of high employee turnover rates (Lai and Wong 2020) since talented people looked for other jobs in other industries that offered better conditions. As a result, the existing high turnover rates increased, which reduced the number of employees in the industry (Lai and Wong 2020). As a consequent situation, which is characterized by an increase in workload and stress levels among hotel employees (Wong et al. 2021), poses major problems regarding work-life balance and the level of commitment demonstrated by employees towards the companies they work for. Moreover, the Great Resignation has also reduced skill levels of hotel employees, as many past skilled employees of the industry have gained other skills to start working in other industries with better work conditions (Goh and Baum 2021).

6.1.2 Relevance of the Study

Traditionally, revenue growth and cost reduction (Ham, Kim, and Jeong 2005) have been the main reasons used to evaluate the adoption of automation technology in the hotel industry. However, by exploring how automation technology adoption might lessen the existing problem of high employee turnover, this research focuses on an important research gap. Existent literature has investigated various aspects such as work-life balance, workload, stress,

and employee commitment in the hotel industry, however, an identified gap exists, as automation technology on employee turnover intentions has not been investigated enough. This research aims to provide industry professionals with useful information by demonstrating that the use of automation technology to reduce workload is not limited to its financial benefits. Furthermore, it could be an essential strategy for retaining talent, by improving employee's work-life balance and their consequent commitment to the company they work for.

6.1.3 Objectives of the Research

The following objectives aim to guide the exploration of automation technology adoption in the hotel industry to identify and analyze its several impacts on workload and its consequent impact on talent retention in the hotel industry:

- Recognize the effect of automation technology on the workload of operational hotel departments.
- Evaluate how reducing operational workload through automation technology improves work-life balance.
- Demonstrate how better work-life balance increases the commitment of employees to the company they work for.

By following the above-mentioned objectives, it is pretended to answer the following research question: "To what extent does the utilization of technology to automate operational routine tasks impact the work-life balance of hospitality employees, and how does this influence their commitment to their roles and the organization?"

6.1.4 Structure of the Research

This research will have the following structure. Before anything, a review of the existing literature on topics such as technology in the hotel industry, and how workload and work-life balance are seen in the hotel industry will be developed. Following, the topics of technology adoption, workload, and work-life balance will be combined and studied. Lastly, literature about

the impact of work-life balance and employee commitment will be reviewed. After reviewing important literature about the topics that are being studied, the methodology will be presented, and it will be explained how this research plans to accomplish the objectives previously mentioned. Succeeding methodology, results, and discussion of the chosen method to collect data will be disclosed. Finally, containing final interpretations of results combined with the previous review of literature, and limitations of this study, is the conclusion of this research.

6.2 Literature Review

6.2.1 Technology Adoption in the Hotel Industry

In the hotel industry, it is pivotal to establish standard procedures and operations (Chathoth, 2007), to assure that there is consistency and provide an adequate service to guests. Processes and operations, although successful in preserving standards of quality and service, can frequently generate repetitiveness and exhaustion (Ivanov, Seyitoğlu, and Markova 2020) among hotel employees. In the past decades, the hotel industry has undertaken a process of technological adoption to combat these difficulties and change its operational procedures.

Historically, the hotel industry has been known to be behind in terms of technology adoption (Okumus 2017) when compared to other industries. Nevertheless, it is gradually adapting and incorporating diverse technological innovations, which have had a transformative impact on the hotel industry, presenting an extensive number of benefits. One of the benefits is the simplicity and optimization of hotel operations (Ivanov and Webster 2019). The utilization of automation technology enables the streamlining of repetitive and time-intensive tasks, leading to a considerable decrease in the workload of hotel employees. Consequently, this allows employees to have the opportunity to concentrate on activities that provide greater value to guests and prioritize their needs (Kokkinou and Cranage 2013).

Furthermore, the deployment of automation technology has been demonstrated to act as an enhancer of increased levels of production and efficiency (Liu and Hung 2022) within the hotel

industry. The implementation of automated technologies, such as check-in and check-out procedures, and room service requests has resulted in several advantages, including enhanced response times and decreased error rates (Foord and Gulland 2006). Consequently, these improvements have contributed to a better guest experience, which is more streamlined and effective. Other automation technologies such as guest applications have significantly enhanced the autonomy and customization options available to hotel guests, resulting in increased levels of guest satisfaction.

In short, the adoption of automation technology into the hotel industry is an ongoing progress that is transforming the industry through streamlining operational processes, increasing productivity and guest satisfaction. The ongoing evolution of technology is expected to play a crucial role in the hotel industry, where predictive and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) are already redefining processes, which significantly influence the way hotels deliver services and engage with their guests (Al-Hyari, Al-Smadi, and Weshah 2023).

6.2.2 Workload and Work-Life Balance in the Hotel Industry

Workload is defined as the tangible amount of energy that is consumed by individuals while carrying out their designated duties (Sheridan 2012). Within the hotel industry, this definition assumes particular significance, given that employees frequently struggle with a stressful workplace (Kusluvan et al. 2010) marked by numerous elements (e.g.: unanticipated engagements with guests, long and inflexible work schedules (e.g., evening and night shifts), repetitive operational tasks, and excessive workload).

The notion of work-life balance has been defined by Lazăr, Osoian, and Rațiu (2010) as the level of equilibrium between the amount of time and energy dedicated to professional and personal initiatives, to maintain a state of harmony in a person's life. However, work-life balance is often seen as poor by employees in the hotel industry (Wong and Ko 2009). This perception exists due to difficulties within the industry, such as workload which frequently

leads to extended and unexpected work schedules, that most likely include weekends and holidays (Ko 2020).

In the hotel industry, the impact of workload on work-life balance is a topic of critical importance. Staff shortage is an unsolved problem and therefore, those who remain in the industry do not have a choice, rather than assuming the tasks of those who left as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This significantly impacts their work-life balance, as the additional responsibility and time invested in their jobs, impacts their personal and family spheres, resulting in accumulated frustration (Peshave and Gujarathi 2014).

6.2.3 The Impact of Automation Technology on Workload and Work-Life Balance of Operational Hotel Employees

The critical issue of work-life balance is primarily caused by the stress (Mansour and Tremblay 2016) resulted from the intensive workload faced by employees, and as mentioned, the integration of automation technology into hotel operations presents the potential to solve this existing problem.

The possibility of revolutionizing the hotel industry's problems through the adoption of technology in operations involves the adoption of automation, which has been implemented consistently, as mentioned before, throughout the past years (Bharwani and Mathews 2021). Enhancement of productivity and guest satisfaction, alongside the reduction of work-related stress, serves as a potential solution for several problems, including poor work-life balance. The implementation of automation in hotel processes by streamlining operations and eliminating repetitive tasks has the capability of reducing the need for hotel employees to work overtime which positively impacts work-related stress (Tan et al. 2020) and work-life balance.

The Front Office department in hotels plays a crucial role as it is the central point of guest interactions and is pivotal for the overall impressions' guests have (Gorry and Westbrook 2011). Thus, this department will serve as a reference in this chapter. Despite its importance, front desk

employees typically experience stress at work, which is worsened by the repetitious nature of their tasks. The impact of exposure to guests, particularly those who express negative feelings, also contributes to employees' stress levels (Shani and Pizam 2009). However, technology implementation has the potential to automate routine tasks (González and Gidumal 2017) in the front office department and reduce work-related stress through fewer interactions. The potential of this technological intervention lies in its ability to improve efficiency and promote a higher work-life balance for Front Office employees.

The challenge of maintaining a work-life balance due to excessive workload extends beyond the Front Office department to other departments such as Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, and Maintenance (Moyeenudin and Anandan 2020), amongst others. The integration of technology in various domains is seen as a solution for optimizing operations and reducing the workload on employees (Ahmad and Scott 2019).

6.2.4 The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Commitment

A vital aspect of organizational environments is employee commitment. It can be defined by the alignment of an individual's objectives with those of the company. This alignment, according to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), shows how committed the employee is to the main goals of the organization and how they identify with them. This commitment includes the psychological condition that characterizes the interactions between workers and their employing companies in addition to being a measure of professional involvement (Meyer Allen 1991).

