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Why should gender differences in hospitality really matter? A study of personnel's service orientation and job satisfaction in hotels

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In this article we examine the gender differences among hotel employees in service orientation and job satisfaction. To determine these differences, we used a service orientation scale (SOS), developed by Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey and Knight and a job satisfaction scale developed by Lytle. Our assumptions were that there would be significant gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction. Our research proved factor structures of the two scales we used. Specifically, we showed gender differences in two of three factors, concerning service orientation (organisational support and customer focus), and no gender differences in job satisfaction. Our study revealed that organisational support is more important to men because they value more structured labour and service procedures than women ($t = 2.21$, $df = 110$, $p = 0.03$). In contrast, customer focus is more relevant to a women because it is more crucial to see satisfied guests, as well as having a good relationship with them ($t = 2.07$, $df = 110$, $p = 0.04$). It is of great importance for hotel management to have in mind that male and female employees respond and behave differently depending on the stimuli in the work environment and their satisfaction varies because of it.

Keywords: gender differences; service orientation; job satisfaction; hotel employees; Novi Sad; Serbia

JEL classification: C10, L83, O52

1. Introduction

Hotel enterprise, as an important part of hospitality, represents combination of spatial and functional service of accommodation, including food and beverages services as well as all the other supporting services. In recent years, human resources (HR) management in hospitality and tourism, together with proper employee selection, is becoming increasingly important for the success of hotel enterprises (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Cheng & Krumwiede, 2012; Chiang & Birtch, 2011; Hoque, 2000; Kim, Leonga, & Lee, 2005). Therefore, employees are becoming the centre of interest of tourism academics and practitioners. Considering this, together with the fact that hotel industry implies working with people, studying hospitality concepts, such as *service orientation* and *job satisfaction* of the employees, becomes essential.

Having gone through many phases of transformation of organisational components, today's hotel industry has significantly changed in the gender structure of employees.

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The number of women employed in this type of business rises (Purcell, 1996; Iverson, 2000; Pinar, McCuddy, Birkan, & Kozak, 2011). Therefore, women are employed at all levels of the organisational structure, including management, and this brings changes in the general conception of the hotel business (Iverson, 2000; Aykac, 2006; Cave & Kilic, 2010; Pinar et al., 2011; Campos-Soria, Marchante-Mera, & Roper-García, 2011; García-Pozo, Campos-Soria, Sánchez-Ollero, & Marchante-Lara, 2012).

A similar situation occurs in Serbia. Hotel companies in Serbia are going through transitional changes that affect the business in general as well as the relationship of the company towards employees. These changes cause already detectable differences in Serbian hospitality that have not yet been thoroughly examined by the scientific community (Nedeljković, 2008). Therefore, we opted to investigate gender-conditioned differences in hotels in Novi Sad, with the focus on two hospitality variables: service orientation and job satisfaction.

2. Service orientation of employees

Service orientation of employees could be defined as the ability to be useful, thoughtful, considerate and cooperative in providing services at the individual level (Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, & Knight, 1992). On the other hand, authors such as Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998, p. 459) defined service orientation as 'an organisation-wide embracement of a basic set of relatively enduring organisational policies, practices and procedures intended to support and reward service-giving behaviours that create and deliver service excellence'.

Service orientation of employees is determined by many factors – from the work environment, job demands, and interpersonal relationships within the organisation to financial and personal satisfaction. Much research has showed that during the use of certain hotel services, employee treatment of customers is the most important issue (Galičić & Ivanović, 2008; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Nikolić, 2006; Petrović & Marković, 2011). The consequences of service orientation are expressed in terms of job satisfaction of the employee (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Lee, Park, & Yoo, 1999), and the turnover that employees make (Lahey, 1984).

Moreover, some research shows the role of service orientation in strengthening competitive advantages (Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, & Knight, 1992; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Kim, Leonga, & Lee, 2005; Kim, 2008). The authors considered that employees should have the competence to be cooperative and thoughtful in providing hotel services at a personal level, and most importantly, to have individual access to each guest in the hotel, so they can provide quality service. Employees in the hotel industry should have adequate knowledge and skills in order to provide not only the expected quality, but also additional quality service to the guests, as they are definitely the most important issue when evaluating hotel service quality. Numerous studies have shown that kindness and accessibility of staff are more important to guests than competence and technical organisation (Čerović, 2002; Galičić & Ivanović, 2008). The attitudes and behaviour of employees results in the perception of service quality by customers (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Establishing relationships with service users is crucial to building loyalty and improving the service delivery process (Galičić & Ivanović, 2008; Nikolić, 2006). Certain psychological characteristics (sociability, openness, agreeableness, etc.) enable employees to meet with the increasingly complex demands of the travel industry.

In the field of tourism and hospitality, results of Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, and Knight (1992) suggest that service orientation is comprised of three components:

organisational support, customer focus, and service under pressure, but also suggest that increasing employees' job satisfaction (with job involvement and job security) is involved in the improving of their overall service orientation. They conclude that there are positive relationships between job satisfaction and customer focus, employees' favourable perceptions of job involvement and job security.

