

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE EMPLOYEES IN NOVI SAD'S TOURIST AGENCIES

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Summary

This paper deals with current issues in the tourism sector, which is employee satisfaction, and result in the synthesis of theory and research findings on employee satisfaction in travel agencies, a factor for success and achieve greater profitability and competitiveness. The primary goal of this study was to determine the extent of employee satisfaction among staff in Novi Sad's tourist agencies, as well as to determine the parameters of employee motivation and enable the possible influence on bigger productivity and business competitiveness. The main objective of this study was to confirm a specific hypothesis. In this paper, the main hypothesis is that generally observing, staff employed in Novi Sad's travel agencies are mainly pleased with all offered segment or determinants that affect their business and it was confirmed. The basic method in this study is to survey a random sample, and analysis of results obtained from the data collected. Data processing used the SPSS program, version 17.0. Included were 107 respondents and the outcome reached by applying or use of statistical methods and secondary publications, confirming certain hypotheses that have been posted in the paper. Analyzing and processing the survey, which completely had a research character, led to the concrete and practical conclusions, proposals and guidelines about job satisfaction in tourist agencies in Novi Sad.

Key words: *job satisfaction, tourist agencies, Novi Sad*

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Introduction

The success of the tourist agency is not only measured by the achieved profit but also by meeting interests of internal and external groups, or to be more precise of the owner of the agency, then employees, and of course customers (Agarwal et al, 2001). However, there is not a precisely defined formalized way to determine the satisfaction level of employees. This paper represents a synthesis of the survey and electronic research, statistical data and available references, and it will result in a critical analysis and confirmation (denial) of certain hypotheses. For the purposes of this paper a survey was conducted, where the respondents evaluated the specific determinants of satisfaction, and overall data processing was done in the programming system Statistical Package for Social Sciences – SPSS, version 17.0. The specific sample included 13 travel agencies in Novi Sad. The statistical analysis determined the relationships between all variables in order to prove or refute specific hypotheses that will be mentioned, concerning the satisfaction of employees in Novi Sad's tourist agencies. The main goal of this work was to determine the extent of employee satisfaction among staff in Novi Sad's tourist agencies; to determine the degree of satisfaction of employees with certain segments of business as well as to determine the parameters of employee motivation and enable the possible influence on bigger productivity and business competitiveness.

The study also highlighted the key aspects of disadvantages, i.e. the segments representing the direct cause of employee dissatisfaction, which is then reflected in the business. This research can be a starting point for other more detailed research in this field with the aim to take corrective measures in business operations, and therefore to achieve higher profits and better competitive position in the tourism market.

Literature Review

Employee satisfaction is a particular trend dealing with a number of scientific disciplines, from which derives the enormous importance of this component in the development of tourism and tourism agencies in an increasingly competitive market (Judge et al, 2000). Most theoreticians believe that employee satisfaction can have large effects on overall business (Kafetsios et al, 2008). Employee satisfaction represents a component of the success of each company (Diaz- Serrano et al, 2005), and more satisfied workers are less likely to leave their employer (Gaziouglu et al, 2002). Organizations have significant effects on the people who work for them and some of those effects are reflected in how people feel about their work (Spector, 1997, Green et al, 2005, Gajić et al, 2011). Employee satisfaction directly or indirectly affects their behaviour (Locke, 1976, Locke, 1969). More satisfied workers are less likely to leave their employer (Clark 2001, Lam et al, 2001, Yee et al, 2010). Job satisfaction includes multidimensional psychological responses to ones job, and that such responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (emotional), and behavioral components (Brief et al, 2002, Sharpley et al, 2003, Chi et al, 2009).

Empirical studies have shown that relationship between employee satisfaction and productivity is not as clear as it might at first appear (Kovach, 1995). In addition, the pleasure does not affect only productivity but also some other phenomena in the organization, such as absenteeism and fluctuation.