Existing literature continuously emphasizes how important work-life balance is for building commitment among employees. An important study by (Hutagalung, Soelton, and Octaviani 2020) shows a clear correlation between high work-life balance and high employee commitment. The results state that workers are more likely to identify with and put effort into accomplishing the objectives of the company when they feel a balance between

their work and personal lives. A correlation between dedication and work-life balance is especially important for professions that have demanding work conditions, such as hotel industry jobs (Dusek et al. 2014).

Within the hotel sector, Doherty (2004) highlights how important it is to improve work-life balance for employees to increase their loyalty to the company. Finding a work-life balance becomes crucial for keeping dedicated and motivated employees, especially in the hotel industry with its intense workload. According to the study, efforts made in the hotel industry to maximize work-life balance directly and positively affect employee commitment.

Moreover, commitment has a major impact on lowering the probability of employees leaving the company, according to García-Almeida, Fernández-Monroy, and Saá-Pérez (2015). This emphasizes how crucial it is to support work-life balance to increase employee loyalty and lower turnover rates in the hospitality sector.

6.3 Methodology

As mentioned, this research aims to understand the impact that streamlining technologies in hotels can have on work-life balance and employment commitment, or in other words, turnover intention. To study this impact and to collect reliable data, a quantitative survey was sent to hotel professionals. Hotel professionals were chosen as target respondents of the survey, since they are the ones who can state if the usage of automation has impacted their commitment towards the companies they work for. This survey was created and shared through the online survey creator – Microsoft Forms.

There are three sections in the survey, which totaled 11 questions. The first section has the main objective of identifying the department of the respondent, if any technology is used to streamline operations, and how often is that technology used in their departments. The second section focused on how respondents feel about their work-life balance towards the use of automation technology which leads the respondent to the third section, where the commitment

to the company is evaluated using technology. To facilitate responses and to get relevant information to analyze, different types of questions were asked. Dropdown and multiple questions were asked for profiling purposes. For the rest of the survey, multiple choice questions were asked, such as “Not at all”, “Rarely”, “Occasionally”, “Frequently”, “Extensively” or “Front Office”, “Food and Beverage”, “Maintenance”, “Housekeeping”, “Other”. Additionally, open-ended questions were asked to respondents where they could state which technologies would improve their work-life balance. The sample resulted in 100 answers. These answers represented a sample that appeared to be credible, as they were shared with operational hotel employees across the globe, meaning that their culture, perspective, and profiles differ from each other. This has allowed a smooth analysis of consequent data. The data analysis was made mostly in SPSS, however Excel was used, such as manual analysis of open-ended questions such as: “Which automation technology could be embraced by your hotel to improve your work-life balance?”.

6.4 Data Analysis and Results

6.4.1 Demographics of Respondents

The respondents of the survey were, as mentioned, operational hotel employees. The sample showed that most of the respondents were males (72%), while female respondents represented the remaining 28% (Graphic 7 in Appendix). To better understand the profile of the respondents, the survey presented 5 age groups. After analyzing it, it is possible to say that a considerable part of the sample is constituted of operational hotel employees that are between 35-54 years old (66%), while the remaining are either under 25-34 years old (21%) or above 55 years old (13%) (Graphic 8 in Appendix). Regarding the level of education, most respondents have shown to hold a bachelor’s degree or equivalent (48%) or a high school diploma (28%). On the other hand, only 17% of the respondents have a master’s degree or equivalent, while just a few have elementary or middle school (7%) (Graphic 11 in Appendix). The respondents of this survey

are clearly experienced, as they had to be professionally active in the hotel industry to answer the survey. Moreover, most of them have more than 7 years of experience. 15% of the sample shows to have between 1 to 6 years of experience, while 21% have between 7 to 15 years of experience. The remaining participants represent a big part of the sample (54%), having at least 16 years of experience (Graphic 9 in Appendix). As profiling the sample is pivotal for data analysis, knowing the department of each respondent is quite important too. Having said that, the department with the most participants is the Front Office (37%), followed by Food & Beverage (26%), Maintenance/IT (21%), Housekeeping (8%), Multifunction/operations (2%), and other existing operational departments (6%), apart from the ones mentioned (Graphic 10 in Appendix).

6.4.2 Automation Technology Usage

After profiling the respondents of the survey, technology usage was measured. For this, the question: “To what extent does your department use technology to automate routine operational tasks?”, the majority (67%) answered that they use it either frequently or extensively, meaning that the respondents are considered to use automation technology on a daily basis or almost on a daily basis. The remaining respondents were divided into two groups: the first one represented by the ones that use automation technology occasionally (15%) and rarely (13%), and the second which is formed by the minority of respondents represented by a tiny 5% of the sample. Thus, after analyzing the frequency of automation technology usage, it is possible to say that most of the participants use automation technology, although at different levels: rarely, occasionally, frequently, and extensively (Graphic 12 in Appendix).

The objective of this part of the survey was to understand if automation technology was used in different operational departments, and which specific technologies from the numerous existing are used by the respondents. Thus, a broad list of automation technologies was displayed to the participants, where they could choose or state missing ones from the list.

According to the crosstabulation in Table 2 (in Appendix) , inventory management systems are the most used automation technology, together with others such as service optimization software, that serves as a centralized communication between departments, mostly operational that need to be constantly aligned (Maintenance, Front Office, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping...), upselling software, and guest messaging software. Other technologies should be highlighted, as they belong to the Food & Beverage department and have considerable adherence: Food & Beverage order software, Food & Beverage order and pay software, digital room service ordering, and digital menu. Despite being less utilized, other automation technologies were mentioned by the respondents, such as online check-in-out, check-in-out kiosks, restaurant self-service kiosks, and others.

6.4.3 Work-Life Balance

After the analysis made on the usage of automation technology and the most frequent automation technologies used by the respondents, it was seen that the majority uses automation technology almost daily and some of these technologies are used by several respondents, such as inventory management and upselling software. Subsequently to this section, the questions regarding work-life balance were presented to the respondents. To understand if automation technology has impacted work-life balance, the impact on workload was first analyzed. The results (see Appendix) show that 40% of the respondents either found that extra workload has decreased significantly (14%) or decreased (26%). On the other hand, respondents who feel that workload has increased (18%) or increased significantly (10%) represent a total of 28% of the sample, which is quite inferior to the latter. Moreover, 20% of the respondents feel that technology does not change the amount of workload that they have and 12% found that the question is not applicable. To better understand, respondents were also asked their opinion about the impact that automation technology has on their work-life balance. For this, the majority (74%) answered that feel a positive impact of automation technology in their work-life balance,

while the remaining minority (16%) answered that they do not feel any positive impact of usage of automation technology (15%) or that they do not use automation technology at all in their departments. Thus, according to the sample, there is a direct correlation between the usage of automation technology and workload, which positively impacts the work-life balance of respondents.

6.4.4 Employee Commitment

As mentioned before, existing literature confirms that work-life balance has a proportional relation to employee commitment. Having said this, this part of the survey is dedicated to it. After identifying that most of the respondents use automation technologies and find them useful to have/improve their work-life balance, it is important to see if there is any impact on the commitment of respondents towards the organizations they work for.

Although automation technology has been related to employee commitment through workload and work-life balance improvements, the survey also investigated the direct impact automation technology might have on employee commitment towards the organizations they work for. Hence, after a thorough analysis, it is possible to observe (see Appendix) that the majority of the respondents find that the usage of automation technology has positively influenced their commitment towards the companies they work for (60%), while a minority of 28% of the sample finds that the usage of automation technology in their departments does not affect at all their commitment towards their organizations. Aligned to these results, are the ones regarding satisfaction of technology usage in the respective departments of the respondents. Results show that the majority of the respondents (57%) are satisfied with the level of technology offered by their employers in their departments. This 57% are divided into 37% that is somewhat satisfied and the remaining 20% that is very satisfied. Conversely, a small part of the sample (20%) does not agree, which has either answered very dissatisfied (5%) or somewhat dissatisfied (15%). The rest of the sample found themselves neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Despite the positive correlation between automation technology usage, work-life balance, and employee commitment, a considerable number of respondents have responded that they either feel neutral when asked about the impact of automation technology in making their job fulfilling (25%), less fulfilling (2%), and somewhat less fulfilling (2%).

