

## The Effect of Professional Qualifications of Chefs on Recruitment: A study in Hotel Businesses in Ankara

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### Abstract

In today's competitive conditions, businesses have to make a difference in every field and they have to be meticulous in choosing employees. For this reason, professional competence is important in terms of both meeting the individual's job search and finding the employees with the qualifications they want. The aim of the research is to evaluate the effect of the professional competencies of the chefs working in four and five star hotels on the recruitment process. The sample of the study is made up of 304 employees who took decisions in the recruitment process of 4 and 5-star hotel businesses in Ankara. The survey technique was used as a data collection tool in the research. The characteristics that should be found in the chefs who will work in the hotel enterprises are in order of priority; it is determined to apply the theory to practice, to be experienced, to be educated and to finally speak a foreign language. Theoretical competencies of chefs have an important role in the recruitment process. The importance that hotel managers give to theoretical competence is related to their educational status. It has been determined that the number of stars owned by the hotel enterprises is related to the importance given to practical competence in the recruitment process.

**Keywords:** Hotel Management, Chef, Professional Qualification, Human Resources

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the evolving world of globalization and technological advancements, Turkey is undergoing significant development and change in its traditional production methods. Especially in developing countries, certain professions are disappearing while new ones are emerging due to technological progress. In light of this information, it can be said that vocational competence has gained even greater importance. Vocational competence is acquired through vocational education, aiming to equip individuals with knowledge, skills, and qualifications related to their profession. Just like in any other sector, vocational competence holds undeniable significance in food and beverage establishments directly related to human health. The importance of vocational competence is evaluated from various perspectives such as consumer satisfaction and institutional image. Furthermore, vocational competence has a direct impact on an individual's success in their professional life. In fact, in today's world, technological advancements and the pursuit of offering higher quality products and services rely on well-

equipped employees. Based on this context, this study aims to examine the impact of vocational competence of chefs working in four and five-star hotels on the recruitment process and to elucidate the relationship among them.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Culinary arts are a form of art encompassing the selection of quality ingredients, preparation, and presentation of food. When talking about culinary arts, one immediately thinks of the hospitality industry. The kitchen of hospitality establishments plays a crucial role in offering rich and delectable products and services, greatly influencing customer preferences. Similarly, factors like meal presentation, the flavor of the cuisine, and qualified staff are of utmost importance in a restaurant's appeal to customers, highlighting the significance of the culinary arts profession (Cullen, 2010). Innovation and creativity are also effective in kitchen work as in every field. Through innovations, cooks reveal differences in the sector (Aslan, 2018:29). In order to increase the adequacy of theoretical education, which is the most important stage of culinary education, schools and the curriculum applied in these schools should be arranged accordingly. In order to keep up with the constantly changing and developing conditions, training programs will be developed and changed, and thus the quality will be increased by increasing the number of qualified personnel in the sector (Çımar, 2019:210). Wong and Pang (2003) observed that acquiring new skills is also effective in the motivation of employees. In the sector where there is a strong competition, hotel businesses need to employ qualified chefs in order to be successful in their kitchen departments. Chefs who stay in the sector for a long time and improve their professional competencies contribute to the preservation of kitchen quality (Ko, 2012:1004). Deutscher and Winther (2017) stated that the performance of employees is related to the training they received in their article studies.

Dishes prepared by a kitchen team are served in various presentation styles. The head of the kitchen team is the chef de cuisine. The lower ranks are formed according to the demands of the chef de cuisine. The lower ranks may consist of sous-chefs, journeymen, apprentices, and dishwashers. The development of the culinary arts profession has been influenced by factors such as urbanization, growth in commerce, and the concept of hospitality. This has led to the emergence of facilities providing paid accommodations in cities, subsequently establishing culinary arts as a professional occupation (Aksoy et al., 2016). Ensuring that a business provides services at the desired standards and quality for customers depends on the quality of the personnel, hence the necessity for well-trained staff (Çemrek & Yılmaz, 2010). Kitchen chefs who previously demonstrated an authoritarian management style and withheld their professional knowledge from their subordinates have been replaced by culinary courses and culinary schools. The establishment of culinary schools not only provides a solid foundation for individuals aspiring to progress in the restaurant and food service industry but also elevates the societal perception of cooking as a profession (Hughes, 2003).

