Educational Level Differences in Job Satisfaction and Service Orientation: Case of Hotels in Novi Sad (Serbia)[*]

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the educational level differences in service orientation and job satisfaction among the hotel employees in Novi Sad (Vojvodina Province, Serbia). For that purpose, we used service orientation scale, developed by Dienhart et al. (1992) in Kim et al. (2005), and job satisfaction scale developed by Lytle (1994) in Kim et al. (2005). Our assumptions were that there would be significant educational level differences in service orientation and job satisfaction. It has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference in terms of educational level in six of nine elements in service orientation. Service orientation through positive interaction with guests and superiors, adequate training and established procedures in service business is highly correlated to job satisfaction of hotel employees which is reflected in comfort on the workplace, enjoyment and satisfaction that the work offers. It is of great importance for hotel management to have in mind that different educational level employees respond and behave differently in respect of service orientation.

Key words: Educational level; Hotels; Job satisfaction; Service orientation; Novi Sad

Introduction

Service orientation of employees is determined by many factors - from the work environment, job demands, interpersonal relationships within the organization to financial and personal satisfaction. One of the new approaches emphasizes the importance of the connection between personal characteristics and the job requirements. Tourism, as an extremely complex activity, orders and requires constant and long-term study of a large number of determinants that affect the successful business enterprises. In recent years, researches put in the centre of many studies the phenomena of the relation between service orientation and job satisfaction of the employees in subjects of travel industry. It have been analyzed many factors that affect the quality of tourism services and opportunities to improve service processes. Employees are no longer only technically part of the service process, but the most important factor in perception of services by service users – the tourists. According to Kim (2008), if employees are satisfied with the job, and if their personality traits are expressed and perceived by the organization, the customer will perceive all this through the service received. It is obvious that customers very emphasize the treatment by employees during the consumption of certain services and the treatment is highly connected to the educational level of employees. Thanks to

this finding, there is the expansion of the HR sector among the hotels in Novi Sad and employees becoming center of interest of experts and management of hotel enterprises.

Review of the Literature: Service Orientation and Job Satisfaction

The purpose of service orientation is to explain the company philosophy and culture of business to its employees in order to improve the quality of the provided adequate service. Service orientation of employees could be defined as "an organization-wide embracement of a basic set of relatively enduring organizational policies, practices and procedures intended to support and reward service-giving behaviours that create and deliver service excellence" (Lytle, 1998, 459).On the other side, authors such as Dienhart et al. (1992) observed the service orinetation as the ability to be useful, thoughtful, considerate and cooperative in providing services at the individual level. Bowen et al. (1989) suggested that companies use for service orientation, successfully implement its business strategy to improve competitive position through customer satisfaction. The authors continue to imply that service-oriented companies, in order to satisfy their customers, through specific service-oriented procedures, create greater competitive advantage in services. Schneider and Bowen (1993) have noted that perceptions of employees in the service sector, in connection with the practice of providing services associated with the perception of customers about the quality of used services. In other words, adequate organizational climate that is present among employees has a positive effect on consumers. The consequence of the closeness between employees and clients during the process of providing services could anticipate future employee needs.

Given the numerous indications of the importance of human resource management, in recent years there is more and more emphasis on proper selection of employees in tourism (O'Connor et al. 2000; Kim et al., 2003; 2005). Many studies show that investing in staff certainly contributes to the quality of tourist services, and therefore the profits of companies. In addition to equipment modernization and introduction of new technologies, it is also necessary to educate staff on all levels, for a successful response to contemporary trends in tourist flows.

Some indicators suggest to all specific requirements of consumers and travel directions to improve the existing offer. Employees in tourism must have certain knowledge and skills in order to provide adequate service. This is primarily based on general culture, different expertise and specialist knowledge and communication and organizational skills (Galičić and Ivanović, 2008). There are required also a certain psychological characteristics that will meet with increasingly complex demand. Within the company there must be a communications network that will enable the timely flow of information and creating the optimal business environment. According to Petrović and Marković (2012), creating a pleasant working environment, management has largely created the basis for a successful business through service orientation and satisfied guests.