After measuring the impact that technology usage on employee commitment and the respondents' satisfaction level on technology in their departments, it is pivotal to understand how committed they felt towards the company they work for. Thus, after analyzing the data collected, the results show that the vast majority of 88% either is frequently committed (28%) or extremely committed (60%). The remaining 12% of the sample either finds themselves rarely committed (2%) or occasionally committed (10%). With this chapter, it is possible to see that technology is considered to be a positive influence on employee commitment and that the vast majority of respondents, who use automation technology, almost every day or every day, feel committed.

Despite the positive results throughout the different sections of the survey, respondents were questioned about which specific automation technologies could be adopted by the hotels they work for that could improve their work-life balance. As this question was optional, fewer answers were obtained, however, different suggestions were made by the participants. Several participants mentioned digital guest-facing solutions, such as digital check-in and check-out. Related to this solution are also payment processes that were mentioned and that could be automatized by technology. An interface between the front of the house and back of the house was mentioned, and the example of a Food & Beverage outlet being connected to an inventory and stock software was given. Other automation technologies mentioned by the respondents were digital registration cards (part of the check-in process), food ordering, QR code menus, and guest messaging. Thus, although the majority of respondents are already using automation technology in their departments, it is possible to see that there is still room for improvement.

6.5 Conclusion

This research studies the relation between different key topics in the hotel industry, with one general and conclusive purpose: “To what extent does the utilization of technology to automate operational routine tasks impact the work-life balance of hospitality employees, and how does this influence their commitment to their roles and the organization?”. With the main objective of answering this research question, three different objectives were stated, which as mentioned, relate to automation technology, workload, work-life balance, and employee commitment. To develop this research, the methodology followed the traditional revision of existing literature and a survey directed to operational hotel employees from different departments, such as Front Office, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, and Maintenance, amongst others, as these are the departments with the most repetitive and monotonous tasks. Moreover, they are the departments with the highest employee turnover ratio.

Existing literature has shown that technology has continuously been adopted into the hotel industry for the past decades, due to several reasons, including the numerous repetitive existing processes (Ivanov, Seyitoğlu, and Markova 2020), which as a consequence reduces workload of employees. On this same line of thought, the survey shows that the majority of the sample uses automation technology in their departments almost daily, meaning that, according to existing literature, if automation technology would not be present in the departments of the respondents, their workload would be higher, and employees would be much less efficient. Related to workload is the work-life balance of hotel operational employees, which is known to be poor due to numerous factors, namely workload and stress (Kusluvan et al. 2010), amongst others.

After analyzing the data retrieved from the respondents, it can be observed that workload has considerably decreased due to the usage of automation technology. Workload and stress, as mentioned, are contributors to a poor work-life balance, as this correlation was also seen in the

results of the survey. This said, the study showed that the vast majority of the respondents found a positive impact on their work-life balance when using automation technology in their departments.

Hutagalung, Soelton, and Octaviani (2020) have previously studied the impact that a high work-life balance can have on the commitment employees feel towards the companies they work for. After finding a positive correlation between automation technology, workload, and work-life balance, results regarding employee commitment show two main findings: firstly, employees find a direct relation between automation technology and their commitment towards the company they work for, and secondly, the majority of the respondents feel committed to the companies they work for.

Hence, through the intention of accomplishing the previously mentioned objectives, it is possible to state that there is a positive relation between automation technology, workload, stress, work-life balance, and employee commitment, which allows the possibility in stating that automation technology has clearly an impact on employee commitment and their turnover intentions towards the companies they work for.

6.6 Study Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

Similarly, to many other studies, some limitations were identified throughout this research. The first limitation was the sample size and its composition. A sample size of 100 respondents may not fully represent the diversity of the hotel industry. Also, still related to the sample, a considerable amount of it was part of two main departments: Front Office and Food & Beverage, which might not represent the reality of other hotel operational departments. For future studies, it is recommended that a more diverse sample is targeted, to better represent the vast hotel operational departments. In addition, a bigger sample is recommended, to have higher reliability when stating conclusions. The second limitation was that responses may have been biased since a part of the questionnaire was about the commitment respondents felt towards the

companies they work for, which can be a socially desirable answer. For future studies, it is recommended that this potential response bias is considered when interpreting the collected data. Thirdly, the survey was sent during October, which is a single moment in time, and that might influence the answers of the respondents (e.g. since it was just after the summer holidays, employees would potentially feel more committed). A clear recommendation would be to send the survey at different times of the year so that the answers would be more realistic. The last limitation identified was that technology is in rapid evolution and that the conclusions that were made about automation technology and its impact on employee commitment can easily change.

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

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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

-Group Part-

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

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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 homogeneously 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).

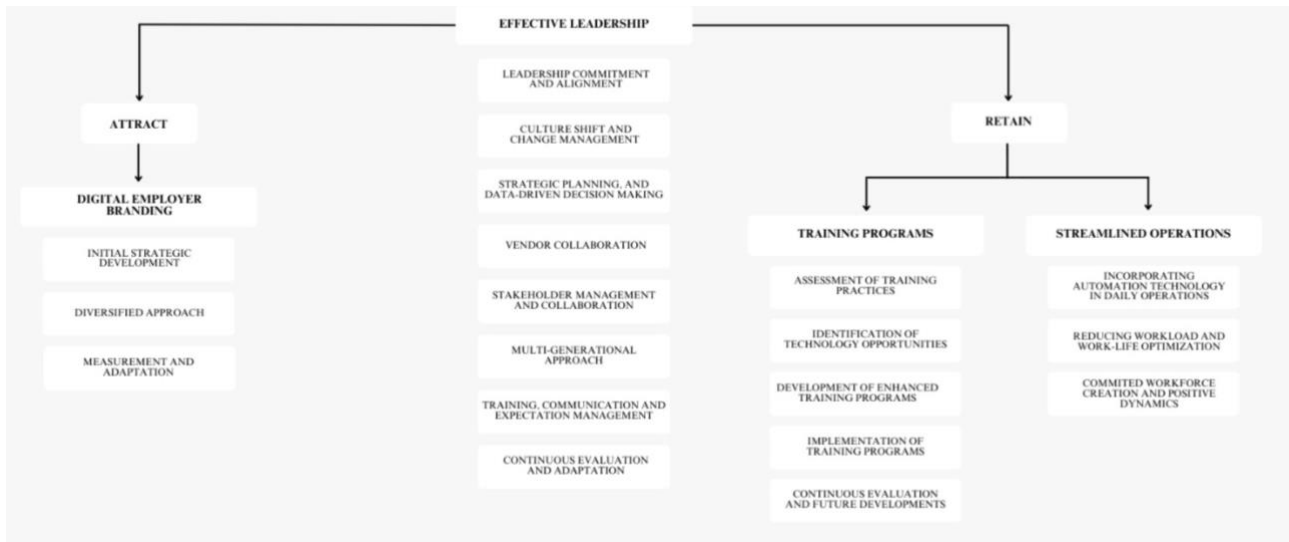
The insights obtained regarding automation technology affirm that the strategic implementation of such technologies has successfully streamlined operational workload by enhancing efficiency, improving employees' work-life balance, and fostering a more committed workforce, which aligns with and supports 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.

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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

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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

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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, as shown in the interviews shown in the Appendix, 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 evolution 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
BE	Brand Equity
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CTO	Chief Technology Officer
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DEB	Digital Employer Branding
EA	Employer Attractiveness
EB	Employer Branding
EVP	Employer Value Proposition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
IHG	Intercontinental Hotel Group
IoT	Internet of Things
IT	Information Technology
JB	Job Satisfaction
JOLTS	Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey
K-12	Kindergarten to Twelfth Grade
LMS	Learning Management Systems
PMS	Property Management System
P-O	Person-Organization
QR	Quick Response

RFI	Request for Information
RFP	Request for Proposal
ROI	Return on Investment
RQ	Research Question
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TE	Training Engagement
TI	Turnover Intentions
TS	Training Satisfaction
TSA	Training Sessions Attended
UK	United Kingdom
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
VR	Virtual Reality
WHG	Westmont Hospitality Group