Culinary education in Turkey continued through the master-apprentice method until the 1950s. From this period onwards, short-term courses for culinary training started being offered through Vocational Chambers and Municipalities in Ankara, Izmir, and Istanbul, aiming to train chefs. However, the comprehensive provision of culinary education began after the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism (Grkem and Sevim, 2016). Since the early 1960s, culinary education has been provided by the government in two forms: formal education and informal education. In recent years, institutions offering culinary academies and private

cooking courses have also begun their activities. Culinary education is offered at the levels of high school, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and master's degree (Arslan et al., 2009). Pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and higher education institutions are part of the formal education system. In Turkey, culinary education is offered at three different levels: secondary education, associate degree, and bachelor's degree (Birdir and Kılıřhan, 2013; Denk and Kořan, 2017). In addition, other institutions providing informal culinary education include the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of National Education, Turkish Employment Agency, Vocational Organizations, Open Education Faculty, Social Organizations, and similar institutions (Aslan, 2018).

One of the norms that Turkey needs to adhere to during its process of joining the European Union is the alignment of vocational education provided in vocational institutions with national occupational standards. National culinary occupational standards define the necessary qualifications, required education, and tools and equipment used for individuals who will work in the profession, in order to ensure that the tasks related to the profession are carried out according to accepted minimum standards in the industry. The development of professional kitchen education programs should be based on job analyses and prepared in accordance with occupational standards. Like other occupational standards, culinary occupational standards also have a dynamic nature, and therefore, the culinary education standard, examination, and certification criteria need to be updated periodically in line with the expectations of the food and beverage sector.

Human beings are the most valuable resource and the most important asset in an organization. Machines, capital, materials, management, and humans are inputs for a business, and human input has a different value and position compared to others. Human resources are irreplaceable because they are the source that provides, plans, organizes, and manages all other resources, thus having a controlling position over inputs (Sabuncuođlu, 2013). Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to the design and implementation of an organization's formal systems to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talent to achieve organizational goals. This impact includes activities to attract, develop, and retain a workforce (Daft, 2012). In organizations, humans are a fundamental element that reduces costs rather than increasing them. Along with the training and development of human resources, enhancing knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals to increase productivity is one of the primary objectives of businesses. The recruitment process varies based on the type and nature of the job or the practices within the organizations. Depending on the hierarchical level of the position the employee will be employed in, in some cases, different research and techniques may need to be applied. The organization carries out the recruitment process by taking all these criteria into consideration (İbiciođlu, 2011). Therefore, candidates go through several stages from the acceptance of applications to the hiring stage, and their qualifications are evaluated accordingly.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The subject of the research is the examination of the impact of culinary candidates' vocational qualifications on the recruitment process from the perspective of decision-making managers in hotel establishments. This study was conducted in four- and five-star hotels located in Ankara. Quantitative research method was employed for this study, using the survey method as the data collection technique. The survey was administered to managerial employees in various positions who are involved in the recruitment process at hotel establishments in Ankara. The

survey questions were designed to determine the effect of culinary candidates' vocational qualifications on the recruitment process. The statistical analysis of the collected data was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0 software, with a significance level set at  $\alpha=0.05$ .

The population of the study consists of employees in the positions of general manager, deputy general manager, food and beverage manager, deputy food and beverage manager, kitchen chef, and assistant kitchen chef working at Culture and Tourism Ministry-certified four- and five-star hotel establishments in Ankara. The sample of the research includes 304 employees who are involved in the recruitment process of four- and five-star hotel establishments in Ankara. The survey used as the data collection tool consists of four sections. The first section of the survey includes ten questions related to gender, age, marital status, education level, foreign language skills, work experience, the class of the establishment, and position of the managers and department heads. The second and third sections of the survey consist of a total of 40 closed-ended statements (20 theoretical and 20 practical competencies) based on the competency table criteria. The fourth section includes 25 questions related to human resources and the recruitment process. The questions in the survey were prepared using scales from various academic studies. The questions in the second and third sections were adapted from surveys used in Daylar's (2015) academic work, while the questions in the fourth section were created based on academic studies conducted by Kızıloğlu (2011).

The hypotheses developed for the analysis of the main research problems are as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the theoretical competency level and practical competency level of culinary candidates during the recruitment process.

H2: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the education levels of decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred theoretical competencies.

H3: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the tourism, hospitality, or culinary education backgrounds of decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred theoretical competencies.

H4: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the foreign languages known by decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred theoretical competencies.

H5: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the total work experience of decision-making managers and department heads in the establishment.

H6: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the total work experience of decision-making managers and department heads in the tourism sector.