Thirteen years later, Kim and colleagues (Kim, Leonga, & Lee, 2005) used Dienhart et al.'s research (1992) to examine the relationship between hospitality employees' service orientation and their job satisfaction, organisational commitment and intentions to leave. They found that only two elements of service orientation (organisational support and customer focus) have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction. The third element, service under pressure, has no correlation with the observed variable.

The role of emotions in the service orientation is crucial. Hochschild (1983) argued that service agents (e.g. hotel employees) are expected to experience and express certain feelings during service interactions. The concept of service orientation implies that workers should be able to display all the emotions that are desired by their supervisors and consumers (O'Connor, Trinh, & Shewchuk, 2000). Emotional labour is defined as a display of expected emotions by service agents during service encounters, and since service context involves face-to-face interactions it is important to explore the emotions and emotional labour in a service orientation context (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Hochschild (1983) claimed that service providers comply with expression norms through surface acting, self-expression, and expression of spontaneous and genuine emotion. However, the presence of a service agent, such as a hotel employee, may prime expectations of good service that cannot be met, and emotional labour may trigger emotive dissonance and impair one's sense of authentic self.

Few studies have dealt with gender differences in service orientation and those that have, showed inconclusive findings. Study of Kim, McCahon, and Miller (2003) show the effect of employee characteristics (gender, age, marriage, education, etc.) on service orientation in restaurants in Seoul, South Korea. They found that employees with a longer length of service and those in supervisory positions display a higher degree of service orientation, whereas other demographic data such as gender do not have a significant impact on employee service orientation. Finding of Kim, McCahon, and Miller (2003) contradicts the study of Groves (1992) who found gender differences in service orientation. According to his research, females had more of a *personal focus* on service, and they perceived more *support* from the organisation, and viewed service as less stressful *under pressure* than male subjects.

Gender could affect service orientation in terms of individual psychological characteristics and issues of emotion management. Many researches have explored gender differences in emotional labour and emotional control in service procedures (O'Connor, Trinh, & Shewchuk, 2000). Rafaëli (1989) claims that women display more positive emotions to customers than men, and she denotes three reasons why: (1) higher ability to empathise and show their emotions (LaFrance & Banaji, 1992); (2) women are brought up to behave themselves in a pleasant and agreeable fashion (Deutsch, 1990; James, 1989); and (3) women need extra social approval (Hoffman, 1972).

Studies in Western societies indicate that there are many gender stereotypes, such as the one that women are free to express emotions and men are taught to control these emotions. Research by Leidner (1993) and Carmeli (2003) have shown that women are more likely to express empathy, pleasantness and helpfulness to a greater extent than their male colleagues. Caruso, Mayer, and Salovey (2002) points out that women have a great ability to understand other people's emotions and are closer in communication

with others. There is research that show that women are better at controlling emotions of stress at the workplace (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). They have a higher frequency of expression of desired emotions, even when they are employed on the same job as their male colleagues. However, research shows that women do not show greater sensitivity to stress as a consequence of emotional labour (Bandura, 1982; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1997; Wharton, 1999; Wharton & Erickson, 1993), and although it is assumed that women are frequently employed on the jobs that require emotional work, both genders express the same degree of negative consequences.

3. Job satisfaction of employees

The second important issue of our research is personnel's job satisfaction in the observed hotels. Odom, Boxx, and Dunn (1990, p. 159), defined job satisfaction as 'the extent to which a worker feels positively or negatively about his or her job' and Lytle's (1994) research indicates that job satisfaction is a unidimensional variable. Job satisfaction is an important predictor of quality of hotel services. There are many determinants of job satisfaction and certain research even suggests that job satisfaction may be genetically determined and remains constant over a five years period though many segments of business change (Arvey, Bouchard, Segal, & Abraham, 1989; George, 2000). However, we do not believe that job satisfaction is a purely genetically-determined construct but is influenced by many other factors: motivation, professional environment, spouse, family, friends, etc.

In a service business, job satisfaction ensures that employees treat service users, i.e. hotel guests/tourists with maximum respect (Arnett, Laverie, & McLane, 2002). Because of the importance of contact with service users due to the development of relations with them, the employee's job satisfaction is a major concern for service companies, i.e. hotels that want to keep a large number of loyal customers. Other authors, such as Jerome and Kleiner (1995), agree that enterprises which are working to improve employee's job satisfaction, motivation and job dedication, can expect long-term benefits of corporate success, loyalty and productivity of employees. Some authors claim that job satisfaction also has a positive correlation with a commitment to organisations (Blešić, Popov-Raljić, & Romelić, 2007; Blešić, Ivkov-Džigurski, Dragin, Ivanović, & Pantelić, 2011; Humphreys & Williams, 1996) and performance (Birnbaum & Somers, 1993; Babin & Boles, 1996). Shaw (1999) showed that there is a strong negative relationship between the level of turnover and job dissatisfaction. Others believe that if employees are dissatisfied with their job, it is more likely that they will make no expectations and eventually leave the organisation (Mobley, 1977).