14.2 Overview of in-text figures

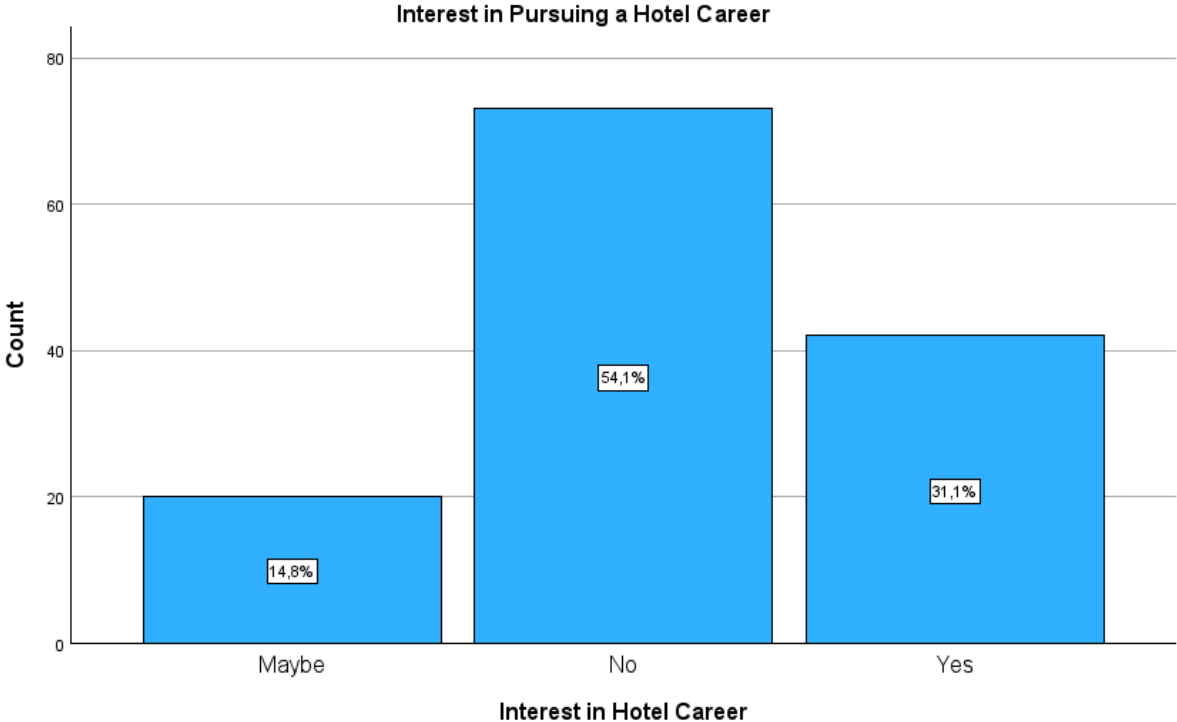
Figure 1: Proposed Framework

14.3 Tables and Figures

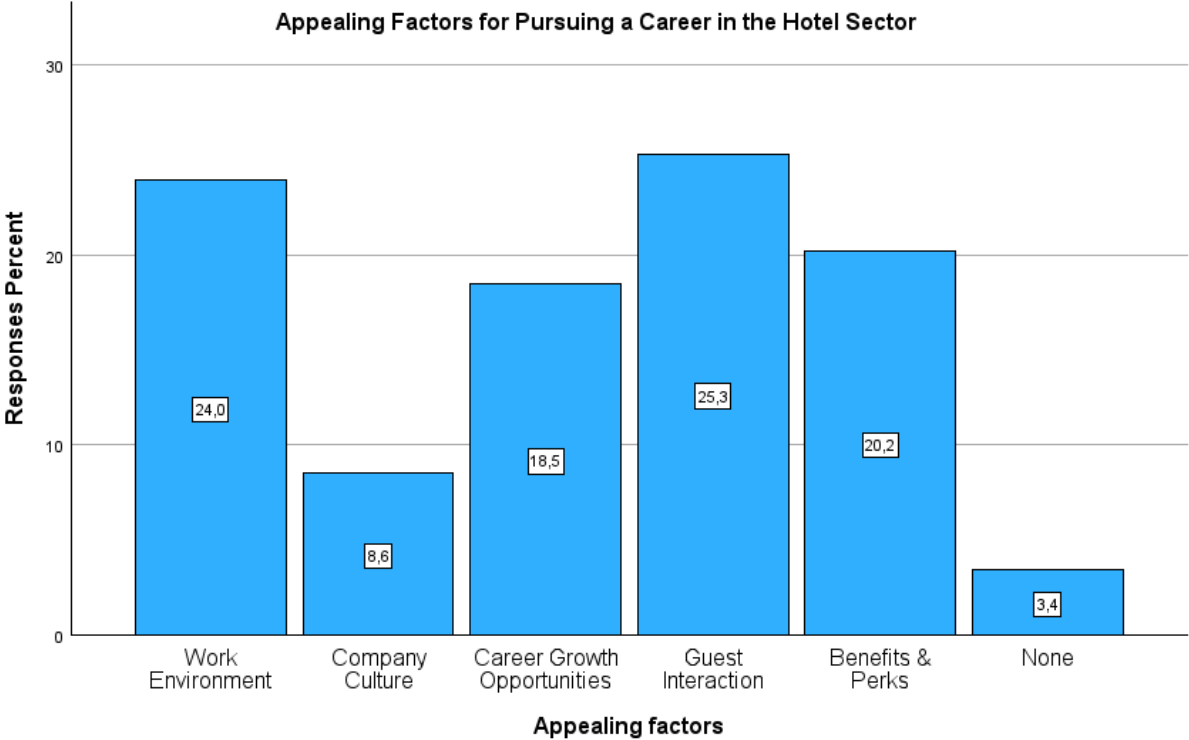
Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents - Attractiveness of the Sector

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

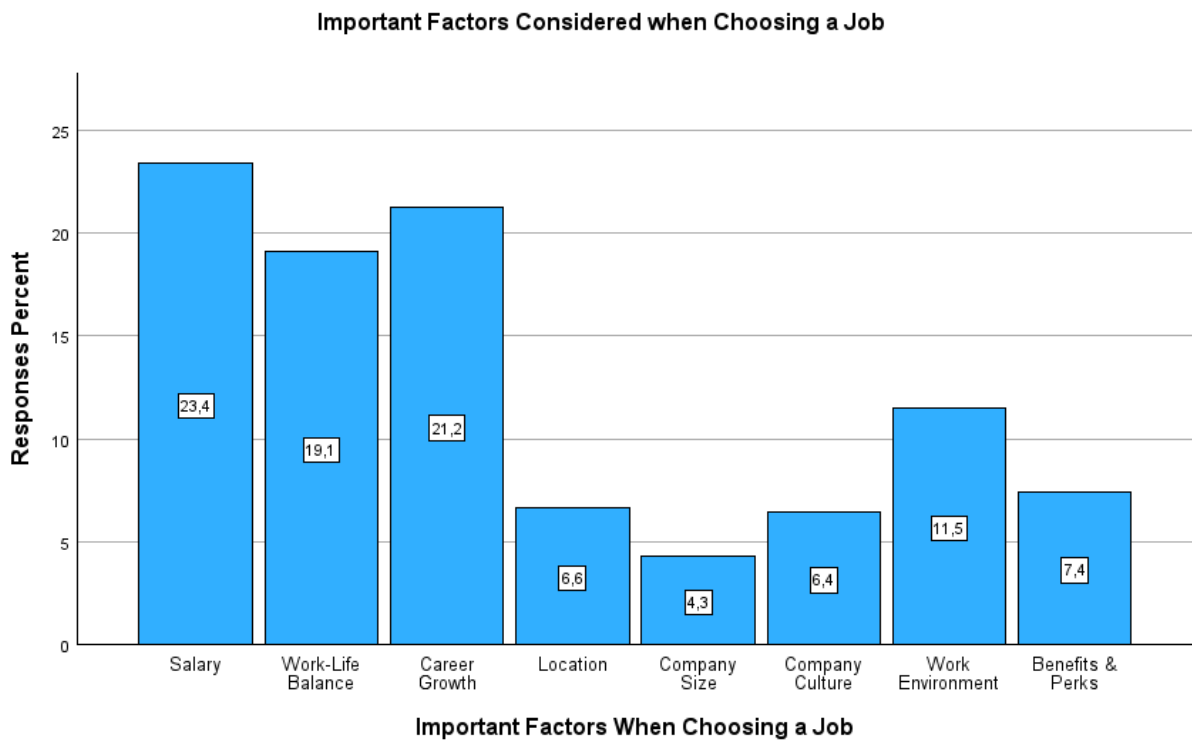
Graphic 1: Interest in Pursuing a Hotel Career - Attractiveness of the Sector