H7: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the class of the establishment where decision-making managers and department heads work.

H8: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the positions and roles of decision-making managers and department heads.

H9: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the education levels of decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred practical competencies.

H10: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the tourism, hospitality, or culinary education backgrounds of decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred practical competencies.

H11: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the foreign languages known by decision-making managers and department heads in terms of their preferred practical competencies.

H12: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the total work experience of decision-making managers and department heads in the establishment.

H13: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the total work experience of decision-making managers and department heads in the tourism sector.

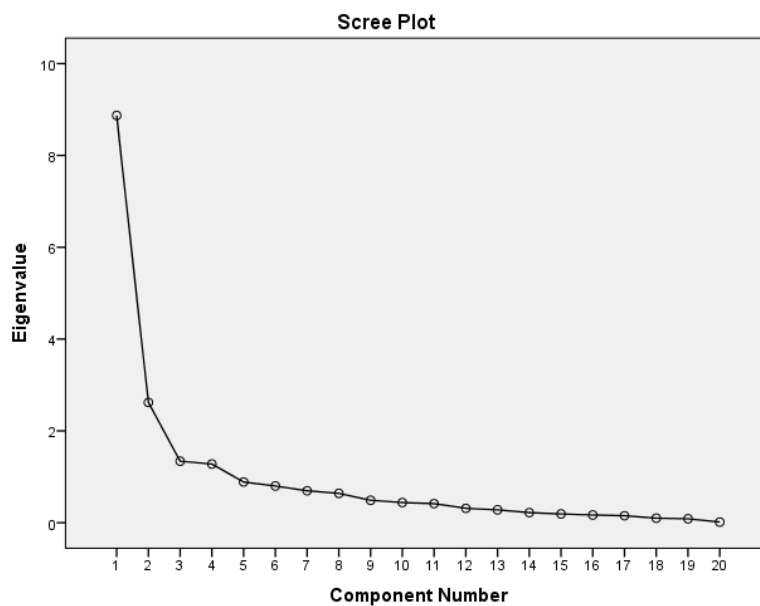
H14: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the class of the establishment where decision-making managers and department heads work.

H15: The preference for a culinary candidate in the recruitment process differs based on the positions and roles of decision-making managers and department heads.

## 4. RESULTS

### 3.1. Factor Analysis

In order to assess the suitability of the data set created for the "Theoretical Competency Scale" for factor analysis, the Bartlett's test was conducted. The results of the Bartlett's test indicated that the data set is suitable for factorization ( $p < 0.001$ ). The data set has a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.850, which is sufficient for factor analysis. The next step is to obtain the factors. When the data set was analyzed using Principal Component Factor Analysis, four factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obtained. The scree plot graph shown in the figure indicates that there are four factors with eigenvalues greater than one. However, it can also be noted that there are three distinct factors.



**Figure 1:** Scree Plot Results

After considering these criteria, the results of Varimax Rotation were examined, and the decision was made to remove problematic items from the scale. Under these conditions, the following items were removed from the scale:

-Item 1 and Item 17 were removed from the scale because they did not provide a sufficient number of items under the factor.

-Item 18 was removed from the scale because it did not exceed the threshold of 0.40 factor loading under any factor.

-Item 10 was removed from the scale because the difference between factor loadings was below 0.10. Thus, a total of 4 items were removed from the scale. In the second step, tests were repeated to determine whether the remaining 16 items were suitable for factor analysis. The KMO test value for the remaining 16 items is 0.851, which is 85% and greater than 0.50. Therefore, the scale is suitable for factor analysis. The next test we will consider is the Bartlett test. The Bartlett test is significant for the scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). There are high correlations among variables, and the data set used in the scale is suitable for factor analysis. When the data set is analyzed using Principal Component Factor Analysis, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obtained.

As a result of the analysis, the following items were removed from the scale:

-Item 19 was removed from the scale because the difference between factor loadings was below 0.10.

-Item 3 was removed from the scale because the difference between factor loadings was below 0.10.

Thus, an additional 2 items were removed from the scale. In the third step, tests were repeated to determine whether the remaining 14 items were suitable for factor analysis. The KMO test value for the remaining 14 items is 0.863, which is 86% and greater than 0.50. Therefore, the scale is suitable for factor analysis. The next test we will consider is the Bartlett test. The Bartlett test is significant for the scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). There are high correlations among variables, and the data set used in the scale is suitable for factor analysis. When the data set is analyzed using Principal Component Factor Analysis, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obtained.