On the other side, job satisfaction is the extent to which "is measured by how many employees feel positive or negative when it comes to the job" (Odom et al., 1990, 159). In a service business, job satisfaction ensures that employees are treated service users with maximum respect (Hoque, 2000; Arnett et al., 2002; Ishitani, 2010). Because of the importance of contact with service users due to the development of relations with them, the employees' job satisfaction is a major concern for service companies, which want to keep a large number of loyal customers.

Jerome and Kleiner (1995) find that companies which are working to improve employee's job satisfaction, motivation and job dedication, can expect long-term benefits of corporate success, loyalty, productivity and retention of employees. Job satisfaction also has a positive correlation with a commitment to organizations (Arnett et al. 2002) and on performance (Birnbaum and Sommers, 1993; Babin and Boles, 1996). Shaw (1999) argues that there is a strong negative relationship between job dissatisfaction and level of turnover which make employees. Moreover, Kim et al. (2009) believe that if employees are dissatisfied with their work, it is more likely to leave the organization and does not make expectations. Selection of adequate human resources becomes a crucial moment for the further advancement of the company and it will not stop the process of creating high-quality services.

Methodology

The research paper included 55 employees at all business levels in six hotels in Novi Sad. Among the respondents, nearly 80% reside in the territory of Novi Sad, and the remainder in surrounding smaller towns who gravitate to Novi Sad, and the age of most respondents are less then 30, then between 30 and 40 years, and the smallest proportion of respondents are between 40 and 50 years. When analyzing the gender structure, almost equal number of surveyed male and female are concluded (47% men and 53% women). When it comes to the working position, which we define as managerial and executive (employers and staff), results show that the higher proportion of employees in the executive affairs of employees in managerial positions (79% employees and 21% managers).

Figure 1
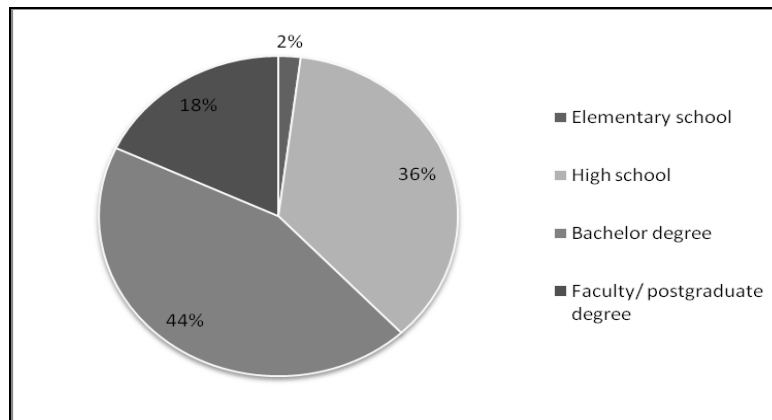**Structure of respondents by education level**

Fig. 1 presents the educational structure and clearly shows the highest percentage of respondents with bachelor degree, i.e. on the basis of this sample could be conclude that in observed hotels there are the most employees with a bachelor and slightly less with a high school diploma. Only one respondent has a primary education (the maid) and nearly 1/5 of respondents who completed postgraduate level of education.

The questionnaire for our research consists of three parts. The first part involves items which concerned socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (age, gender, work position, level of education, etc.). Second part consists of the list of nine items about the *service orientation (S1-9)* of respondents. This questionnaire is translation of the Service Orientation Scale developed by Dienhart and colleagues (1992) and Kim et al. (2005). The job satisfaction scale was adapted from Lytle' research (1994), with only five items: *P1-5* (Kim, et al. 2005). We decided to make our study more functional, so we used an abbreviated version of the questionnaire, where we included five items which were fit into planned research. In both scales, the respondents express their opinion about items on the five-point Likert (from 1 - completely agree to 5 - completely disagree).