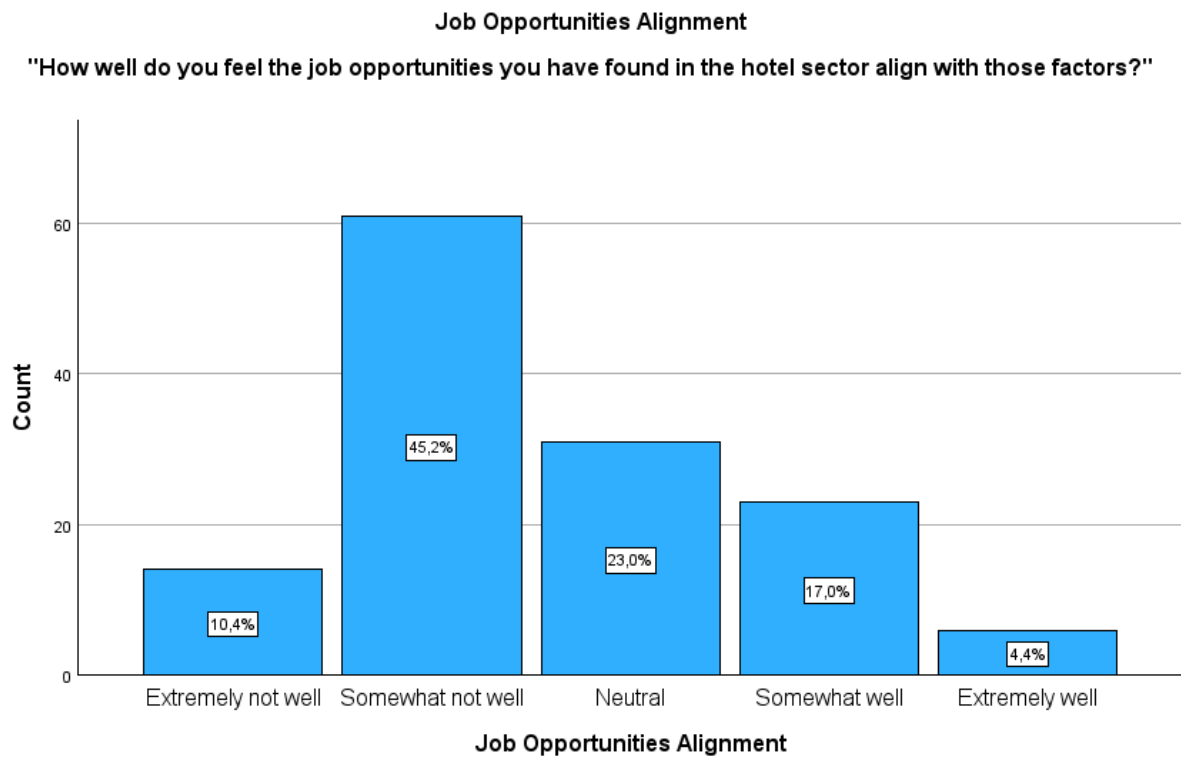
Graphic 2: Appealing Factors for Pursuing a Career in the Hotel Sector - Attractiveness of the Sector



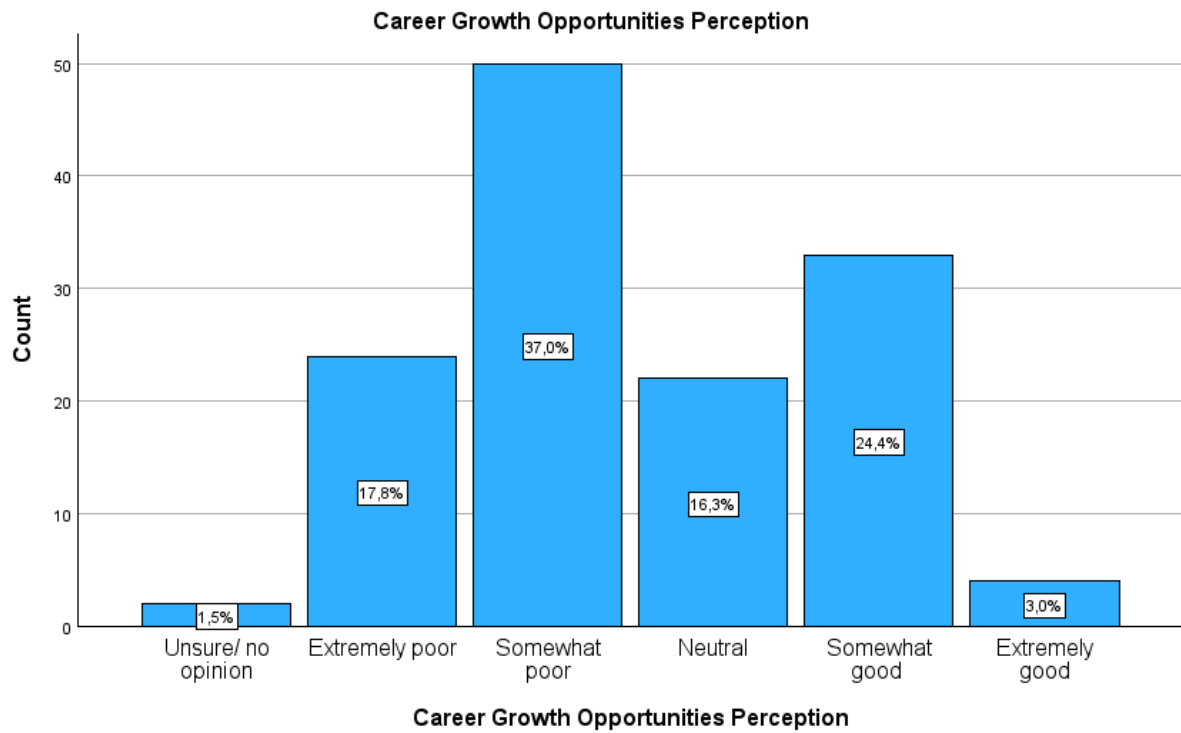
Graphic 3: Important Factors Considered when Choosing a Job - Attractiveness of the sector



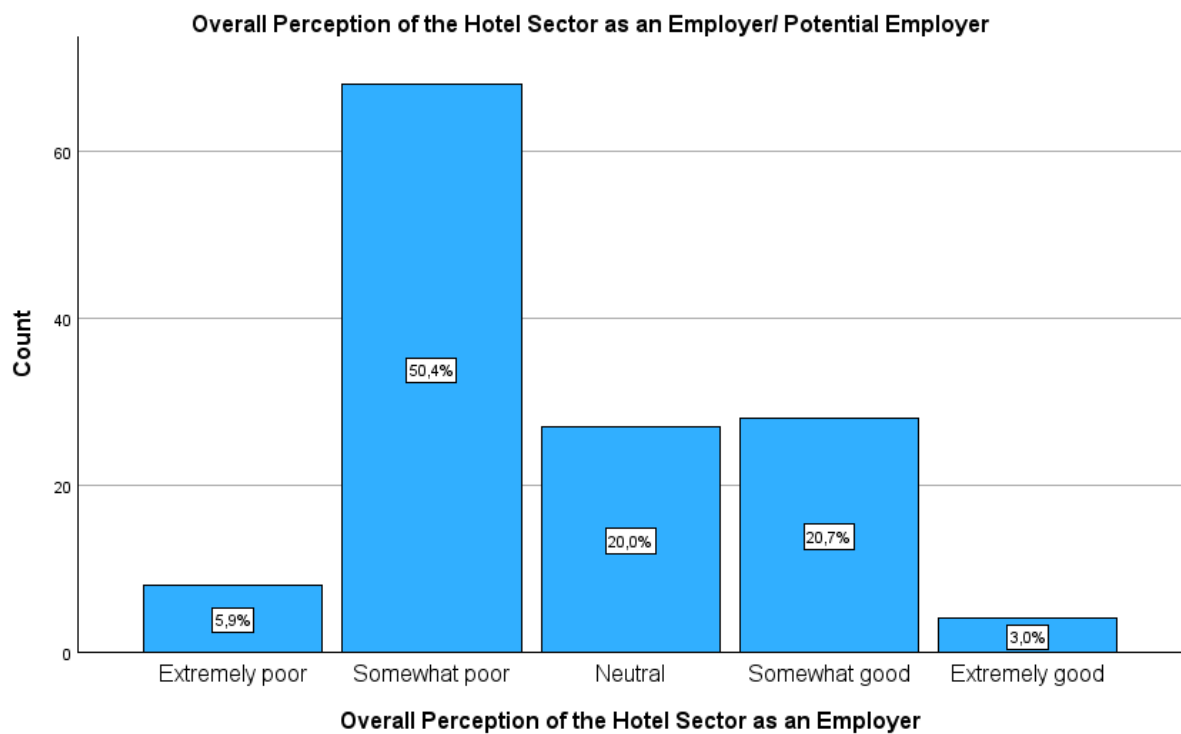
Graphic 4: Job Opportunities Alignment - Attractiveness of the Sector