For the purpose of this research created the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in 13 tourist agencies in Novi Sad in May 2011. There were 150 questionnaires distributed in total, out of which only 107 were complete and then analysed. However, due to poor turnout and return of the questionnaires, then to real difficulties in accessing the facilities, the obtained results were only indicative and they should serve as a good example and possible starting point for a representative survey. Nonetheless, many similar studies included even smaller sample. Theorists believe that about 50 respondents of the representative sample can achieve the desired results of the research. The primary objectives of this survey were to:

1. determine the demographic structure of employees at Novi Sad tourist agencies on the basis of the questionnaire created for the purpose of this research;
2. identify the extent of employee satisfaction among staff at tourist agencies;
3. determine the parameters of employee motivation at travel agencies and enable the possible influence on bigger productivity and business competitiveness; as well as
4. theoretically determine the correlation between the degree of satisfaction and level of education of participants at travel agencies.

The questionnaire contains precisely and clearly formulated questions, divided into three parts, with the responses given in the form of Likert scale (point 1 is complete disappointment and point 5 is full satisfaction). The first part dealt with the demographic structure of the sample. The second part of the questionnaire related to the basic parameters of employee satisfaction of staff in travel agencies in Novi Sad, whereas the third part of the questionnaire dealt with the parameters of motivation of employees in the workplace. All the collected data and analyses are processed in the SPSS package, version 17.0. Two main groups of statistical analysis were used: descriptive statistics (the method used to describe a group of respondents, i.e. survey sample, and the parameters such as frequency or median are obtained) and statistical conclusion method (a method of making certain conclusions and hypothesis testing). In statistical practice, there are two types of tests: parametric (data from interval scale which are normally distributed) and non-parametric tests (used for phenomena that cannot be measured quantitatively, but are presented by frequency and ranges).

On the basis of previously set goals and objectives, the main hypothesis of this research is:

H- Generally observing staff employed in travel agencies Novi Sad are mainly pleased with all offered segment or determinants that affect their business.

Sub-hypotheses are as follows:

- h1 – communication between superiors and their subordinates is satisfactory
- h2 – working space and business conditions meet the needs of employees
- h3 – organization at work meet the expected criteria of employees
- h4 – employees at travel agencies are paid enough although the position at the travel agency is not always the equivalent of knowledge and education of the employees
- h5 – employees at travel agencies in Novi Sad are overqualified for their positions
- h6 – there are attitudes that employment at travel agencies is humiliating, without any signs of pride among employees. The employees at tourist agencies are not respected by their superiors, and also further education and promotion are not guaranteed.

Research results

Out of 150 questionnaires in total, 107 contained full answers and therefore analysed. As can be seen in Table 1, most employees in the survey are men (50.5%), whereas there are 49.5% women. Out of 107 respondents who were included in the analysis, 51.4% are aged between 30 and 49, and most of them were married (45.8%). As far as education level is concerned, there are 39.5% who have high education and 35.5% graduated from university. Then 46.7% have work experience lasting between five and ten years, with the average salary of 300 euros (50.5%), and the least have the salary above 600 euros (10.3%).

Table 1. Demographic data of the respondents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
			Marital Status		
			Married	49	45,8
			Single	33	30,8
			Divorced	25	23,4
			Total	107	100,0
Sex	54	50,5	Work		
Male	53	49,5	experience		
Female	107	100,0	Until 5 years	35	32,7
Total			5 to 10 years	50	46,7
Age	42	39,3	10 to 20 years	20	18,7
18-29	55	51,4	More then 20 years	2	1,9
30-49	10	9,3	Total	107	100,0
50 and more	107	100,0	Monthly		
Total			salaries		
Level of Education			Up to 300 e	54	50,5
high school			300 to 600 e	40	37,4
higher school	23	21,5	600 and more	11	10,3
faculty	42	39,3	Total	105	98,1
(PhD, MSc)	38	35,5	Missing System	2	1,9
Total	4	3,7	Total	107	100,0
	107	100,0			

Source: research by authors.

Analyzing and processing the survey, which completely had a research character, led to the concrete and practical conclusions, proposals and guidelines about job satisfaction (Scott et al, 1985, Gajić et al, 2009). The results of the survey analysis will be included in the next few paragraphs.