There are many models (Hunt & Chonko, 1984; Lawler & Suttle, 1973; Lucas, Parasuraman, Davis, & Enis, 1987; Teas, 1983; Sujan, 1986) which create satisfied (hotel) employees and improved quality of operations. Increase in the responsibility of the employee creates a greater commitment and sense of usefulness and importance of the employee and the organisation. More power leads to a timely resolution of unforeseen problems in working with guests, but is also creates satisfaction. Employees should be aware of changes and innovations in business enterprises such as hotels.

The relationship between job satisfaction and gender differences has been examined many times, with contradictory results. Some studies have shown women to be more satisfied than men (Clark, 1996, 1997; Ishitani, 2010; Sloane & Williams, 1996), whereas others have shown men to be more satisfied than women (Aydin, Uysal, & Sarier, 2012; Kim, Murrmann, & Lee, 2009; Mora & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009).

However, a number of the researchers reported no significant differences between genders in relation to job satisfaction (De Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Smith, Smits, & Hoy, 1998; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2007; Ugorji, 1997).

The research of De Vaus and McAllister (1991) shows gender differences in regard to what men and women look for in a job. According to Malka and Chatman (2003) job orientation represents work-related preferences to value specific types of rewards inherent in the work environment. Some other studies, such as Loscocco (1989), show that women value extrinsic job characteristics more than men do. However, there are other researches that show the opposite (Neil & Snizek, 1987). Finally, certain studies have found no differences between men and women in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic job orientation (Brief, Rose, & Aldag, 1977). Some authors examine gender differences in job satisfaction and service orientation, using closely comparable data collected in nine Western European countries (De Vaus & McAllister, 1991). Their results show that men place greater value than women on both extrinsic and intrinsic work values and are somewhat more satisfied than women with their jobs.

4. The present study

Most of the research on gender differences of service orientation and job satisfaction was conducted in the western societies, and the study results are far from conclusive. Thus, gender distinctions in hospitality have not yet been resolved. To the best of our knowledge, the influence of gender differences on service orientation and job satisfaction has not been studied in previous research in our region (south-eastern Europe). The same goes for Service Orientation Scale (SOS) developed by Dienhart et al. (1992), which will be explained in the Method section.

The purpose of our study was to investigate gender distinctions in service orientation and job satisfaction in order to identify some differences and similarities that are conditioned by the behaviour of men and women. This research will provide insights into gender differences of two important variables in providing quality service in the hospitality industry in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Given such research is scarce in the Balkans in general, this research might serve to stimulate similar surveys in the future. Also, the present research is important because it is one of the first empirical examinations of the gender influence on job satisfaction and service orientation in hotel industry in our region. Moreover, Serbian society is currently undergoing a period of adaptation to new labour market changes and women are occupying an increasingly important role in the contemporary work processes in hotel business. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia in 1992, the gender structure within hotel employees shows were only 28% of hospitality employees, and in 2012, women dominate in this kind of business, being 52% of all hospitality employees (<http://webzrs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>). Therefore, there is a significant change in the gender structure in hotel industry, but also in perception of the job and relationship with it.

Considering the topic of this study, we expect significant gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction, because men and women show quite dissimilar behaviour in these two variables (Groves, 1992; Kim, McCahon, & Miller, 2003). According to these findings, we made a few assumptions:

- women in the observed hotels show more customer focus than men, because women are more motivated to provide more quality and faster service, in order to prove themselves in this business.

- it is more important to a woman to see satisfied clients, i.e. guests than a support and encouragement of the managers, because we believe the internal motivation is more crucial to a female than a male employee.
- women will perceive more work situations under pressure.
- men would value and perceive more organisational support and precise work procedure, than women.
- we assume that women will show higher level of job satisfaction than men, like in the studies mentioned earlier (Clark, 1996; 1997; Hodson, 1989; Murray & Atkinson, 1981; Sloane & Williams, 1996).

5. Research methodology

5.1. Research sample

The population for this study consists of 112 employees (sample size) of 16 (city type) hotels in Novi Sad ('Aurora', 'Park', 'Leopold I', 'Zenit', 'Mediterraneo', 'Gimnas', 'Centar', 'Duga', 'Best Western Prezident', 'Elite', 'Vojvodina', 'Putnik', 'Novi Sad', 'ARTA boutique', 'Vigour' and 'Panorama'). Sampling was convenient since subjects were employees willing to participate in the study. Employees were selected from eight segments of the hotels' organisational structure: Front Office/Reception, HR Management, Restaurant, Bars, Administration and Accounts, Housekeeping, Executive Management and Kitchen. Each work position was approximately represented, with almost equal number of respondents for each category. While sampling, we covered all categorisations levels of hotels (from one star to five star hotels). Within our study we investigated the information-seeking of male and female employees and employers in observed hotel enterprises.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (%).

