
RURAL TOURISM OF EASTERN SERBIA – HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

Depending on the existence and dominance of a resource in a certain rural area, different forms of rural tourism can be developed. Human resources are the most important factor in all forms of tourism business, including rural tourism. The subject of this paper is a survey of employee satisfaction in rural tourism, in Eastern Serbia - in the villages of the Timok region. The authors aimed to highlight the most important motivating factors of employees in smaller rural households. The technique of survey questionnaires was applied, while the obtained data were processed by the appropriate statistical method. The paper represents a modest contribution to the research of human resources motivation in the field of rural tourism, but the results obtained by the research can be recommendations to the general managers of rural households, in which way to best motivate their employees.

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Introduction

Human resource management is considered a new theoretical and scientific discipline, which deals with the study and critical review of all important aspects of human management. Man is less and less treated as an object of management, and more and more as a subject of leadership (Milić, 2011). Rural tourism is tourism that takes place in a rural area. At the same time, the rural area, in addition to the village as a settlement, includes the rural area - atar, as well as uninhabited areas and wilderness areas (Đenadić et al., 2016). The authors studied the directions of rural tourism in the

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region of Eastern Serbia in their previous research on the development directions of the Timok region (Ilić et al., 2020a). The ability to know and recognize people, ie employees, can be practiced through continuous education, through life experience, or it can be spontaneous or naturally innate (Ilić, Đukić, 2021). Tourism is becoming the main economic power in the new century. Due to its specific business, which includes travel and stays of people outside the place of residence, or due to the specific services it offers, organized tourism can significantly participate in increasing the total income of the economy and contribute to its development (Vojnović et al., 2012). Employees need the organizational ability of transformational leadership, ie understanding of their needs by managers (Ilić et al., 2020b). The future requires the unification of functions and the flow of information in all activities, especially in the tourism industry. New management models emphasize management that combines orientation, goal setting, decision making, and the application of various forms of leadership (Ilić, Simeonović, 2018). By conducting a survey of employee motivation factors in the rural tourism sector, the authors wanted to present the main motivations of employees, as an opinion about the relationship they have with their superior/boss or household manager.

Literature review

Creating a simple picture of tourism is not easy at all because there are too many factors “playing the role”, in other words it is a multidimensional phenomenon. Based on the fact that people, as tourists, are the basic objects and drivers of tourism development, this fact must be considered in defining terms of tourism (Marković, S., Marković, Z., 1970). Tourism, as a socio-economic phenomenon, represents the movement of people to meet tourist needs (Perić et al., 2020). It is a phenomenon that is present in all countries but manifests itself differently in scope and effects. Tourist satisfaction means meeting all his/her expectations. The modern tourism business has led, as in other service and production activities, to the emergence of a spoiled consumer (Zečević-Stanojević et al., 2021). The modern tourist is spoiled for the reason that tourist facilities are offered to him from all sides. As the offers are numerous, so are the contents (Vehapi, Mitić, 2021). What is important, when interacting with consumers and producers or service providers, is the possibility of such an offer that would exceed the expectations of tourists (Prodanović et al., 2021). Achieving this goal in modern tourism is not easy. But to delight, the tourist, as a consumer is not impossible. A tourism organization consists of many resources, but human resources make up its soft and sophisticated, most important component. Modern human resource management in organizations is not an easy task. In the past, a couple of decades ago, it was enough for a manager to be in a position to issue orders, which had to be carried out by employees without discussion (Vojnović et al., 2012). However, with the development of overall social relations, the approach to human resource management has also developed (Ilic, Nikolic, 2019). The modern market is characterized by turbulent changes, while globalization has accelerated them even more (Đukić Mijatović et al., 2021).