**Table 1:** Results of Factor Analysis for Theoretical Competence Scale

Factor 1: Various Cuisines and Dishes (Explained Variance: 33.426)	Factor Loadings
12. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of preparing dishes specific to Ottoman cuisine in personnel selection.	0.901
11. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of preparing dishes specific to Turkish cuisine in personnel selection.	0.893
13. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of various world cuisines in personnel selection.	0.863

7. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of cooking local and international soup varieties in personnel selection.	0.854
8. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of preparing and cooking meats in personnel selection.	0.811
9. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of preparing and cooking seafood in personnel selection.	0.793
<b>Factor 2: Menu Planning, Decoration, and Desserts (Explained Variance: 20.867)</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
16. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of preparing cold kitchen products in personnel selection.	0.831
14. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of menu planning in personnel selection.	0.753
15. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of the art of food decoration in personnel selection.	0.729
20. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of bakery products and desserts in personnel selection.	0.61
<b>Factor 3: Chopping Vegetables, Portion Sizes, Hygiene, and Cooking Methods (Explained Variance: 17.99)</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
5. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of chopping vegetables in international styles in personnel selection.	0.847
4. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of determining daily portion sizes of food groups in personnel selection.	0.706
2. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of hygiene rules in personnel selection.	0.668
6. I prioritize candidates who have theoretical knowledge of different cooking methods in personnel selection.	0.661

Eigenvalue statistics indicate the presence of three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The first factor explains 33.426% of the total variance, and the combination of the first and second factors explains 54.293% of the total variance. The three factors combined explain 72.283% of the total variance. To assess the suitability of the data set created for the "Practical Competence Scale" for factor analysis, a Bartlett test was conducted. According to the results of the Bartlett test, the data set is suitable for factorization ( $p < 0.001$ ). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.633, indicating an adequate level for factor analysis. When the data set was analyzed using Principal Component Factor Analysis, five factors with eigenvalues greater than one were

obtained. The results of Varimax Rotation were examined, and it was decided to remove problematic items from the scale. Under these conditions, the following items were removed from the scale:

- Item 2, as it was loaded solely on Factor 2
- Item 15, as it was loaded solely on Factor 3
- Item 18, as it was loaded solely on Factor 3
- Items 1, 16, 19, 3, 4, and 14, due to factor loadings differences being below 0.10

As a result, a total of 9 items were removed from the scale. In the second step, tests were repeated to determine if the remaining 11 items were suitable for factor analysis. The KMO test value for the remaining 11 items is 81% (0.810), which is greater than 0.50, indicating that the scale is suitable for factor analysis. The second test is the Bartlett test, which is significant for the scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). There are high correlations among variables, and within the scale used, the data set is suitable for factor analysis. When the data set was analyzed using Principal Component Factor Analysis, two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obtained.

**Table 2:** Results of Factor Analysis for Practical Competence Scale

<b>Factor 1: Various Cuisines and Dishes (Explained Variance: 45.179)</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
11. I prioritize candidates who can effectively apply dishes specific to Turkish cuisine in personnel selection.	0.865
8. I prioritize candidates who can effectively prepare and cook meats in personnel selection.	0.815
12. I prioritize candidates who can effectively apply dishes specific to Ottoman cuisine in personnel selection.	0.811
9. I prioritize candidates who can effectively prepare and cook seafood in personnel selection.	0.806
13. I prioritize candidates who can effectively apply dishes from various world cuisines in personnel selection.	0.799
10. I prioritize candidates who can effectively prepare open buffet cocktail foods in personnel selection.	0.799
7. I prioritize candidates who can effectively cook local and international soup varieties in personnel selection.	0.708
20. I prioritize candidates who can effectively apply bakery products and desserts in personnel selection.	0.571
<b>Factor 2: Chopping Vegetables, Cooking, and Serving (Explained Variance: 23.425)</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>



6. I prioritize candidates who can effectively apply different cooking methods in personnel selection.	0.897
17. I prioritize candidates who can effectively perform show service in personnel selection.	0.855
5. I prioritize candidates who can effectively chop vegetables in international styles in personnel selection.	0.725

These results provide insights into the preferences for practical competence in personnel selection, with Factor 1 focusing on various cuisines and dishes, and Factor 2 focusing on the skills related to chopping vegetables, cooking, and serving. The eigenvalue statistics indicate that the first factor explains 45.179% of the total variance, while the second factor explains 23.425% of the total variance.