The social atmosphere is an important factor for job satisfaction. Logically, the better working conditions and interpersonal relationships are the greater employee satisfaction. It is higher not only because they feel comfortable, but also because better working conditions provide better opportunity for improved job performance and success at work. The quality of relationships with associates is very important for job satisfaction (Grehart, 2005) as well as relationship between employees and their direct superior (Yee et al, 2008). Interpersonal relationships (the quality of relationships with associates) in tourist agencies in Novi Sad is at a very high level of communication with 39.3% satisfied, 35.5% is predominantly satisfied and 15% is very satisfied with the quality of relationships with associates (σ 0.884). Therefore, it can be concluded that the interpersonal relationships are, excluding some individual cases, at a very high level of communication. Likewise cooperation among employees is developed, because the percentage of those satisfied and those without complaints accounts for 50.5%, whereas there are only 5.6% dissatisfied (σ 0.742). The employees had the opportunity to express their attitude to the satisfaction with their superiors, with only 4.7% dissatisfied and 45.8% satisfied (σ 0.765). People are often dissatisfied with the poor working conditions, and the main reason for that is not the fact they personally find them unpleasant but because poor working conditions are an obstacle to achieving anticipated performance. Working conditions and adequate equipment for work meets the average criteria where 35.5% are satisfied, whereas only 2.8% are dissatisfied. (σ 0.831). The subjective satisfaction with the employer is associated with job satisfaction, salary, relationship with colleagues at work, increased security for staying in the workplace and reduced desire to work more for a higher salary (Chen, 2008). There are 29.9% (σ 0.756) respondents who stated that they are predominantly satisfied with safety at work; in other words, they positively commented on relationships and a sense of safety at work. Relationship between employees and their direct superior is on very high level: 50.5% of respondents were satisfied, and 36.4% predominantly satisfied (σ 0.765). About 43% are satisfied with well-defined rules and business procedures, and 48.6% were satisfied with work ethic, culture and similar values (σ 0.885). For conducted activities employees have more available time, which is seen in the results of the survey, where 20.6% stated they are mostly satisfied, while 55.1% of them were satisfied with the fixed-time basis. However, less satisfaction was expressed in terms of flexibility of taking annual leave (16.8% were mostly satisfied, whereas 11.2% were very dissatisfied). Nearly 27% were very satisfied with the reputation of the organization, while the monthly salary is a more sensitive issue, where 39.3% declared they are satisfied, whereas 14% said that they are very dissatisfied with their salary (σ 1.180). The level of education prescribed by the law for a career in a travel agency in the position of sales officer of tourist packages (the largest proportion of the participants worked in this position) is secondary school diploma, which leads to the conclusion that as many as 78.7% of the participants belong to a higher

educational level than it is prescribed by the law for the given position, which supports the fact that employees at travel agencies in Novi Sad are overqualified for their positions, thus confirming the initial hypothesis of this research. If we compare the educational level of their revenues, it can be concluded that the most educated participants have the highest income. Mostly employees with higher education belong to the group of participants who earn more than 600 euro per month, which means that the level of education is proportionate to the amount of monthly income.

Table 2. Research survey data for primary determinants of employee satisfaction (N=107), (very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, predominantly satisfied, satisfied, very satisfied, total, standard deviation)