As organizations had to adapt to business conditions, so did their leaders have to change management styles. Human resources, their knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies are key factors in the business of tourism companies. Numerous entities have recognized the importance of investing in human resources because they have proven to be extremely important capital (Cook, 2011). Human resources can also be defined as the total amount of knowledge and skills available to employees as a result of knowledge acquired through formal education and knowledge acquired through practical work and experience (Sánchez Cañizares, López-Guzmán Guzmán, 2010). Investing in human resources has its equivalent in better business, better services, and the expected increased satisfaction of users of services and tourism products.

According to Werther, and Davis, the following sentence can be highlighted: "Equipment makes things possible, and people are the ones who make things happen." (Werther, Davis, 1996). Human resources enable and determine the success of every company, especially the tourist one. Among the employees are the people who come from different backgrounds, different attitudes, views on life, ways of solving problems, bringing with them some family inconsistencies. However at work, they must function as a well-tuned and rehearsed orchestra. The most important thing is that they all have to adapt to the cultural pattern that prevails in the company because that is the only way for optimal business result (Stojanovic et al., 2017). All the skills and potential of the employees must be expressed, especially in the tourism business. They must respect the philosophy and culture of the organization, but also of their clients, and function in harmony to achieve a synergy effect and provide an image of quality and business excellence. Of course, employee satisfaction must be ensured by taking care of the even distribution of work, fair remuneration, and taking care of health and working conditions - by creating and encouraging a sense of community and loyalty to the company. According to Blažević, as education is one of the most important forms of human capital, investing in it results in much better and greater effects than investing in equipment (Blažević, 2007). However, such capital shows its value only when it is implemented, applied, and turned into something tangible and valuable for the offer of tourist products. When such an offer gets its valorization through consumers and gets a financial equivalent, only then are human resources the capital of the company (Ilic et al., 2019). Otherwise, it is only intellectual potential that is untapped. "Human resource management (especially in rural tourism) is a process of attracting, engaging, training, motivating, retaining and rewarding employees, to create a safe and fair environment for employees on the one hand, and on the other hand to achieve strategic goals of the organization." (Djordjević-Boljanović, 2018). Human resource management is successful if the basic task is done, which means increasing labor productivity under the company's strategy and in an ethically and socially responsible way. It is necessary to harmonize individual, organizational and social goals. What is the importance of motivating human resources, ie employees for the tourism industry? Motivation is one of the most important topics in management, in general. The concept of motivation is associated with several elements: needs, desires, intentions, and aspirations. All the above terms are the drivers of the activity.

Motivation can therefore be defined as: “the process of initiating, directing and maintaining human behavior towards a certain goal” (Šarović, 2009). This way managers can achieve better business performance. Achieving the performance of employees and managers can be presented as a combination of three key factors: the ability of employees to achieve performance, the chances of employees to achieve performance and the will or motivation of employees to achieve performance (Bratić et al., 2021). The ability of employees to achieve better business effects is possible through their education and training. The organizational structure of the company can enable employees to maximize the effects of business tasks (Ilić, Mihajlović, 2015; Milojević et al., 2020).

However, although the employee may be competent and the organization may provide him education - all this will not be worth if the employee is not motivated for job. From the aspect of the rural tourism sector, motivation could be understood as a means of improving business performance - attracting tourists to rural areas. In this way, motivated human resources would be able to maximize business effects (Podovac et al., 2019). The ability of employees to achieve effects can be possible through their on-the-job training. The structure of the rural household and “how to do better business” in these households, provide an opportunity for employees to achieve better results (Košić et al., 2015). However, employees in rural tourism, as in any other field, can be competent to achieve performance, only if the household or organization in which they work can enable them to achieve performance. Thus, all factors are closely related and interdependent.

Considering the results of numerous researches and experiences, the answer is that there is no universal solution for building a motivational system for any company, including a tourist company, but it largely depends on the policy of an individual organization and specific solutions (Milićević et al., 2015). One of the main tasks is to define the goals of the reward policy and system, and the condition is better knowledge and understanding of human motivation. The system of rewarding and motivating cannot depend on the individual behavior and attitude of managers but is an integral part of business and development policy, defined rules and norms that arise from it. The motivational system of a tourist facility (households for example) must provide three types of behavior important for the functioning of the organization and development (Torrington et al., 2004): 1. people need to be attracted to the system and they must stay in it, 2. employees must perform the assumed tasks and obligations adequately, 3. The innovative and creative activity must be developed to achieve the development goals of the organization.

