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Comparison of Motivation Level of Service Sector Employees in The Regions of Slovakia and Austria

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Abstract

In the paper we compare the motivation level of service sector employees in two neighbouring countries in the Central Europe (Slovakia and Austria). We assume, considering the differences in present living conditions in both countries that there are significant differences in the motivation level of service sector employees. Subjects of the research were comparable hotels situated at the foot of mountains in the mentioned countries and in the towns with similar level of tourism, infrastructure and regional development. A questionnaire with closed questions was used to analyse the motivation level. Socio-demographic and qualification characteristics of employees were explored in the first part of the questionnaire. Individual motivation factors were included in the second part. Through them we acquired general information relating to motivation. Respondents evaluated individual motivation factors by one of the five levels of importance. On the basis of sample sizes and their independence a two-sample t- test was used to evaluate the significance and F-test was used to test the variances. The null hypothesis about the equality of individual motivation factors was tested at the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. Significant differences were determined in the motivation factors, i.e. the opportunity to apply one's own ability, information about achieved performance results, moving up the corporate ladder, prestige, self-actualization, social benefits, mission of the company, education and personal growth, relation to the environment, recognition and basic salary. The result of the paper is the finding that despite the economic differences between countries the level of employee motivation of the studied subjects in Slovakia and in Austria is very similar. Therefore, the arrangement proposal for improvement in the area of employee motivation can be the same in both regions.

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1. Introduction

Work is a place where humans spend more than a third of their life. It offers them not only finances but also satisfaction. If people are expected to be successful and effective employees, they must be strongly motivated to work. Therefore, each organisation should pay attention especially to employee motivation. At the present time, in an era of the economic globalisation and European labour market transition, various analyses of enterprises from different points of view, e.g. geopolitical and economic, can be carried out (Kostiviarová, Sopková, 2009). General instructions on how to work with people, influence them and get along with them fail very often. Different factors and approaches that motivate employees can affect them in different ways. If we want to achieve great results when managing people, negotiating, or predicting the people's reactions, we must think about differences among people and respect them (Stachová, Stacho (2013). Therefore, it is very important for each person to put their mind to activity and work that motivate and inspire them and they can put a lot of effort in this area. Forasmuch as each individual is, in some way, unique and complicated, each organisation must understand what motivates employees most. Intrinsic motivation factors are specific for each individual and there are no general ones (Urbancová, 2012). That is why each person is, in some way unique, and responds to stimuli in a different way (Bolfíková et al., 2010).

The aim of the paper is to review whether there are significant differences in the level of motivation of the service sector employees – of the hotels in two neighbouring countries in the Central Europe, specifically Slovakia and Austria. We assume, considering the differences in living standards in both countries that hotel employees will prefer different motivation factors (GDP per capita in Austria 29,115 €, GDP per capita in Slovakia 15,501€)

The subjects of the research were the Hotel Franko and the Grand Hotel Kitzbühel. The Hotel Franko is one of the newly built hotels in Zvolen. The activity of this Hotel started in 2006. It is situated in the centre of the town. It offers accommodation, catering and wellness facilities. The Grand Hotel is situated in the centre of the mountain resort of Kitzbühel in North and East Tyrol. It was built in 1903 and restored in the 1990s to its former glory. It offers accommodation, catering and wellness facilities as well.

2. The Level of Employee Motivation in Slovakia and in Austria

The financial crisis started in the U.S.A. in the year 2008. It affected all economic areas of the European Union countries including the management of human resources (Pajtinková Bartáková & Gubíniová 2012). Many different ways of non-monetary rewards of employees like rebuilding of a team, educational activities within the organisation (Kucharčíková, 2014), training of employees, language courses, managerial and IT courses, professional courses or various outsourcing market tools can be used to overcome the difficult period of the crisis (Kampf, Bucháčková, 2005; Potkány, 2008). The financial crisis hit also motivation, one of the most important areas affecting the job performance. Many enterprises, after the first phase of reducing the costs, started to analyse their downsizing efforts more carefully. Significant change in order of importance of the motivation factors can be seen among employees. However, it depends also on the level of the crisis in the specific period of time. Following our present findings of the level of the employee motivation in the enterprises in Slovakia (Hitka, Vacek, 2010; Stacho et al., 2013) we can state that 20 motivation factors from 30 studied motivation factors changed significantly (6,013 respondents). Employees, influenced by crisis and by unemployment increase, are willing to work in markedly worse financial and social conditions. Employees are also willing to tolerate considerably worse conditions in the area of relationships and career growth than before the crisis. The increase of the motivation level was seen in the following factors: job security, working hours, work environment and relationship with supervisor (Blašková & Gražulis, 2009). Mentioned motivation factors can be successfully applied in motivation programmes of organisations despite the crisis.

On the other hand, according to (<http://karriere-journal.monster.lu/beruf-recht/chef-kollegen/umfrage-mai/article.aspx>) is the best motivation factor for 39 % of employees in Austria. Other motivation factors, important for Austrian employees, are especially emotional factors, i.e. good working atmosphere, job security, good relationship with the supervisor, work-life balance and recognition.

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