	Men	Women
Total:	41.1	58.9
<i>Work Position:</i>		
Employer	22.5	14.7
Staff	77.5	85.3
<i>Age:</i>		
less than 20 years	11.3	14.8
21–30 years	30.2	32.3
31–40 years	21.1	20.8
41–50 years	13.2	24.1
51–60 years	18.2	5.7
61+ years	6.0	2.3
<i>Education:</i>		
Elementary School	10.3	6.1
High School	45.7	41.6
BSc Degree	36.2	47.0
MSc/PhD Degree	7.8	5.3
<i>Residence:</i>		
City of Novi Sad	75.1	82.8
Surrounding area	22.4	16.8
Other settlements	2.5	0.4

Source: Data gained in the research.

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents' sex, work position, age, educational background and residence. On the basis of survey research it can be concluded that among the employees a significantly higher number were female (nearly 59%), 41% of respondents were men. The ratio is almost the same as for the entire population of travel industry in Serbia of whom 56% are women and 44% are men (Čačić, 1998; Čerović, 2002).

Among the respondents, nearly 80% reside in the territory of Novi Sad (men 75%, women 83%) and the remainder lives in surrounding smaller towns (men 22%, women 17%). Only a few respondents are from the other regions in the country (men 2.5%, women 0.4%). Most (30.2%) of the male respondents were in their 20s; the next largest group (21.1%) of men were in their 30s. Most (43.8%) of the women were also in their 20s and 24.1% were in their 40s. When analysing the structure of respondents by working position, results clearly show higher proportion of employees in the executive affairs (men 77.5%, women 85.3%) than employees in managerial positions (men 22.5%, women 14.7%). Further results present the educational structure and clearly show the highest percentage of respondents with BSc diploma, and slightly less with a secondary school diploma. Most male respondents (56%) have elementary and high school diplomas; 44% had a BSc and MSc/PhD diploma. Most female respondents (52.3%) have elementary and high school diplomas; 47.7% of the respondents had a BSc and MSc/PhD diploma.

5.2. Research instruments

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part involves items which concerned socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (age, gender, work position, level of education, etc.) (Table 1). Second part consists of the list of nine items about the *service orientation* of respondents (Table 2). This questionnaire is a translation of the SOS developed by Dienhart et al. (1992). This scale measures three dimensions of service orientation: customer focus, organisational support and service under pressure (Kim, Leonga & Lee, 2005). Items 1, 2, and 6 of the SOS, should represent *customer focus*. *Organisational support* is described with items 3, 4, 5 and 8. Finally, items 7 and 9 should depict *service under pressure*. The third part shows the list of five items about the *job satisfaction* of the employees (Table 3). The job satisfaction scale was adapted from Lytle's research (1994), with only five items (Kim, Leonga & Lee, 2005). We decided to make our study more functional, so we used an abbreviated version of the questionnaire, where we included five items which fit into planned research. In both

Table 2. Service orientation (SO) of hotel employees.

SO1	Interacting with customers is enjoyable
SO2	It is important to me that the customer is satisfied
SO3	The employees at my hotel provide excellent service
SO4	My manager encourages me to provide better service
SO5	The training which I received prepared me to provide excellent service
SO6	Customers treat me with respect
SO7	At peak hours, we are so busy that we cannot provide excellent service
SO8	Our service procedures make it easy for me to give excellent service
SO9	My manager expects us to always follow procedures, even if it means giving less than excellent service

Source: Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, and Knight (1992), in Kim, Leonga, and Lee (2005, p. 178).

Table 3. Job satisfaction (JS) of hotel Employees.

JS1	I consider my job pleasant
JS2	I feel fairly-well satisfied with my present job
JS3	I definitely like my work
JS4	My job is pretty interesting
JS5	I find real enjoyment in my work

Source: Lytle (1994), in Kim, Leonga and Lee (2005, p. 179).

scales, the respondents express their opinion about items on the 5-point Likert scale (from 1 – completely agree to 5 – completely disagree). Both scales were back translated to ensure proper measurement.

5.3. Research hypotheses

We examined relationships between service orientation (customer focus, organisational support, and customer service under pressure), job satisfaction and gender. Based on the literature review, several hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: *Customer focus is positively correlated with job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 2: *Organisational support is positively correlated with job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 3: *Customer service under pressure is negatively correlated with job satisfaction (Kim, Leong, & Lee, 2005).*

Hypothesis 4: *Women show more customer focus than men.*

Hypothesis 5: *Men would perceive more organisational support than women.*

Hypothesis 6: *Women would perceive more service under pressure.*

Hypothesis 7: *Women are more satisfied with their jobs than men.*

Based on the proposed hypothesis, the model of relationship between examined variables is shown in Figure 1. The arrows in the Figure 1 show that examined variable (gender) has impact on service orientation and job satisfaction, as well as those two variables have impact on each other. On the other hand, the lines mean that service orientation consists of three dimensions: customer focus, organisational support and service under pressure. Figure 2 illustrates significant gender differences in organizational support and customer focus. According to the figure, we can notice that organizational