The research methodology

The authors tested the motivation of employees in rural tourist households in a case study of eastern Serbia and the Timok Region. The paper applied the methodology of field research because the secondary data were not enough to shed light on the phenomenon of motivation of employees in rural tourism in this part of the country. The applied Survey method belongs to the scope of marketing research, which is the systematic and comprehensive collection and processing of data needed to make strategic managerial

decisions. Research on the behavior of employees, in this case, participants in achieving economic benefits through smaller rural households, put respondents/employees at the very center of the research - their attitudes, needs, and opinions. The following basic hypothesis was tested by the method of surveys and interviews: "If it is clearly determined what motivates employees in the rural tourism sector the most (motivation factors), it will be easier for the main bearers, ie household managers, to motivate employees, and the tourist product will indirectly be more valued by consumers." The authors emphasize that the indirect evaluation of the tourist product would result from the greater commitment of employees in the rural tourism sector. In other words, if they were adequately rewarded, the performance in the business would be better and thus consumers of rural products would be more satisfied with the services provided. To research the motivation of employees in rural tourism, more precisely in 50 rural catering facilities in the Timok Region, an adequate survey questionnaire was prepared, which is the purpose of the research.

During the survey, the governing bodies were contacted, ie the heads of rural households, who gave their consent for the survey. The questionnaire contained seventeen questions, 7 of which were of a general nature (gender, education, age), and 10 related to the degree of motivation of employees and the attitude of superiors towards employees in households. The time frame of the research covered the period from April 1, 2021. by the end of September 2021. The territory around all major cities of the Timok Region (Zajecar, Bor, Majdanpek, Kladovo, Negotin, Sokobanja, Knjazevac) is included. Data from the survey questionnaires were processed by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical method, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Results and discussion

The first part of the research belongs to the descriptive method, by which the authors presented the structure of employees in the rural tourism sector, by age, gender and education. The authors also pointed out how familiar employees are with the concept of motivation and what the employees in the rural tourism sector mostly associated this concept (motivation) with. The authors pointed out that the research included rural households that have been engaged in rural tourism for more than 5 years and belong to larger rural households. Rural households employ up to seven workers and offer services of approximately hotel character (accommodation, food preparation, and service). A total of 97 respondents participated in the survey, the most represented were from 46 to 55 years (43), then 1/3 of respondents were in the age group of 36 to 45 years (30), from 18 to 35 years, there were a total of 12 respondents, as and persons over 55 years of age (12). There were 65 women and 32 men. Most respondents had secondary and higher education, 87%. Significant differences were evident in the ratio of the gender of respondents and education, ie given the specifics of jobs in the rural tourism sector, specifically larger rural households and smaller catering facilities, women who performed jobs at the operational level were mostly degree (53). Out

of a total of 97 respondents, 70 respondents answered that they are familiar with the conceptual meaning of motivation and that motivation is a very important factor that should be directed to the human resources employed in the rural tourism sector. They connected motivation with material satisfaction, but also with intangible support from their superior employer. A slightly higher percentage of respondents were those who were more familiar about the concept of motivation (connecting this concept not only to money but also to praise, opportunities for career advancement, additional education, etc.). Only 5.7% of employees believe that fair motivation is implemented in the households where they are employed. Percent of 79.5% of respondents thought that motivation was insufficiently implemented, while 14.8% thought that the motivation was not implemented at all. The first indicators were answers to questions related to personal satisfaction, the second indicators were related to managerial staff (heads of rural households, managers of catering facilities), and the third indicators were related to interpersonal skills.