Item	Very dissatis.		Dissatisfied		Predomina. satisfied		Satisfied		Very satisfied		Total		Stan. Dev.
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	σ
Frequency and percent													
The quality of relationships with associates	1	0,9	10	9,3	38	35,5	42	39,3	15	14,0	106	99,1	0,884
Well-defined rules and business procedures	3	2,8	7	6,5	29	27,1	46	43	22	20,6	-	-	0,960
Available working hours	-	-	-	-	22	20,6	62	57,9	22	20,6	106	99,1	0,647
Adequate equipment for work	-	-	3	2,8	28	26,2	41	38,3	35	32,7	-	-	0,841
Organization of work	1	0,9	1	0,9	36	33,6	54	50,5	14	13,1	106	99,1	0,765
Relationship between employees and their direct superior	1	0,9	6	5,6	39	36,4	54	50,5	7	6,5			0,742
Autonomy at work	1	0,9	13	12,1	25	23,4	53	49,5	13	12,1	105	98,1	0,893
The possibility to propose innovations	1	0,9	6	5,6	32	29,9	52	48,6	15	14,0	106	99,1	0,818
Safety at work	1	0,9	2	1,9	32	29,9	55	51,4	16	15,0	106	99,1	0,756
Company Reputation	1	0,9	1	0,9	23	21,5	53	49,5	29	27,1	-	-	0,783
Appropriateness of work	-	-	2	1,9	27	25,2	47	43,9	27	25,2	103	96,3	0,779
Employees earn	15	14,0	14	13,1	27	25,2	42	39,3	8	7,5	106	99,1	1,180
The flexible use of annual leave	12	11,2	12	11,2	18	16,8	49	45,8	16	15,0	-	-	1,206
The possibility of advancement and progress	3	2,8	8	7,5	30	28,0	51	47,7	15	14,0	-	-	0,917
Support from superiors	1	0,9	5	4,7	36	33,6	56	52,3	9	8,4	-	-	0,746
Expressing ability	1	0,9	4	3,7	41	38,3	43	40,2	17	15,9	106	99,1	0,825
Work creativity	2	1,9	6	5,6	18	16,8	59	55,1	21	19,6	106	99,1	0,867
Stimulation of the organization	8	7,5	17	15,9	20	18,7	45	42,1	17	15,9	-	-	1,158

Source: research by authors

Workers were more satisfied if they perceive that the reward system is fair and provides equal treatment to all employees. More is expected from the fair reward system than from the salary itself. It must be noted that the perceived fairness of the reward system is a more important factor than just salary (Karatepe et al, 2007). As far as their objective assessment of performance, 8.4% were very satisfied, whereas there were 25.2% (σ 0.779) satisfied with the purpose of work. The respondents at the travel agencies gave a positive opinion regarding autonomy in performing some tasks (49.5% satisfied, and only 12.1% dissatisfied) and the possibility to propose innovations to improve the efficiency of work, where 48.6% were satisfied and only 5.6% dissatisfied. Relatively positive answers are given for the choice of their own method to solve a problem – 43% satisfied (σ 0.929). From Table 2 it can be seen that the highest values of standard deviations were seen in the issue relating to the flexible use of annual leave (1.206), satisfaction with salaries (1.180) as well as stimulation by the organization (1.158). As tourism is an activity characterized by a marked seasonality, it is not surprising that the highest standard deviation was with the question referring to the flexible use of annual leave, but it is a problem is common for all the employees in the tourism industry, not only for employees at travel agencies. The answer to the question why the large discrepancies are in the questions relating to the satisfaction with salaries could be found in different responses of those holding managerial and non-managerial position (the equivalent is a salary), and in the length of employment and experience of the respondents. The high value of standard deviation in the analysis of responses to the question about satisfaction with stimulation by their organizations may be found in different methods and levels of incentives, which vary from agency to agency.

Table 3. The results of survey research employee satisfaction

Question	Yes		No		Total		Missing system		Total	
	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%
Does the salary equivalent of knowledge and education of the employees?	47	43,9	60	56,1	107	100	-	-	107	100,0
Do you think that your job provides security for the future?	54	50,5	53	49,5	107	100	-	-	107	100,0
Does s job satisfaction associated with satisfaction in private life?	74	69,2	31	29,0	105	98,1	2	1,9	107	100,0
Are you proud of your work?	81	75,7%	24	22,4	105	98,1	2	1,9	107	100,0

Source: research by authors

The second part of the survey contained some questions to which employees could provide yes or no answers (Table 3). When asked whether the salary equivalent of knowledge and education of the employees, 43.9% responded positively and 56.1% of respondents believe that salary is not equivalent of their knowledge. The share of respondents who think that salary is equivalent to knowledge and education (43.9%) is much higher than expected, therefore it can be concluded that sub-hypotheses 4 is completely rejected. The employees had the opportunity to express their attitude about their future in this business. However, 54 respondents out of the total number said that their position provides them the safe future, whereas 53 of them declared that their future in this business is uncertain. From the above-mentioned we may conclude that almost about half of the respondents, regardless of their satisfaction with salary, interpersonal relationship and the basic parameters of motivation, still feel insecure about their employment. The reason can be found in the relatively unstable political and economic situation in Serbia (Gajic, 2011). This is further evidence supporting the fact of how external factors may affect employee satisfaction. When asked the question whether job satisfaction is connected with their satisfaction with private life, 69.2% replied affirmatively, whereas 29% provided a negative answer. Surprisingly, a large number of employees are proud of their job in the travel agency because the hypothesis of the research was that the position in tourism is often underrated and thus the employees are insufficiently respected by end users (potential tourists).