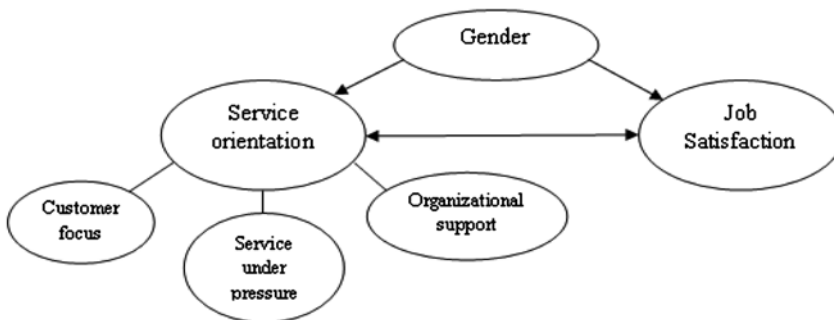


Figure 1. A proposed model of relationships between variables.
Source: Introduced by authors.

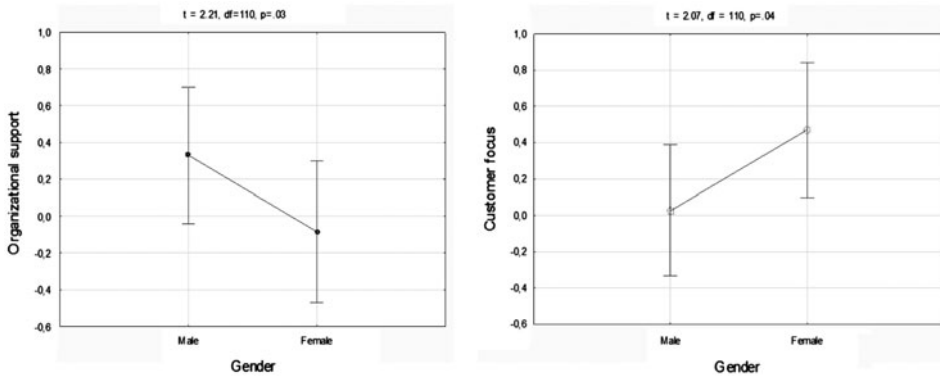


Figure 2. Gender differences in organisational support and customer focus.
Source: Data gained in the research.

support is more important to men, because men value more structured labour and service procedures than women ($t = 2.21, df = 110, p = 0.03$). On the other hand, customer focus is more relevant to a women, because it is more crucial for them to see satisfied clients that respect them ($t = 2.07, df = 110, p = 0.04$).

5.4. Research procedure

The research was carried out from March until June 2012. We distributed the questionnaire to all employees who expressed an interest in taking part in this research. At the beginning, we informed the respondents about the subject of examination. We distributed the questionnaires in respondent's place of work and then came after a few days to pick them up. In order to ensure respondents' anonymity, we undertook the following: emphasised that they will not write their names on the questionnaires, they could take questionnaire to their home and, after filling them out, they should return questionnaires via another employee (for example, the receptionist), who returned the questionnaires to the researchers.

6. Research results

Before we have analysed the data, we have recoded all the answers to the items which were not in the same direction as the rest (SO7 and SO9). Firstly, we wanted to confirm latent structures of our two scales: *job satisfaction* (unidimensional) and *service orientation* (three-dimensional). Principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotation on total sample was used to identify these underlying dimensions.

Using factor analysis, it was found that job satisfaction has unidimensional structure with scale reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.89$, so we simply summed the answers in the form of a composite score. On the other hand, we extracted three factors with eigenvalues higher than 1, which describe service orientation (see Table 4):

- Factor 1: *organisational support*,
- Factor 2: *customer focus and*
- Factor 3: *service under pressure*.

Table 4. Service orientation (orthogonal rotation).

	Eigenvalue	% Total Variance
Factor 1	3,032	33,687
Factor 2	1,362	15,132
Factor 3	1,052	11,689

Source: Data gained in the research.

Factor 1 explains about 34% of the total variance, Factor 2 explains additional 15% of the variance, while the Factor 3 covers nearly 12%. The total percentage of explained variance is about 60%.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of the sampling adequacy is $KMO = 0.71$ and Bartlett's test of sphericity is $\chi^2_{(36)} = 229.147$, significant at $p < 0.01$, therefore showing that variables correlate between themselves significantly.

Based on Table 5 we can conclude that the highest number of items represents Factor 1 which we concluded resembles dimension *organisational support* (Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, & Knight, 1992). Item SO8 has the highest positive correlation with Factor 1 (factor loading = 0.794). This means that the establishment of service procedures that facilitates the provision of excellent hotel services is highly correlated with the organisational support. We expected this finding in our initial hypothesis. Variable SO4 also highly correlated with Factor 1, which clearly shows that encouragement by managers in providing quality services is an important part of organisational support. On the other side, SO6 loads onto Factor 1 as well, which leads to an unusual conclusion where a large number of the respondents believe that respect from the service consumers, i.e. hotel guests, leads to better organisational support in the hotel company. Therefore, certain contradiction arises in relation to the definition of organisational support, which basically does not include relationship with guests, but only internal relationships in organisation, i.e. 'the degree to which supervisors value the contributions of

Table 5. Factor analysis – service orientation.