The analysis of basic issues was related to employees' opinions about the importance of the following 10 items: Managers support employees' ideas; Managers are personally involved in the rural organization (household); Employees receive clear instructions from the manager (what is expected of employees); Possibility to choose an independent way of performing tasks; Possibility of decision-making within the domain of employee work; Cooperation with colleagues in the rural household; Communication with superiors; Individual evaluation of results (amount of income); Possibility of advancement in the service depending on the achieved work results; Opportunity for professional development. Respondents rated these items on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 was the lowest grade and five was the highest grade). The statistical data collected from the surveys were processed by SPSS - descriptive statistics, arithmetic means, standard deviation, tabular presentation, ie analytical statistics, frequency distribution analysis, gradation of features, and observations by statistical method for nominal variables (chi-square, distribution). Based on employee evaluations, the analysis of the main components for these issues, which were treated as variables, is shown in Table 1, as a correlation matrix. Table 1. allows determining the strength of the relationship between the variables from the survey through the correlation coefficient. The correlation range of the coefficient is from -1 to +1. The level of the coefficient of dependence among the variables is over 0.3. The table shows that there are correlation coefficients that are greater than 0.3 and that the data are suitable for decision-making, ie questions from the correlated survey. The methodology of the analysis was conducted through another confirmation, ie. access to other tests for a more precise assessment of the significance of the use of the so-called Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Table 1. Correlation matrix between variables or questions

	<i>p6A</i>	<i>p6B</i>	<i>p6C</i>	<i>p6D</i>	<i>p6E</i>	<i>p6F</i>	<i>p6G</i>	<i>p6H</i>	<i>p6I</i>	<i>p6J</i>	
Correlation coefficient	<i>p6A</i>	1,000	,546	,526	,289	,228	,354	,360	,179	,317	,327
	<i>p6B</i>	,546	1,000	,639	,500	,415	,359	,425	,261	,361	,337
	<i>p6C</i>	,526	,639	1,000	,485	,454	,459	,359	,303	,494	,377
	<i>p6D</i>	,289	,500	,485	1,000	,675	,373	,282	,394	,519	,364
	<i>p6E</i>	,228	,415	,454	,675	1,000	,492	,372	,414	,498	,416
	<i>p6F</i>	,354	,359	,459	,373	,492	1,000	,721	,380	,391	,408
	<i>p6G</i>	,360	,425	,359	,282	,372	,721	1,000	,337	,373	,324
	<i>p6H</i>	,179	,261	,303	,394	,414	,380	,337	1,000	,665	,587
	<i>p6I</i>	,317	,361	,494	,519	,498	,391	,373	,665	1,000	,767
	<i>p6J</i>	,327	,337	,377	,364	,416	,408	,324	,587	,767	1,000

Source: Author's processing

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value was greater than 0.7, while the second Bartlett's Sphericity Test was significant at the 0,000 error level. These values of throughput tests for the analysis of the main components showed that the parameters set by the respondents, ie the scale as a method, justified the measurement of this phenomenon. After previous checks, the methodology was conducted to calculate the common variation that the variables had among themselves through the so-called extracted variance.

Table 2. Communality explained by variance in variables

Indicators	Initial	Extracted variance
p6A Managers support employees' ideas	1,000	0,389
p6B Managers are personally involved in the rural organization (household)	1,000	0,784
p6C Obtaining clear instructions from the manager on what is expected from employees within the work.	1,000	0,591
p6D Possibility to choose own way of working.	1,000	0,430
p6E Possibility of decision-making within the domain of employee work.	1,000	0,413
p6F Cooperation with colleagues in the rural organization (household).	1,000	0,999
p6G Communication with superiors.	1,000	0,547
p6H Individual evaluation of results (amount of income)	1,000	0,492
p6I Possibility of advancement in the service depending on the achieved work results	1,000	0,939
P6J Opportunity for professional development	1,000	0,633
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.		