Results and Conclusions

The main goal of the research is to determine if there are significant statistical differences between hotel employees with different educational level in the categories of service orientation and job satisfation. A One way ANOVA test (Analysis of variance) was carried out to complete this goal. The results of the statistical test showed that differences

exist in the case of **service orientation (S1-9)**, at the following elements that were tested: *Interacting with customers is enjoyable* (F=11.117, p<0.01), *The training I received prepared me to provide excellent service* (F= 6.940, p<0.01), *Customers treat me with respect* (F=4.153, p<0.01), *At peak hours it is so busy that we cannot provide excellent service* (F=4.857, p<0,01), *Our service procedures make it easy for me to give excellent service* (F= 3.544, p<0.05), *My manager expects us to always follow procedures, even if it means giving less than excellent service* (F=4.689, p<0.01). The category of **job satisfaction (P1-5)** did not showed any significant difference between employees with different educational level (Table 1

Table 1
Service orientation and job satisfation differences among hotel emloyees with different educational levels

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
S1 Interacting with customers is enjoyable.*	Between Groups	6.531	3	2.177	11.117	.000
	Within Groups	21.148	108	.196		
	Total	27.679	111			
S2 It is important to me that the customer is satisfied.	Between Groups	.163	3	.054	.806	.493
	Within Groups	7.266	108	.067		
	Total	7.429	111			
S3 The employees at my company provide excellent service.	Between Groups	1.280	3	.427	1.148	.333
	Within Groups	40.148	108	.372		
	Total	41.429	111			
S4 My manager encourages me to provide excellent service.	Between Groups	2.879	3	.960	1.132	.340
	Within Groups	91.550	108	.848		
	Total	94.429	111			
S5 The training I received prepared me to provide excellent service.*	Between Groups	20.595	3	6.865	6.940	.000
	Within Groups	106.825	108	.989		
	Total	127.420	111			
S6 Customers treat me with espect.*	Between Groups	8.280	3	2.760	4.153	.008
	Within Groups	71.782	108	.665		
	Total	80.063	111			
S7 At peak hours it is so busy that we cannot provide excellent service.*	Between Groups	20.883	3	6.961	4.857	.003
	Within Groups	154.795	108	1.433		
	Total	175.679	111			
S8 Our service procedures make it easy for me to give excellent service.*	Between Groups	8.239	3	2.746	3.544	.017
	Within Groups	83.681	108	.775		
	Total	91.920	111			
S9 My manager expects us to always follow procedures, even if it means giving less than excellent	Between Groups	20.510	3	6.837	4.689	.004
	Within Groups	157.481	108	1.458		
	Total	177.991	111			

service.*						
P1 I consider my job pleasant.	Between Groups	1.272	3	.424	.574	.634
	Within Groups	79.835	108	.739		
	Total	81.107	111			
P2 I feel fairly-well satisfied with my present job.	Between Groups	2.808	3	.936	1.528	.212
	Within Groups	66.183	108	.613		
	Total	68.991	111			
P3 I definitely like my work.	Between Groups	2.686	3	.895	1.175	.323
	Within Groups	82.305	108	.762		
	Total	84.991	111			
P4 My job is pretty interesting.	Between Groups	2.880	3	.960	1.264	.291
	Within Groups	82.040	108	.760		
	Total	84.920	111			
P5 I find real enjoyment in my work.	Between Groups	5.071	3	1.690	1.965	.124
	Within Groups	92.893	108	.860		
	Total	97.964	111			

* **Bolded items** show statistical significant difference between employees' opinions with different educational level.

As significant statistical differences were determined between employees with different educational level, an additional Post Hoc test was conducted at six of the stated categories of service orientation. The reason was to point out the pairs with the most noticeable differences.

The element of *S1,* the main differences are at the following extremities: elementary school-high school, elementary school-college and elementary school-faculty/postgraduate degree. There is a tendency of higher differences between the two poles, as the bias of the educational level is higher. The conclusion is that employees with higher level of education are enjoying more in the interaction with guests, than the employees with the basic, elementary education (Table 2).

Table 2:
The review of significant differences for the item S1*

Dependent Variable	(I) Educational level	(J) Educational level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Dependent Variable Upper Bound
S1	Elementary school	High school	-1.61(*)	.323	.000	-2.25	-.97
		Bachelor degree	-1.72(*)	.324	.000	-2.37	-1.08
		Faculty / postgrad. degree	-1.80(*)	.319	.000	-2.43	-1.17

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The main differences in the element of *S5* are in the extremities pairs of high school-bachelor degree and high school-faculty/postgraduate degree. Employees with the attained faculty degree or higher stated more often that the attended training appraised their skill of providing an excellent service, than the employees with a high school degree (Table 3).