		Factor loadings	Reliability coefficient
	<i>Factor 1</i>		0.73
SO8	Our service procedures make it easy for me to give excellent service	0.794	
SO4	My manager encourages me to provide better service	0.773	
SO6	Customers treat me with respect	0.708	
	<i>Factor 2</i>		0.64
SO2	It is important to me that the customer is satisfied	0.868	
SO1	Interacting with customers is enjoyable	0.663	
SO3	The employees at my hotel provide excellent service	0.575	
	<i>Factor 3</i>		0.58
SO5	The training which I received prepared me to provide excellent service	-0.891	
SO9	My manager expects us to always follow procedures, even if it means giving less than excellent service	0.418	
SO7	At peak hours, we are so busy that we cannot provide excellent service	0.400	

Source: Data gained in the research.

employees and care about their well-being' (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Factor 2 can be interpreted as the dimension of *customer focus* (Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, & Knight, 1992). Item SO2 has the strongest loading onto this factor (factor loading = 0.868). As expected, customer satisfaction is the primary representative of customer focus. Items SO1 and SO3, also have high loadings, i.e. the enjoyment during the contact with the hotel guests is of very important for the observed factor, as well as providing excellent service to guests. All these results show an expected relationship when it comes to customer focus, and we can easily conclude what the necessary measures are to raise this dimension in hotel facilities.

The training which hotel staff goes through in order to provide excellent service is highly negatively correlated with Factor 3 – *service under pressure* (factor loading = -0.891). This indicates a very disturbing fact that staff at Novi Sad's hotels claims that they do not have adequate training (in the work place) which will provide the best possible hotel service. Such an alarming indicator should be high priority of all hotel managers if they want to increase turnover and quality of hotel services. It is interesting to note that SO9 (factor loading = 0.418) has the highest positive correlation with service under pressure. This fact shows that hotel managers have expectations of adherence to service procedures even at the cost of providing low quality services. In conclusion, item SO7 indicates that the amount of work and customers affects quality of the service. This raises pressure on the employees which does not allow them to provide an adequate service.

According to Cohen's guidelines in interpreting strength of the relationship between variables (1988), there are significant positive correlations between job satisfaction and organisational support ($r = 0.52, p < 0.05$), on the one hand, job satisfaction and customer focus ($r = 0.36, p < 0.05$), on the other. Service under pressure does not correlate with job satisfaction ($r = 0.06, p > 0.05$) (see Table 6). These findings indicate that a higher level of organisational support and customer focus lead to greater satisfaction of the employed, while service under pressure does not influence job satisfaction.

The main problem of this article, considering gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction, was analysed using t-test independent samples. Factors 1 and 2 of service orientation showed significant differences between men and women while Factor 3 of service orientation and job satisfaction did not show any gender differences (see Table 7).

The previous figure illustrates significant gender differences in organisational support and customer focus. According to the figure, we can notice that organisational support is more important to men, because men value more structured labour and service procedures than women ($t = 2.21, df = 110, p = 0.03$). On the other hand, customer focus is more relevant to a women, because it is more crucial for them to see satisfied clients who respect them ($t = 2.07, df = 110, p = 0.04$).

Table 6. Correlation analysis – job satisfaction and service orientation.

	Job satisfaction
Organisational support	0.52
Customer focus	0.36
Service under pressure	0.06

Source: Data gained in the research.

Table 7. Gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction (t-test).

	M factor loadings (scores) men	M factor loadings (scores) women	t-value	df	p
SO: Organisational support	0,246	-0,171	2,21	110	0,03
SO: Customer focus	-0,231	0,161	-2,07	110	0,04
SO: Service under pressure	0,077	-0,054	0,68	110	0,5
JS	20,717	19,969	1,07	110	0,3

Note: M – mean; t – value of t statistic; df – degrees of freedom for $p \leq 0.05$; p – level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Data gained in the research.

If we separate service orientation and job satisfaction by gender correlations, we can see that there are some specificities regarding relation of service under pressure and job satisfaction. Although these differences are not statistically significant, when providing service under pressure, in the same circumstances, women show a slight regression in job satisfaction while men show a slight progression (see Figure 3).