Source: Author's processing

Table 2. explains and shows the utility variance and variables. Maximum variation weighs on a unit, which means that values closer to it had more in common in terms of variation with other variables. There was a common variability between the indicators explained by absolute variation over variance. The explained amount of variance (component saturation) can correlate to a maximum with some indicators. The purpose of the analysis was to identify indicators that simultaneously vary to a new dimension that forms a group of common factors that affect a phenomenon. This further implies the use of a test that will calculate the total variability, ie the amount of the same. The Kaiser criterion is used, through which the common variability is extracted and which is declared with a score higher than one. Which indicators to keep in the analysis are decided only after the application of the so-called rotation of the factor space to facilitate the interpretation of the results. Orthogonal rotation was also used via one of the defaults "Virimax". Indicators are shown that high values of variance vary in new impact factors. Table 3. shows the explained variability of the main components.

Table 3. Totally explained the variability of major components

Components	Basic equivalents of variance			Extracted summarized component variability		
	Total	% from the variance	Cumulative %	Total	% from the variance	Cumulative %
1	4,846	48,463	48,463	2,861	28,614	28,614
2	1,295	12,949	61,412	2,272	22,722	51,337
3	1,003	10,032	71,443	1,083	10,830	62,167
4	,888	8,876	80,319			
5	,448	4,476	84,795			
6	,425	4,254	89,049			
7	,381	3,808	92,857			
8	,308	3,081	95,938			
9	,259	2,593	98,531			
10	,147	1,469	100,000			

Source: Author's processing

According to the rules of analysis, only those components (factors) with which the Kaiser criterion was over 1 (units) are retained. These were the first three components with which the variance of the indicator correlates in 62% of cases. Three groups of components have been retained, which will be named later. Tables 4, 5. and 6. show the matrices of rotated components with their saturations based on each indicator of the first, second and third components.

Table 4. Matrix of rotated components based on each indicator of the first component

Indicators	The first component
p6A	0,153
p6B	0,134
p6C	0,305
p6D	0,400
p6E	0,395
p6F	0,230
p6G	0,220
p6H Individual assessment work results (amount of income)	0,654
P6I Opportunity to progress at work depending on the results achieved	0,925
P6J Opportunity for professional development	0,739

Source: Author's processing

Table 5. Matrix of rotated components based on each indicator of the other component

Indicators	The second component
p6A Managers support employees' ideas	0,569
p6B Managers are personally involved in the rural organization (household)	0,863
p6C Obtaining clear instructions from the manager on what is expected from employees within the work.	0,657
p6D Possibility to choose own way of working	0,487
p6E	0,380
p6F	0,221
p6G	0,307
p6H	0,145
p6I	0,258
p6J	0,217

Source: Author's processing

Table 6. Matrix of rotated components based on each indicator of the third component

Indicators	The third component
p6A	0,204
p6B	0,145
p6C	0,258
p6D	0,183
p6E	0,335
p6F Cooperation with colleagues in your rural organization (household)	0,947
p6G Communication with with superiors	0,636
p6H	0,209
p6I	0,128
p6J	0,201

Source: Author's processing

According to the results of the research, about 1/3 of the respondents from the surveyed area of Timok Region decided on the motivation factor and personal satisfaction in terms of income. Almost 23% of respondents said that the factors of fair relations with superiors and business ethics are second in importance for the good motivation of employees in the rural tourism sector. Almost 11% of respondents opted for factors motivating good collegial relations and cooperation. The overall analysis of the main components and results obtained by surveying employees in rural tourism organizations concluded that personal satisfaction was the best form of motivation factor for employees, although the relationship with superiors, ie household owners, managers, was also very important factor. The third component, or motivational factors, which united one-fifth of the respondents, referred to the desire for good interpersonal relationships.