Conclusion

Human resources in tourism are one of the most important segments of the quality of the services provided. If a travel agency wants to function optimally and gain profit, it should have educated, motivated, and therefore satisfied staff, because the success of the company lies in their human resources. This also means that behaviour within the organization depends on the educational and cultural values of their employees. In this paper the authors dealt with the current issues of employee satisfaction at Novi Sad's travel agencies. The paper presents the data of the survey in a concise way conducted by the authors in 13 travel agencies in Novi Sad. Out of the 150 questionnaires that were distributed, 107 were analysed and on the basis of the data we obtained key answers to the questions about which factors the employees are most or least satisfied. The SPSS method was used in the data processing, and along with a combination of statistics and some secondary publications we got the confirmation of some hypotheses and sub-hypothesis. Analyzing and processing the survey, which completely had a research character, led to the concrete and practical conclusions, proposals and guidelines about job satisfaction in tourist agencies in Novi Sad. From the above-given it is concluded that the employees at travel agencies in Novi Sad are relatively satisfied with their job, interpersonal relationship and the level of salary; therefore, this study confirmed the initial hypothesis and sub-hypotheses. Surprisingly,

some sub-hypotheses were rejected. It is widely known that the employees at travel agencies believe that their job is not equivalent to their education and knowledge, and that their job that does not provide them with a certain security and pride. The survey, however, led to completely different attitudes for all given segments. Namely, sub-hypotheses 4 and 6 were completely rejected. The assumptions are that motivational systems become inefficient, inflexible and outdated, and it is necessary to introduce a completely new system of motivations. As tourism is an activity characterized by a marked seasonality, it is not surprising that the highest standard deviation was with the question referring to the flexible use of annual leave, but it is a problem is common for all the employees in the tourism industry, not only for employees at travel agencies. The answer to the question why the large discrepancies are in the questions relating to the satisfaction with salaries could be found in different responses of those holding managerial and non-managerial position (the equivalent is a salary), and in the length of employment and experience of the respondents. The high value of standard deviation in the analysis of responses to the question about satisfaction with stimulation by their organizations may be found in different methods and levels of incentives, which vary from agency to agency. The actual results of the survey findings are of strategic and tactical importance for the holders of tourism policy at the regional and local level and are formulated to be applicable in the modern tourist practice.

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ZADOVOLJSTVO POSLOM MEĐU ZAPOSLENIMA U TURISTIČKIM AGENCIJAMA NOVOG SADA

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Rezime

S obzirom da se zadovoljni kadrovi u turističkim agencijama smatraju primarnim razvojnim resursima, utvrđivanje stepena zadovoljstva humanog kapitala predstavlja izuzetno važan segment procesa upravljanja turističkim preduzećima, što dalje povlači sa sobom uspeh i poziciju na konkurentnom turističkom tržištu. Rad se bavi aktuelnom problematikom u turističkoj delatnosti, a to je zadovoljstvo zaposlenih, a rezultiraće sintezom teorije i rezultata istraživanja o zadovoljstvu humanog kapitala u turizmu, kao faktoru uspeha ili postizanja veće profitabilnosti i konkurentnosti. Kao primaran cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi trenutno stanje i stepen zadovoljstva zaposlenih kadrova. Osnovna metoda u ovom istraživanju jeste anketa slučajnog uzorka, te analiza rezultata dobijenih na osnovu prikupljenih podataka. Za obradu podataka korišten je SPSS program, verzija 17.0. Obuhvaćeno je 107 ispitanika, a rezultati do kojih se došlo primenom tj. upotrebom statističkih metoda i sekundarnih publikacija, potvrđuju određene hipoteze koje su postavljene u radu.

Ključne reči: *zadovoljstvo poslom, turističke agencije, Novi Sad*

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