Factor 1 corresponds to the component of *organisational support*, which seems to be more important to men than women, which is in accordance with our expected hypothesis. On the other hand, factor 2 in this case alludes to the component of *customer focus*, which is more relevant to female respondents of this research. This finding also confirms our initial assumptions. Factor 3, *service under pressure*, shows no gender difference, which disproves our starting hypothesis where we believed that men would be more resistant to providing service under pressure. Finally, level of *job satisfaction* was the same for both genders, which is in accordance with numerous previous research (Brief, Rose, & Aldag, 1977; De Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Mottazl, 1986; Smith,

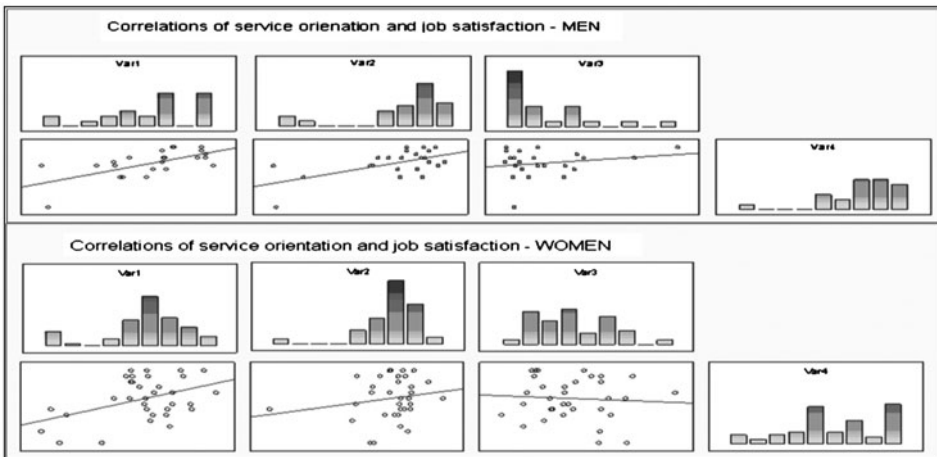


Figure 3. Correlation of service orientation and job satisfaction – men and women.

Note: Var1 = organisational support, Var2 = customer focus, Var3 = service under pressure, Var4 = job satisfaction.

Source: Data gained in the research.

Smits, & Hoy, 1998; Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989; Ugorji, 1997; Witt & Nye, 1992). This also indicates our assumptions were erroneous, because we expected women to be more satisfied than men, like many authors proved previously (Clark, 1996, 1997; Hodson, 1989; Murray & Atkinson, 1981; Sloane & Williams, 1996).

7. Research discussion and conclusion

The goal of our study was to examine gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction of 112 employees in 16 hotels in Novi Sad (Serbia). To determine these differences, we used the SOS, developed by Dienhart et al. (1992) and job satisfaction scale developed by Lytle (1994). We expected a three factor solution for the SOS and a unifactor solution for job satisfaction. More importantly, our assumptions were that there would be significant gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction. Our research showed factor structures of the two scales we used. Specifically, we find gender differences in two of three factors, concerning service orientation, and no gender differences in job satisfaction.

7.1. Theoretical and practical implications

The factor solution for the SOS in our study is very similar to previous research which used this scale (Dienhart, Gregoire, Downey, & Knight, 1992; Kim, Leong, & Lee, 2005). Our Factor 1 resembles highly dimension *organisational support*. This dimension includes external motivation factors which come from the organisation itself. These factors are: high procedural structure, encouragement of the management, loyalty in the collective and good interpersonal relations. However, factors such as respect from the customers and risking quality service while under pressure also describe the Factor 1. This might be because manifested respect from customers usually leads to respect from the managers and other members of the staff which is a part of organisational support. Putting quality service as a priority instead of insisting on service, no matter what, also improves organisational support, in a long run. Quality service results in higher respect towards the product (hotel services) which leads to healthy organisational relations. Factor 2, which we identified as *customer focus*, involves motivation from within person. This means that employees value perceived satisfaction, kindness and respect from customers instead of support from the organisation. This dimension is very similar to the previous studies of Dienhart et al. (1992). Factor 3 shows similar structure as the dimension *service under pressure*. It includes working while service capacities are overloaded, blind following of the instructions and procedures and low level of previous training for providing hotel services. This indicates that this dimension includes all negative aspects of the service in hotels. Rigid following of procedures leads to potential conflicts with service consumers and other members of the staff which results in rising of tension and pressure on the workplace. Low level or complete lack of training for real situations in hotel practice makes employees feel inadequate and unprepared. Therefore, when they start working they feel pressure on a daily basis. So, all these aspects imply working under certain pressure which is in accordance with previous studies of Dienhart et al. (1992).