In rural tourism, the heads of private households are in one way the managers of the entire business process that is being carried out. Rural households can be explained and treated as entrepreneurial small firms, which do not employ a large number of workers. Therefore, managers of farms or small catering facilities in rural tourism should focus their activities on comprehensive support to employees in rural tourism, which includes: introducing employees to safety measures (especially in emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic), proposing health care with the appropriate use of protective equipment, because in this way improved and safer working conditions are created, which indirectly affects the satisfaction and motivation of employees. In this way, employees would get the image that their employer takes care of them and that they are important for the business. According to Nedeljković Knežević et al. (2020), it is recommended that in tourism enterprises (hotels or rural households) management engage around employee perception, provide sufficient feedback and improve mutual communication; to timely inform employees about the results of work; to organize meetings with employees to have the opportunity to express their views on improving working conditions and work processes, which also applies to the activities of rural tourism, for example providing sufficient information, ie improving mutual communication (Vuković et al., 2018). This could be expressed in the way that the manager of a rural household or a small catering facility can and should accept the ideas that his employees have, regarding work processes and working conditions (Laban et al., 2021). Only the improvement of the entire country on the European map of tourist offers will contribute to the better positioning of rural tourism in Serbia and its regions. Therefore, the recommendation could be made in the part related to advertising rural tourism products through information technologies, social networks, portals, which every manager of a rural household could and should afford, especially if he is a member of the younger generation. This would mean the promotion of a rural enterprise - household through a web portal. For this reason, the general manager of a rural enterprise must have an appropriate level of awareness for the use of information technology, even by the human resources in the enterprise, as this affects the achievement of better economic performance. Environmental impacts are significant for rural tourism, i.e. the correlation of rural tourism and greater awareness of environmental

protection leads to significant and turbulent changes. Ecological protection of rural areas and their revitalization creates conditions for the provision of high-quality tourist services (Cvijanović et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The paper and research of the authors indicate the importance of human resources, their motivation, and job satisfaction, directing managers to a more adequate approach to the motivation process, as one of the four main pillars of management (POMK - Planning, Organizing, Motivating and Control). In that way, the better economic performance of a certain organization would be influenced. Given that the surveys were conducted within the rural tourism sector in Serbia, knowledge, and application of employee motivation factors could affect the satisfaction of consumers of rural products (or services) and thus attract more domestic and foreign tourists. The overall analysis of the results obtained by surveying employees in the rural tourism sector, in the area of Eastern Serbia and the Timok Region, determined that personal satisfaction, ie material reward, is the best form of employee motivation. Another important factor was the relationship with superiors. The desire for good interpersonal relations, ie a good work climate, was also expressed to a large extent, although it united a fifth of the respondents.

The authors confirmed the main hypothesis of the paper. In the research conducted, the authors wanted to show the main factors motivating employees, as well as their opinion about the relationship they have with their superior/boss or household manager. The application of adequate motivation factors would have a positive effect on the best possible execution of work tasks.

Given the fact that better motivation, gives better performance in the work and quality of employees, consumers of rural tourism products would be more satisfied with the services provided. On the other hand, rural households/organizations would get loyal and loyal consumers, who would always return to the place with the best business (tourism) performance.

It can be emphasized that adequate internal and external communication is crucial in understanding, but also in creating good mutual relations between the heads of households and their employees. A high level of internal communication among employees (in addition to material satisfaction, which is primary), could contribute to a higher level of motivation. Based on the research of the literature as well as from the conversations with the heads of households (and smaller catering facilities), the authors in the concluding part emphasize the special importance of external communication of “local managers” with state management. However, this could be classified as a future direction of new research. Future directions of research could also focus on ways to obtain the necessary financial resources, as well as on attracting foreign direct investment for rural tourism development, innovating existing infrastructure, and providing resources for information and communication technologies to a better brand of Serbian rural tourism. Based on the fact that human resources are one of the most

important links in tourism, especially in service industries, motivational factors by which employees could provide excellent services play a crucial role in achieving the desired quality of rural tourism products in Serbia.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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