Table 3
The review of significant differences for the item S5*

Dependent Variable	(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Dependent Variable Upper Bound
S5	High chool	Bachelor degree	-.83(*)	.257	.002	-1.34	-.32
		Faculty / Postgrad. degree	-1.01(*)	.227	.000	-1.46	-.56

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There are statistically significant differences at the *S6* variable, (Table 4) between the following pairs: elementary school-bachelor degree, elementary school-faculty/postgraduate degree, and also among high school-bachelor degree. Noticeable, but not meaningful difference exists between the couple high school-faculty / postgraduate degree. It can be noted that guests have higher respect to staff with education higher than elementary and high school.

Table 4
The review of significant differences for the item S6*

Dependent Variable	(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Dependent Variable Upper Bound
S6	Elementary school	Bachelor degree	-1.59(*)	.596	.009	-2.77	-.40
		Faculty / Postgrad. degree	-1.38(*)	.588	.021	-2.55	-.21
	High school	Bachelor degree	-.55(*)	.211	.010	-.97	-.14
		Faculty / Postgrad. degree	-.35	.186	.065	-.72	.02

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The variable *S7* reported differences amongst the following pairs: faculty/postgraduate degree-elementary school, faculty/postgraduate degree-high school, faculty/postgraduate degree-bachelor degree (Table 5). Employees with high education level have the most disagreed with the fact that they cannot provide excellent service if there are many guests. Also, as the educational level falls, the difference between opinions is increasing.

Table 5
The review of significant differences for the item S7*

Dependent Variable	(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	Dependent Variable
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
S7	Faculty / Postgraduate degree	Elementary school	-1.76(*)	.863	.044	-3.47	-.05
		High school	-.86(*)	.274	.002	-1.40	-.31
		Bachelor degree	-.73(*)	.279	.011	-1.28	-.17

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

At the *S8* variable, there are significant differences stated between the pairs: elementary school-high school, elementary school-bachelor degree, and elementary school-faculty/postgraduate degree. It is noticeable that employees with lower educational level poorly perceive the contribution of established service procedures to the service quality level, and the difference between the opinions increases with the distinction in the education level. Highly educated staffs consider that the established service procedures help them in providing excellent service (Table 6).

Table 6
The review of significant differences for the item S8*

Dependent Variable	(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	Dependent Variable
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
S8	Elementary school	High school	-1.81(*)	.642	.006	-3.08	-.53
		Bachelor degree	-1.93(*)	.644	.003	-3.21	-.66
		Faculty / Postgrad. degree	-2.02(*)	.635	.002	-3.28	-.76

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Statistically significant difference in the case of the element *S9* exists amongst: elementary school-high school, elementary school-bachelor degree, elementary school- faculty/postgraduate studies, and also between: high school-faculty/postgraduate studies. It is noticed that staff with elementary education agree that service procedures should be abided as the manager expects, despite of causing lower service quality. Employees with faculty/postgraduate degree mostly disagree with this statement (Table 7).

Table 7
The review of significant differences for the item S9*

Dependent Variable	(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Dependent Variable Upper Bound
S9	Elementary school	High school	2.32(*)	.881	.010	.58	4.07
		Bachelor degree	2.69(*)	.883	.003	.94	4.44
		Faculty / Postgrad. degree	2.90(*)	.871	.001	1.17	4.63
	High school	Faculty / Postgrad. degree	.58(*)	.276	.039	.03	1.12

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

In light of the upper mentioned facts, it can be concluded that there are dissimilarities between the statements of employees with elementary educational level and those with higher degrees. It indicates that hotel managements should pay more attention to employees with less education to achieve the required level of service quality. There are even some obvious distinctions among the statements of employees with high school and faculty degree (or higher). The most important conclusion of the research is that service orientation of hotel employees heavily depends on their education. Workers with lower educational level should be sent more often on trainings to achieve the required skills and to understand the business philosophy of the company. In the category of job satisfaction, the research showed that there are no significant differences in statements, in relevance to educational level, and both lower and higher educated employees could enjoy their job evenly.

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