### 3.2. Reliability Analysis of Data Collection Instrument

In the research, the reliability coefficient for the theoretical competence scale was calculated as  $\alpha=0.927$ , and for the practical competence scale, it was found to be 0.882. Reliability analysis is used to test the consistency of statements (judgments, propositions, questions, etc.) that make up a measurement tool developed to collect data from units forming a sample for a particular subject. The obtained reliability coefficients for both the theoretical and practical competence scales being greater than 0.80 indicate a high level of reliability for both scales in the research.

**Table 3:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage within Valid Responses
Gender			
Female	77	25.3	25.3
Male	227	74.7	74.7
Age			
18-25	23	7.6	7.6
26-30	59	19.4	19.4
31-40	70	23	23
41-50	96	31.6	31.6
51-60	46	15.1	15.1
61+	10	3.3	3.3
Marital Status			
Single	100	32.9	32.9
Married	204	67.1	67.1
Education Level			
Secondary Education	16	5.3	5.3
High School	80	26.3	26.3
Associate's Degree	76	25	25

Bachelor's Degree	89	29.3	29.3
Graduate Degree	43	14.1	14.1
Level of Tourism and Hospitality or Culinary Education			
None	60	19.7	19.7
Apprenticeship Training Center	35	11.5	11.5
High School or Equivalent	134	44.1	44.1
Associate's Degree	20	6.6	6.6
Bachelor's Degree	35	11.5	11.5
Graduate Degree	20	6.6	6.6
Known Foreign Languages			
English	166	54.6	54.6
German	39	12.8	12.8
French	16	5.3	5.3
Arabic	7	2.3	2.3
Spanish	6	2	2
None	18	5.9	5.9
English and German	30	9.9	9.9
English and French	5	1.6	1.6
English and Arabic	7	2.3	2.3
English and Spanish	3	1	1
German and French	2	0.7	0.7
English, German, and French	5	1.6	1.6
Total Work Experience in the Business			
Less than 1 year	46	15.1	15.1
1-5 years	136	44.7	44.7
6-10 years	77	25.3	25.3
11-15 years	20	6.6	6.6
16-20 years	20	6.6	6.6
21+ years	5	1.6	1.6
Total Work Experience in Tourism Enterprises			
Less than 1 year	-	-	-
1-5 years	56	18.4	18.4
6-10 years	87	28.6	28.6
11-15 years	55	18.1	18.1
16-20 years	44	14.5	14.5
21+ years	62	20.4	20.4
Classification of the Serviced Business			
4-star hotel	128	42.1	42.1
5-star hotel	176	57.9	57.9
Position in Hotel Management			
General Manager	22	7.2	7.2

Deputy General Manager	21	6.9	6.9
Food and Beverage Manager	28	9.2	9.2
Deputy Food and Beverage Manager	19	6.3	6.3
Executive Chef	143	47	47
Assistant Executive Chef	71	23.4	23.4
Service Manager	-	-	-

**Table 4:** Distribution of Criteria that Hotels Emphasize Most in Chef Placement

Frequency	Percentage	Percentage within Valid Responses
Having completed a relevant undergraduate program	41	13.5
Having sufficient knowledge about the job	183	60.2
Having professional experience	77	25.3
Being familiar to someone	3	1

A majority of participants, around 60.2%, indicated that hotels primarily emphasize having sufficient knowledge about the job during personnel placement. About 25.3% mentioned that professional experience is important, 13.5% mentioned the completion of a relevant undergraduate program, and 1% noted the significance of having a familiar connection. Based on this information, it is evident that in chef recruitment for hotel establishments, skills, education, and experience play significant roles. The finding that knowing someone familiar can facilitate job placement highlights that even with connections, having the necessary skills, education, and experience remains essential.

**Table 5:** Relationship Between Theoretical Competence and Practical Competence

N	Correlation Coefficient	Significance (p)
304	0,31**	<0,001

\*\*0,01 Significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between the level of theoretical competence and the level of practical competence ( $p < 0.01$ ). There is a positive linear relationship between the level of theoretical competence and the level of practical competence. As the level of theoretical competence increases, the practical competence of personnel also increases.