We also examined the correlation between three mentioned components of service orientation and job satisfaction. Findings replicated previous research of Kim et al. (2005). We concluded that job satisfaction has high correlation with *organisational support*, moderate correlation with *customer focus* and does not correlate with *service under*

pressure. This can be explained by the fact that encouragement by supervisors, support from colleagues and friendly relationships, definitely affects the feeling of comfort and pleasantness at the workplace and potentially longer stay in the same working environment. All this might influence the professional development of each individual. Also, these circumstances contribute to staff enjoying while communicating with hotel guests, and they can stimulate staff to put added effort into the service process and this, in turn, improves their professional skills. It was noticed that job satisfaction does not significantly change when there is tension on the workplace, daily stress and pressure that is created from potentially unrealistic expectations from the business environment, mostly supervisors. However, it is observed that men showed statistically insignificant, but slight progress in job satisfaction when it comes to *service under pressure*, while women showed also statistically insignificant, but slight regress, which is not in accordance with previous research of Groves (1992). This can be explained by the fact that women are more sensitive to negative external effects, i.e. if they do not meet customer expectations they are more likely to become dissatisfied with their job and the workplace, than men. On the other hand, pressure at work stimulates men, since our results show that the increase of pressure leads to slight increase in job satisfaction, which can be described by a greater men' susceptibility to prove themselves. Also, men from this region have prominent competitive spirit (deep patriarchal roots), which is obviously reflected at the workplace. All these findings show factors that improve job satisfaction and they should be taken into account by hotel management.

When it comes to gender differences, we concluded that male hotel employees perceive more *organisational support*, which is not in accordance to previous findings of Kim, McCahon, and Miller (2003), who claimed that there is no significant gender impact on service orientation, or research of Groves (1992) who said that women perceive more support from the organisation. In our sample, the facts are that women also perceive organisational support, but not as much as men do. Female employees are more focused on users of hotel services and customer satisfaction is more important to them, as well as good relationship with guests. The job satisfaction of a female hotel employee will increase when she receives good comments and praise from customers and when she can see their satisfaction. Thus, interactions and feedback from customers are very important to them, which is in agreement with the finding of Groves (1992).

7.2. Benefits and contribution of the study

The research was of adequate sample size. From a total of 22 five-star hotel objects in Novi Sad we included 16 objects. The number of respondents was 112 hotel employees from eight different sectors of the organisational structure from the lowest level to executive management. If we take into account that the average number of employees in the city type hotels is 15 persons per object (Kosar, 2002), and if we multiply that number by the number of hotel objects, we get amount of about 330 employees in the hotels of Novi Sad. Therefore, we can claim that our research sample was sufficient to make generalisations on the entire population (over 1/3 of the total number of hotel employees in hotel enterprises of Novi Sad was included in the survey).

Our research is one of the first studies in Serbia that combines variables such as gender, service orientation and job satisfaction. Hotel staff in Novi Sad has long been scientifically neglected and this kind of research has great importance for understanding the complexity of service industries, such as hotel management. Also, gender differences were, until recently, almost unexplored in the hotel industry of Serbia. We believe that

this article will contribute to the scientific understanding of obvious gender differences in two dimensions of service orientation of hotel employees: organisational support and customer focus and the importance of HR in hospitality.

7.3. *Limitations of the study*

Our suggestion for future research is to increase the sample size of hotel employees, so that gender differences in service orientation and job satisfaction might reach higher significance. This particularly goes for dimension service under pressure, whereby increasing the number of respondents, we might reach statistically significant gender effect.

There are some contradictions in interpreting items SO5 and SO4 in the SOS. For item SO5 ('The training which I received prepared me to provide excellent service.'), interpretation can go in two directions. The first direction is that respondents thought of their earlier formal education. Thus, respondents could mean that, during previous education (especially during high school and university), they did or did not have enough opportunities to adequately prepare for performing service procedures in a hotel. The second direction of interpretation of item SO5 may be that respondents thought that they did or did not have sufficient practical preparations and training to provide the best service, during their active work in the organisation. We chose the second direction of interpretation, but it is necessary to consider the contradiction of this claim and eventually specify this question in the future surveys. So, it is necessary to clarify: Is the omission made in the course of formal education or during training while working in the organisation? Or is the problem in both stages?

We would also like to highlight the item SO4 ('My manager encourages me to provide better service.'). The problem is in which way managers encourage their employees? Is it through financial incentives (material component), praise and showing respect (psychological component) or maybe through job promotion and prosperity (organisational component)? Finally, are there gender differences in this matter? Answers to these questions are important for the future research, i.e. it is important to specify the manner in which way hotel employees are encouraged by their supervisors.

Another problem that we would like to point out is highly local character of our research, so the future research should include other towns in Serbia and the surrounding countries (e.g. administrative centres, resort complexes, ski centres, spas, etc.). That way the entire study would have greater sample of respondents and data would be more relevant and comprehensive for chosen geographical area and perhaps for the entire country and Balkans. We opted for Novi Sad hotels because we wanted to explore the effect of service orientation and job satisfaction in city hotel types. This type of accommodation is characterised by the high frequency of guests (mainly business people) so work under pressure is everyday present due to the high demanding clientele. Also, in Serbia there are a small number of significant administrative centres, and Novi Sad represents one of the biggest.

Although, there are limitations within this study which demand further research, certain benefits arise from our results. Job satisfaction and service orientation are two very important constructs for hotel industry. There are gender specific differences in customer focus and organisational support. However, job satisfaction is the same for men and women. So, it is of great importance for hotel management to have in mind that men and women respond and behave differently depending on the stimuli in the work environment and their satisfaction varies because of it.

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