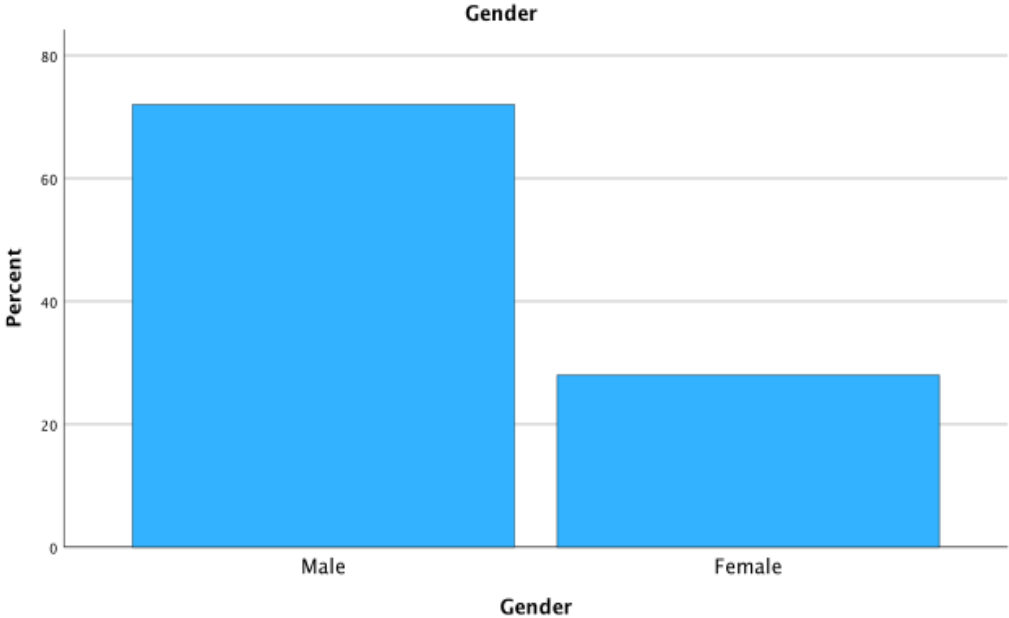
Graphic 5: Career Growth Opportunities - Attractiveness of the Sector



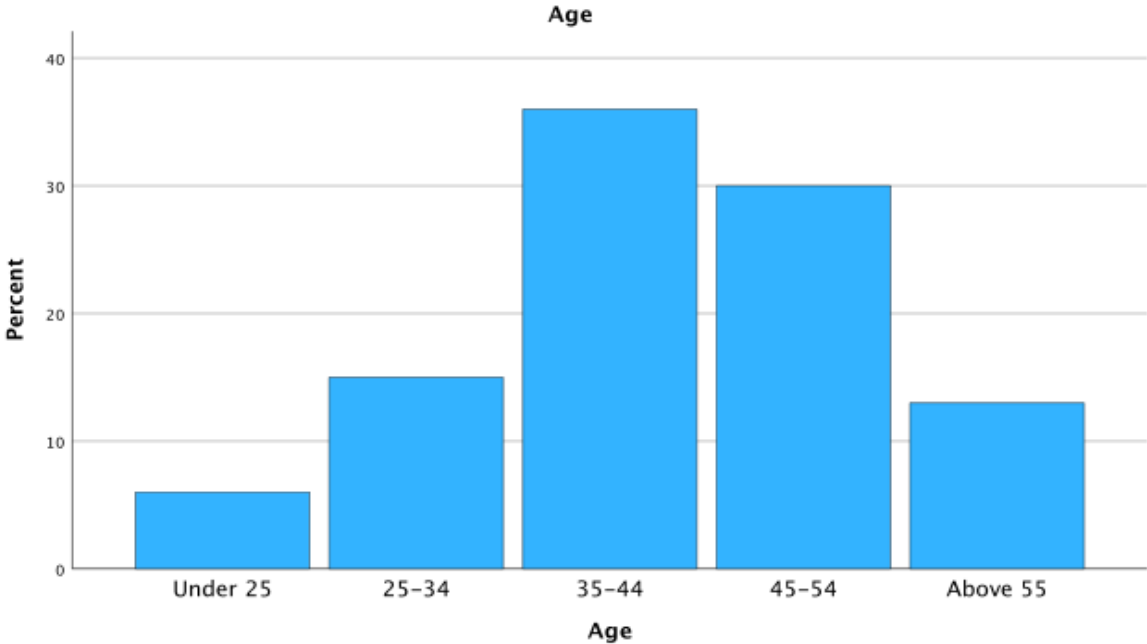
Graphic 6: Overall Perception of the Hotel Sector - Attractiveness of the Sector



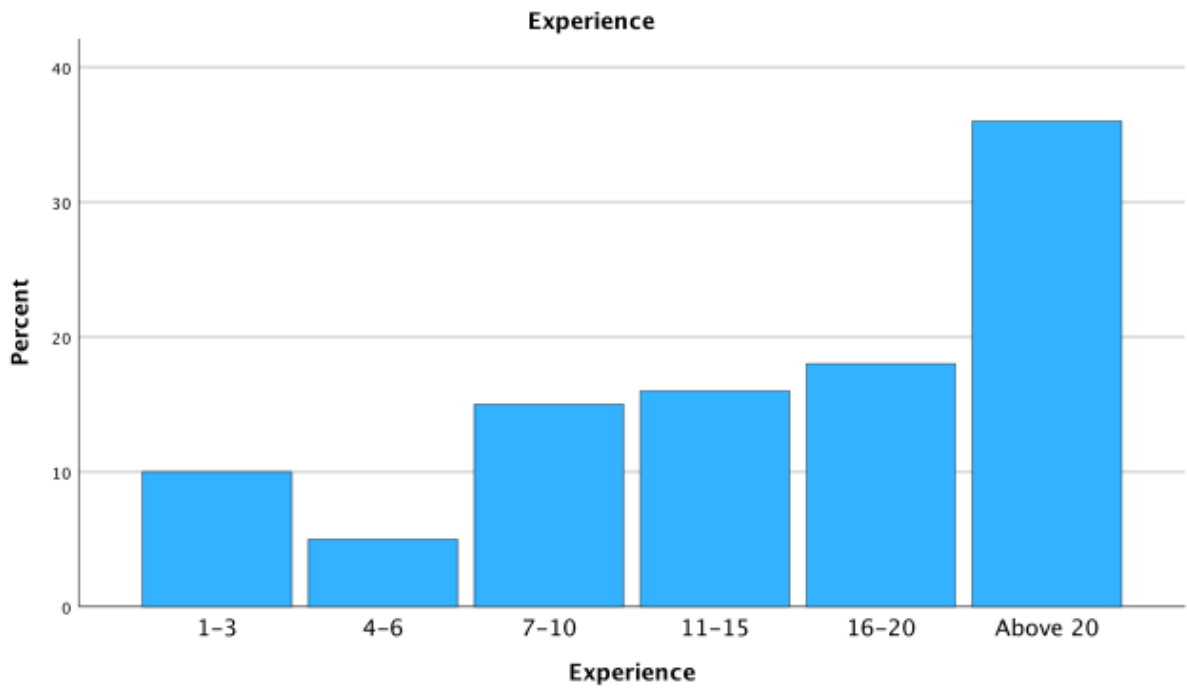
Graphic 7: Gender - Streamlining Operations