**Table 6:** Comparison of Theoretical Competence of Chef Applicants with the Professional Competence of Managers in the Hiring Process

Dimension	Theoretical Competence	Variables Groups	Groups Median (Min-Max)	p-value
Education Level		<b>Education Level</b>		
		High School	78.5 (56-90)	<0.001
		High School	80 (20-95)	

<i>Tourism and Hospitality or Culinary Education Level</i>	Graduate		
	Associate's Degree	82 (63-92)	
	Bachelor's Degree	86 (59-98)	
	Master's Degree	82 (67-100)	
	No Education	82 (20-96)	<0.001
	Apprentice Training Center	82 (68-92)	
	High School Graduate or Equivalent	83 (59-98)	
	Associate's Degree	80 (67-89)	
	Bachelor's Degree	86 (80-100)	
	Master's Degree	85 (78-93)	
<i>Known Foreign Language</i>	English	83 (59-98)	<0.001
	German	80 (20-92)	
	French	70.5 (64-86)	
	Arabic	79 (68-87)	
	Spanish	83 (71-84)	
	None	79 (56-90)	
	English and German	88 (80-100)	
	English and French	86 (86-86)	
	English and Arabic	84 (84-84)	
	English and Spanish	85 (85-85)	
	English and German	85 (85-85)	
	French		
	English, German, and French	80 (80-80)	
<i>Total Work Experience in the Establishment</i>			

<i>Total Experience in Tourism Establishments</i>	Less than 1 year	83.5 (70-98)	0.157
	1-5 years	82 (20-100)	
	6-10 years	86 (59-97)	
	11-15 years	83.5 (80-96)	
	16-20 years	81.5 (59-89)	
	21+ years	80 (80-80)	
	<i>Classification of the Service-Offering Establishment</i>	Less than 1 year	-
1-5 years		86 (70-98)	
6-10 years		82 (56-98)	
11-15 years		85 (59-100)	
16-20 years		77 (20-92)	
21+ years		82 (59-96)	
<i>Position in Hotel Management</i>		4-star Hotel	82 (20-98)
	5-star Hotel	84 (60-100)	
	General Manager	82 (67-96)	<0.001
	Deputy General Manager	82 (79-92)	
	Food and Beverage Manager	74 (59-91)	
	Assistant Food and Beverage Manager	87 (70-98)	
	Kitchen Chef	80 (59-100)	
	Assistant Kitchen Chef	86 (20-98)	
	Service Chef	-	

As it is seen that in Table 6, the theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment exhibit differences ( $p<0.001$ ) based on the educational level of the decision-making managers and department heads involved in the hiring process. Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with secondary education ( $p=0.038$ ). Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with high school education ( $p<0.001$ ). Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree prefer chefs with

higher theoretical competencies compared to those with associate's degree ( $p=0.001$ ). Among other educational levels of managers, there is no difference in the preferred theoretical competency levels for chef candidates.

The theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment in the hiring process exhibit differences ( $p<0.001$ ) based on the foreign language skills possessed by the decision-making managers and department heads in the tourism and hospitality or culinary fields. Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those without such education ( $p=0.001$ ). Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with apprenticeship education in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts ( $p=0.004$ ). Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with high school and equivalent education in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts ( $p=0.006$ ). Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts prefer personnel with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with associate's degree education in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts ( $p=0.001$ ). Among other managers with different foreign language skills, there is no difference in the preferred theoretical competencies for chefs.

Theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment in the hiring process do not show differences ( $p=0.157$ ) based on the total working periods of the decision-making managers and department heads within the establishment. In other words, the preferences of managers and department heads in personnel selection remain consistent regardless of their working durations in the establishment. Theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment in the hiring process exhibit differences ( $p=0.001$ ) based on the total working periods in the tourism sector of the decision-making managers and department heads. Managers and department heads with 1-5 years of working experience in the tourism sector prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with 16-20 years of experience ( $p<0.001$ ). Managers and department heads with 1-5 years of working experience in the tourism sector prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with 21 years and more of experience ( $p=0.01$ ). Among other managers, there is no difference in the preferred theoretical competencies for candidates.

Theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment in the hiring process exhibit differences ( $p=0.008$ ) based on the class of the establishment where the decision-making managers and department heads provide services. Managers and department heads serving in a five-star hotel prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to those serving in a four-star hotel. Theoretical competencies of chef candidates desired for employment in the hiring process exhibit differences ( $p<0.001$ ) based on the roles of the decision-making managers and department heads. Food and beverage managers prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to general managers, assistant food and beverage managers, and assistant kitchen chefs. Kitchen chefs, on the other hand, prefer chefs with higher theoretical competencies compared to assistant kitchen chefs and assistant food and beverage managers. Among managers in other roles, there is no difference in the preferred theoretical competencies for candidates. The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance

process shows variation based on the roles of the decision-making managers and department heads ( $p < 0.001$ ). Food and beverage managers prefer chefs with lower practical competence compared to general managers, assistant food and beverage managers, and kitchen chef assistants. Kitchen chefs, however, prefer chefs with higher practical competence compared to kitchen chef assistants and assistant food and beverage managers. Among other managers, there is no difference in preferred practical competence for candidates.