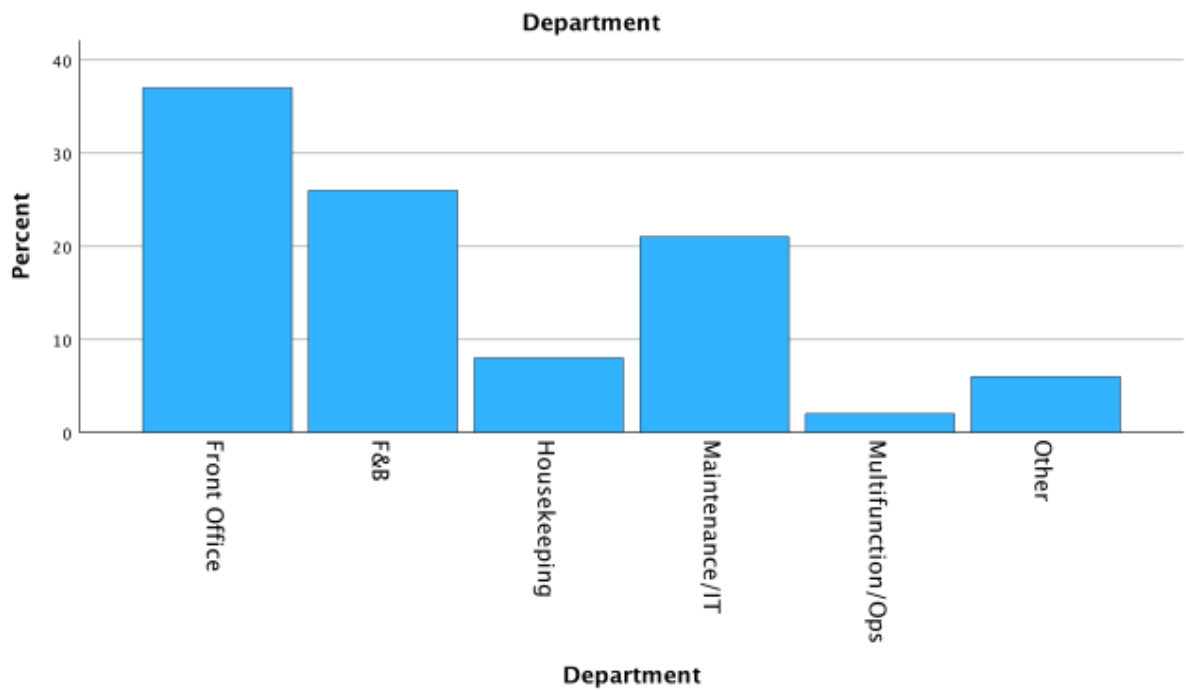
Graphic 8: Age - Streamlining Operations



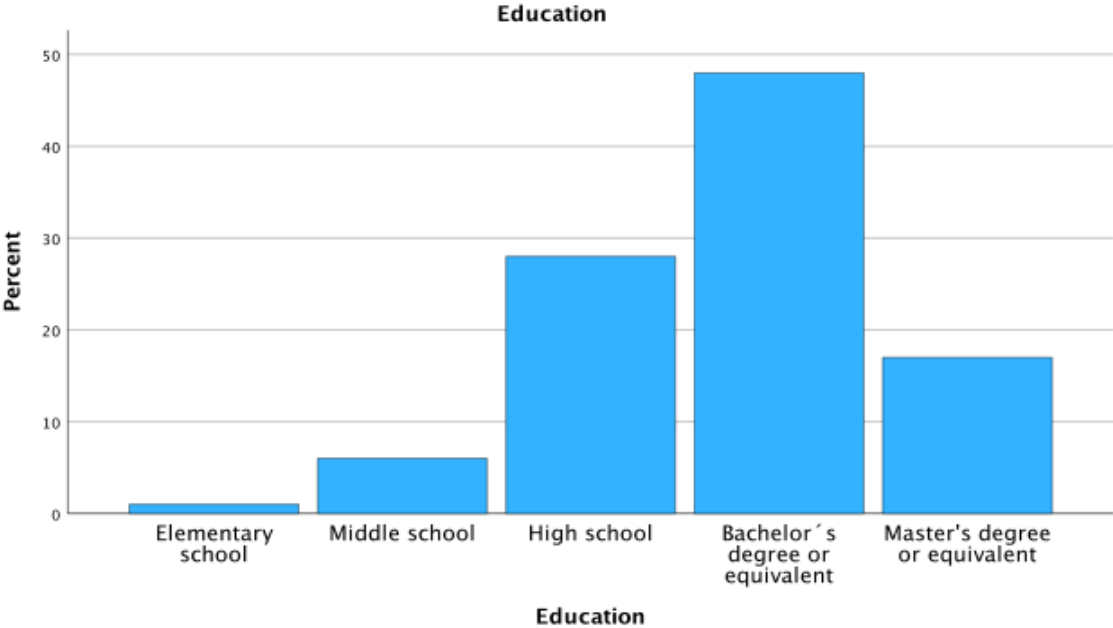
Graphic 9: Experience - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 10: Department - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 11: Education - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 12: Technology Usage on Departments - Streamlining Operations

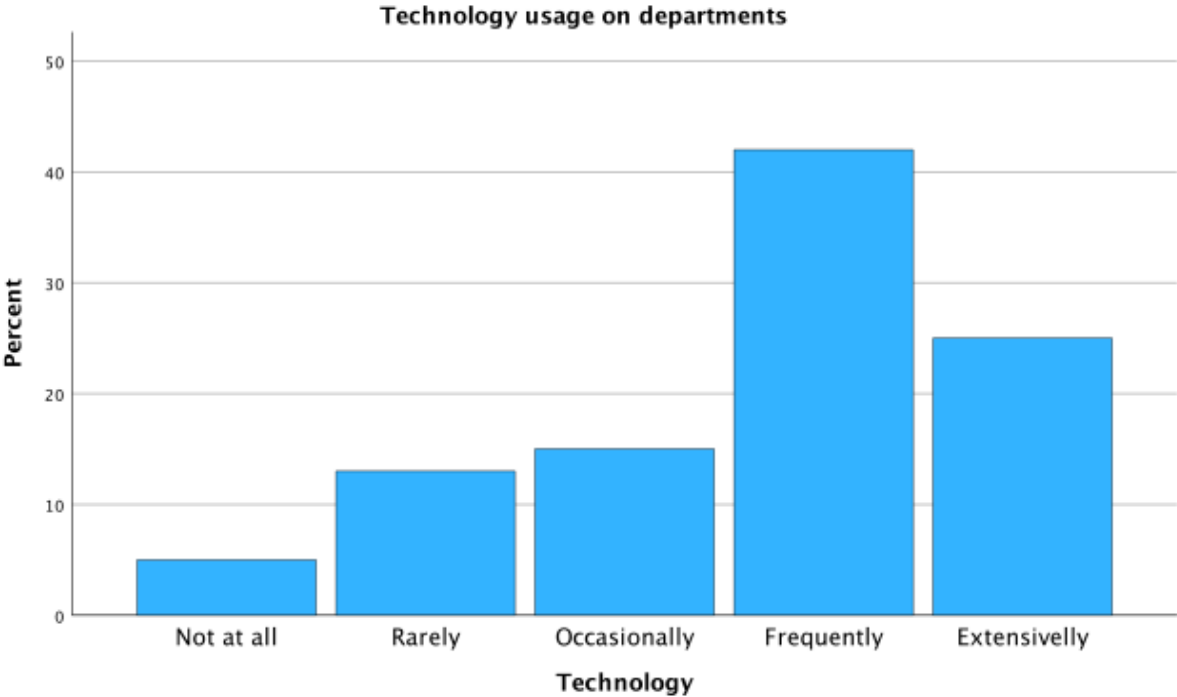
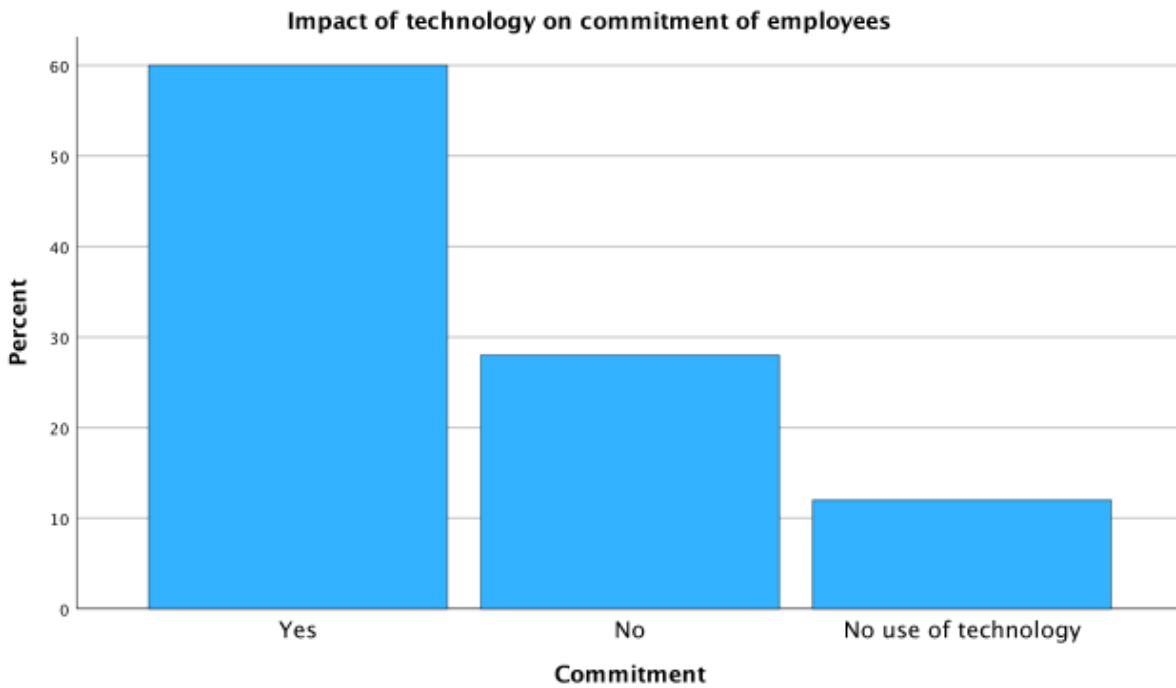