### 3.3. Evaluation of Research Findings

In this study examining the impact of the professional competence of managers and department heads involved in the job acceptance process in four and five-star hotels on the hiring process, the obtained findings from the analyses can be summarized as follows:

**Table 7:** Acceptance and Rejection Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision
H1: There is a significant relationship between the theoretical competence level and practical competence level of chefs in the hiring process.	Accepted
H2: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the education levels of decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H3: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the education status of decision-making managers and department heads in the fields of tourism, hospitality, or culinary arts.	Accepted
H4: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the foreign languages known by decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H5: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the total work durations within the business for decision-making managers and department heads.	Rejected
H6: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the total work durations in the tourism sector for decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H7: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in	Accepted

the job acceptance process shows variation based on the class of the establishment where decision-making managers and department heads provide services.	
H8: The theoretical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the roles or positions of decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H9: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the education levels of decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H10: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the education status of decision-making managers and department heads in the fields of tourism, hospitality, or culinary arts.	Rejected
H11: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the foreign languages known by decision-making managers and department heads.	Rejected
H12: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the total work durations within the business for decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H13: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the total work durations in the tourism sector for decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted
H14: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the class of the establishment where decision-making managers and department heads provide services.	Accepted
H15: The practical competence of chef candidates desired in the job acceptance process shows variation based on the roles or positions of decision-making managers and department heads.	Accepted



## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, the impact of the professional qualifications of managers and department heads involved in the hiring process in four and five-star hotels on the recruitment process was examined, and the following conclusions were reached. When examining the gender distribution of managers and department heads working in hotel establishments, it is observed that the majority are male. This could be attributed to factors such as long working hours and demanding labor conditions in the industry compared to other sectors. Additionally, the ages of managers and department heads in hotel establishments are mostly 30 years and above. This could be indicative of the industry's preference for hiring individuals with substantial professional experience for managerial and department head positions in order to ensure effective operations and decision-making within the hotel establishments. Taking into consideration the marital status of managers and department heads, it is observed that the majority are married. The prevalence of married managers could be linked to the fact that the average age of managers and department heads is 30 years and above. When examining the educational backgrounds of managers, it has been determined that a significant majority have received various forms of education in the fields of tourism and hospitality. In this context, it can be inferred that obtaining education is not only essential but also mandatory for individuals aspiring to become managers or hold leadership positions in any branch within hotel establishments. In addition to vocational education, the fact that participants possess a high level of proficiency in foreign languages highlights the importance of foreign language skills in hotel establishments. The high turnover rate of human resources in hotel businesses has been attempted to be determined based on the total working hours in the current establishment. This phenomenon is believed to be attributed to the acceleration of hospitality activities in Turkey, leading to the possibility of existing human resources finding better opportunities within the same industry in terms of economic, social, and various other aspects.

The first characteristic that managers consider essential for chefs is the ability to "apply theory into practice." Managers believe that a chef in a hotel establishment can achieve true success in the profession by putting theoretical knowledge into practical use. In the culinary profession, it is not possible to have practical application without theoretical knowledge or theoretical knowledge without practical application. Other essential characteristics that chefs, who are an indispensable workforce in the tourism sector, should possess are as follows: having previous experience and receiving education in tourism. Past experience and expertise are of utmost importance for a chef, playing a significant role in their classification and promotion. Chefs who have received education in both tourism and culinary arts can be considered more knowledgeable than their peers who lack such education, particularly in areas such as guest relations, new product development, healthy food choices, and quality control. However, proficiency in foreign languages is ranked as of lower importance in this hierarchy. It's worth noting that if the research had been conducted in regions attracting a significant number of foreign tourists, such as the Mediterranean or the Aegean, the ranking could have shown variations. When evaluating the priority sequence in personnel employment within the tourism sector, the first priority is given to experienced personnel. Following this, the order includes being educated, pricing policies, foreign language proficiency, and recruitment through personal connections. The distribution of the pre-employment assessments has also been

examined before hiring a new employee. Upon examining the distributions, it has been observed that a significant portion of the participants conduct preliminary work by describing the job, workplace, and required skills. In cases where appropriate personnel selection cannot be made, the most significant risk among the potential outcomes is the increase in the risk of work-related accidents. This line of thought is followed by a sequence where disruptions in the workplace climate and an increase in work accidents lead to higher turnover rates and wastage. The most commonly used method in chef selection is the interview technique, followed by combinations of interview-exam and interview-exam-psychotechnical methods. When examining the implementation of HR policies concerning chefs, it was found that the top management and the human resources department take the lead. The human resources department follows in the second place, while the top management is in the last place. Methods for recruiting chefs for businesses have been evaluated. Accordingly, the most common methods for chef recruitment are various advertisements or individual applications, followed by employee recommendations and the use of educational institutions or professional organizations as the most preferred recruitment channels. It has been observed that the most significant criterion that businesses pay attention to in personnel placement is having "sufficient knowledge about the job. "In this context, it is evident that modern hotel establishments aim to gain a competitive advantage in both national and international markets by acquiring chefs with sufficient knowledge and skills. Additionally, criteria such as "having professional experience" and "having completed a degree program related to the field" emerge as focal points that hotel establishments consider in chef recruitment. Among the attributes that businesses emphasize in chef selection, the candidate's overall appearance, attire, and attention to detail stand out. Personal grooming is not only important for chefs but also a significant criterion for all professions, especially in the service sector. A chef who neglects personal grooming can cause much more harm to the establishment's image than to their own. Furthermore, the ability of candidates to express themselves accurately and their competencies in customer and staff relations are qualities highly valued by hotel establishments in their hiring process. Factors such as the employee's enthusiasm for the job, their previous professional development, decision-making and leadership skills, are also among the other considerations that businesses take into account in personnel selection. The theoretical competencies of chef candidates applying for a job do not vary based on the total work experience of the managers and department heads involved in the recruitment process of the establishments. The theoretical competencies of chefs differ based on the educational level of managers and department heads, their education level in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts, their proficiency in foreign languages, the total work experience in tourism establishments, the class of the service-providing establishment, and their roles in hotel management.

Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree level of education prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with a secondary education, high school, or associate degree education level. Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree level of education in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts prefer chefs with a higher theoretical competency who also have a bachelor's degree level of education in tourism and hospitality or culinary arts, compared to those who have not received education in these fields or have education from vocational training centers, high school, and associate degree level. Managers and department heads who are proficient in both English and German prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to those who have knowledge

of only German and no other foreign language. Managers and department heads with proficiency in English prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to those who have proficiency in French but no knowledge of other foreign languages. In the tourism sector, managers and department heads with 1-5 years of work experience prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to those with both 16-20 years and 21 years and above of work experience. In a five-star hotel, managers and department heads providing services prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to those in a four-star hotel. Food and beverage managers prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to general managers, food and beverage manager assistants, and kitchen chef assistants. Kitchen chefs prefer chef candidates with higher theoretical competencies compared to kitchen chef assistants and food and beverage manager assistants. The practical competencies of chef candidates do not vary based on the education level and foreign language proficiency of the managers and department heads involved in the recruitment process of the establishments. The practical competencies of chef candidates vary based on the education level of managers and chefs, the total working period in the establishment, the total working period in tourism enterprises, the class of the service-providing establishment, and the managerial responsibilities. Managers and department heads with a bachelor's degree prefer chef candidates with higher practical competencies compared to those with high school or equivalent education. Managers and department heads with a postgraduate degree also prefer chef candidates with higher practical competencies compared to those with high school or equivalent education. Managers and department heads with an associate degree prefer chef candidates with higher practical competencies compared to those with high school or equivalent education. Based on the data obtained from the research, several recommendations have been provided to hotel establishments, managers, and employees. These include: (1) Increasing the participation of female managers in the sector to address gender disparities in leadership roles within hotel businesses. (2) Offering employment opportunities to educated recent graduates to contribute to the development of a young managerial profile in hotel establishments. (3) While the rate of professional training among hotel managers is already high, expanding the scope of content in vocational training curricula and diversifying training activities to enhance their effectiveness. (4) Many hotel managers are proficient in at least one foreign language. Expanding foreign language education both within and outside the business could contribute to the positive development of the organizational culture. (5) Aiming for a significant reduction in workplace accidents and potential risks by prioritizing the selection of appropriate and experienced personnel.

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