Table 2: Technologies Used in Departments - Streamlining Operations

Technology	Frequency
Upselling software	48
Inventory management software	54
Digital menu	38
Guest messaging	46
F&B order software	42
F&B order and pay software	33
Digital room service ordering	33
Online Check-in-out	29
Service optimization software (communication between departments)	47
Self-service check-in-out kiosk	12
CCTV	3
Radio communication	1

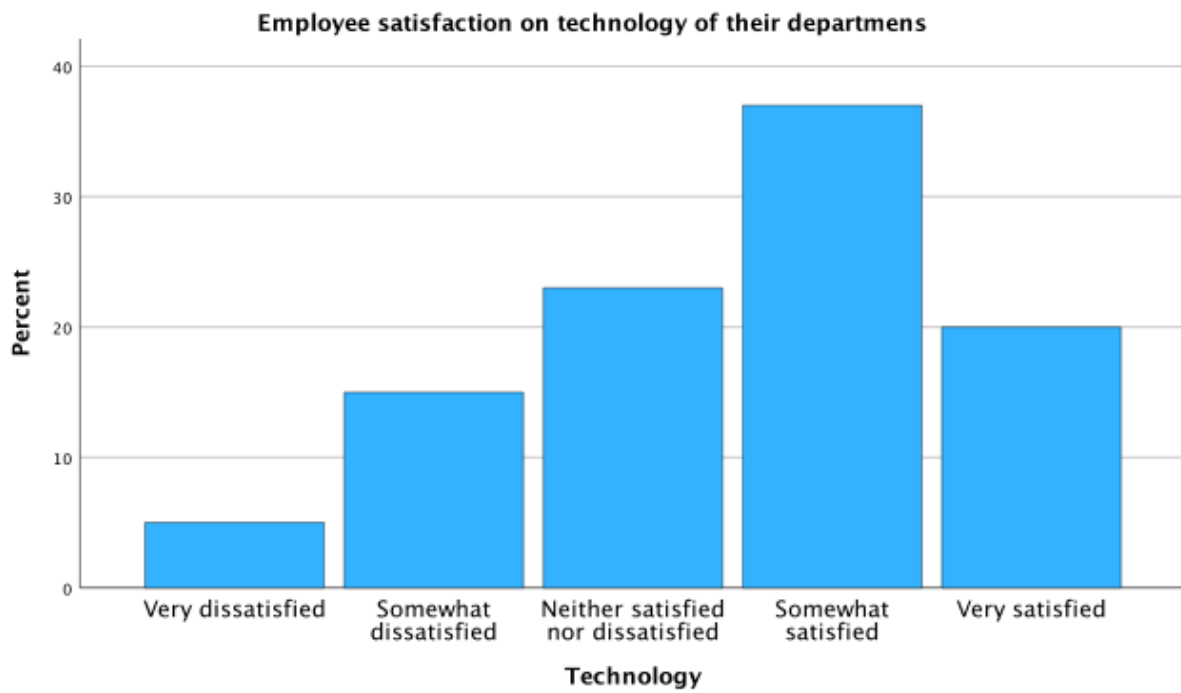
Graphic 13: Impact of Technology on Employee Commitment - Streamlining Operations



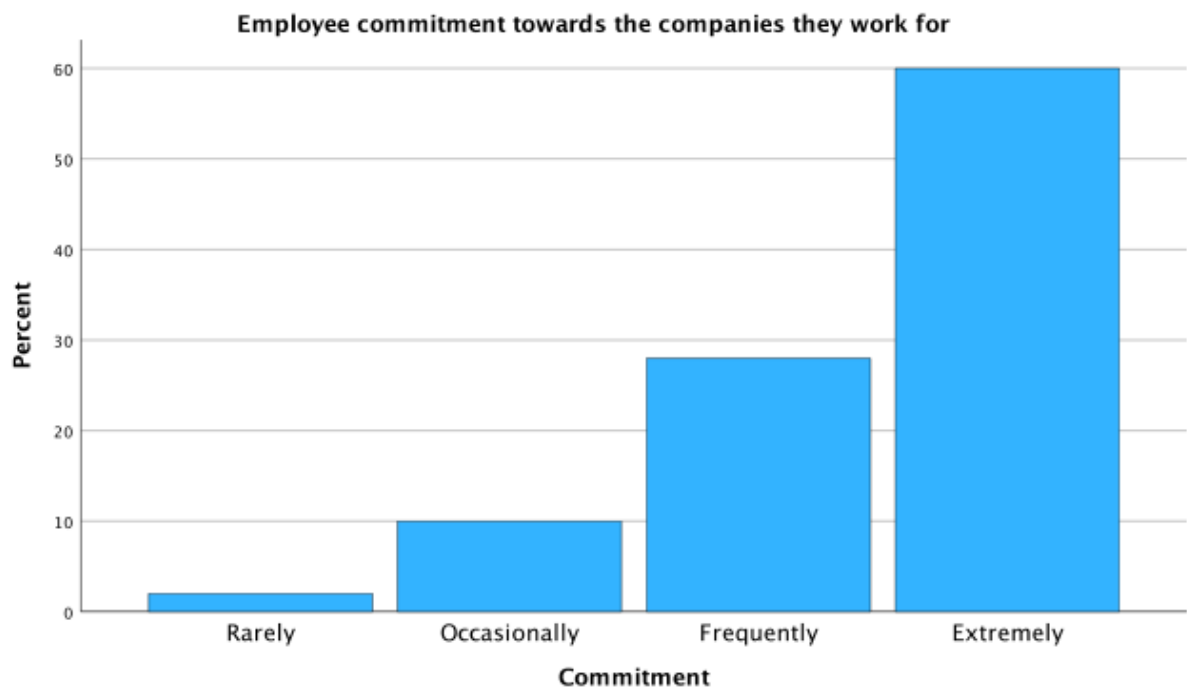
Graphic 14: Impacts of Technology on Work-Life Balance - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 15: Employee Satisfaction on Technologies Used - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 16: Employee Commitment towards Employer - Streamlining Operations



Graphic 17: Time Reduced by Using Automation Technology - Streamlining Operations

