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The impact of organizational culture on the successful business of hotel companies – a case study of the hotel “Zlatibor Resort & Spa”

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Abstract

The tourism business is usually characterized by a large number of turbulences, which are present both in the domestic and foreign markets. Many hotel companies, which are present and exist within these markets, base their business on the application of different business strategies, as a form of adaptation to the new changes. An indispensable segment in both the creation and implementation of these strategies are employees, who, with their behavior at the organizational level, contribute to the creation of a concept known as organizational culture, the manifestation of which is primarily reflected in the definition of a value system, which is adopted as such by employees and presented as a form of code of conduct. Bearing in mind the importance of organizational culture for the development of an efficient working environment and increasing the competitiveness of the hotel on the market, the paper presents the basic postulates of this concept and their application in the business of the hotel "Zlatibor Mountain Resort & Spa", with a focus on the perception of employees about its importance for the quality of services and employee satisfaction. The aim of this paper is to identify key aspects of organizational culture and its impact on employee satisfaction and quality of service in the hotel. This study provides an insight into the current state of culture in the hotel and points to aspects that can be improved. The results of the paper, based on three groups of questions, clearly indicate multiple benefits in business during the implementation of organizational culture, which are recognized by employees.

Keywords: tourism, hotel management, organizational culture

1. Introduction

Competition among hotel companies, which is most often reflected through the implementation of various strategies, contributes to the achievement of business performance, which in the long run ensures the growth and development of the service industry. In order to achieve enviable results, hotel companies, i.e., their management, are turning to specific business strategies, which will simultaneously contribute to the satisfaction of both consumers and employees (Alavuk, 2023). Adequate human resource management and the quality of interpersonal relationships are some of the basic prerequisites that are necessary in achieving business goals and achieving business success in the field of hospitality. What's more, the long-term presence in the market and the competitive position depends on the expertise and performance of the employees. Therefore, special attention is paid to those aspects of employee management that can contribute to increasing work performance, which will be reflected in the business performance of hotel companies in many ways. Combining the company's strategy with the performance of employees can be achieved through the implementation of an adequate organizational culture, which is also perceived as one of the most important factors in creating business success (Richter et al., 2016; Kiziloglu, 2022).

The subject of this paper is reflected in an extensive analysis of organizational culture and all the benefits that this concept contributes to the business of hotel companies. Hotel "Zlatibor Mountain Resort & Spa" is one of the most eminent hotel companies in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, which records enviable business results from year to year. Bearing in mind that the mentioned hotel facility is located in one of the most popular and most visited tourist places, Mount Zlatibor, within which a large number of both domestic and foreign tourists gravitate, it is of great importance to analyze how the organizational culture is implemented as an indispensable segment of the business of this hotel company. The

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aim of this paper, in addition to a literature review of the mentioned concept, is also to ask employees about the key aspects of organizational culture and the impact that this concept has on employee satisfaction and the quality of services provided in the hotel.

In addition to the Introduction and Conclusion, the paper consists of three basic parts. Namely, in the Introduction, the subject and goal of the paper are defined, as well as the justification, i.e., the importance of the research. The first part of the paper, Literature Review, provides an overview and various theoretical interpretations of the concept of organizational culture by several relevant authors. Also, within this part, the results of previous research from the sphere of organizational culture and the impact that the mentioned concept has on human resources are highlighted. The second part of the paper is presented through the Methodology, within which the procedure of data collection is presented, as well as a sample of respondents. Within the third part, the results of descriptive statistics based on the conducted questionnaire are presented and discussed, as well as the sociodemographic presentation of the respondents.

2. Literature review

The concept of organizational culture, whose origins can be recognized in the early 1980s, undoubtedly have a strong influence on the theory and practice of business management. According to some authors, it is a business tool used by managers, with the aim of raising the level of efficiency of companies in the markets within which they exist (Heine et al., 2016; Rostain, 2021). Numerous companies, through their organizational culture, have achieved enviable business results, which has caused great interest among researchers, i.e., in scientific circles (Zeng et al., 2013; Warrick et al., 2016). Over the last three decades, a large number of papers indicate that this is a concept that successfully integrates the internal strength and ability of the company to adapt to all the turbulences imposed by the modern market (Warrick, 2017; Kayani, 2023). In practical terms, organizational culture defines the business environment and values within which employees exist (Nair et al., 2019, Kayani, 2023).

2.1. Defining term organizational culture

An organizational climate is a set of beliefs and expectations that contribute to the specific behavior of employees in an organization (Romani et al., 2018, Kiziloglu, 2022). It is reflected through uniform assumptions, accepted by a group of employees, i.e. teams in solving internal and external problems. Also, it energetically shapes the behavior of each individual, influencing through subjective perception, which will be reflected in the level of satisfaction of the same, as well as his commitment and personal progress (Simović et al., 2023).

The concept of organizational culture can also be perceived as a uniform pattern imbued with assumptions, which are identified, analyzed, and developed by a specific group of people in the course of adjusting and depreciating problems arising from internal and external turbulence (Kayani, 2023). Organizational culture is defined as a set of values and beliefs, on the basis of which a psychological and social environment is created, with clear models of behavior and communication among employees (Nzuva et al., 2022). It is also a business philosophy with multiple benefits for all stakeholders.

Organizational culture, as a set of unique values that significantly differentiates one hotel company from another, is the first of three different aspects of understanding this concept. The next view is perceived as a process of organizing business activities, while the last aspect is reflected in the set of characteristics of employees, with the help of which they achieve the realization of business goals. The application of this culture does not only affect the cohesion of employees, but also creates a specific way of communicating the company with the external environment, while adapting to market conditions. Summarizing the above, it can be stated that it is a concept that consists of a series of thoughts, behaviors and symbols, with a special emphasis on hospitality within the hotel environment. (Puciato & Pławiak, 2019).

When defining organizational culture, special attention is paid to the correlation that it develops with the organizational structure of the company. By shaping values, beliefs, and norms, culture provides clear guidance to management in creating a hierarchical structure. In this way, managers and leaders assess the expediency of a centralized or more flexible structure, given that it more closely determines the behavior and interaction of employees in the performance of daily business tasks. Although bringing the organizational structure into a harmonious relationship with the culture will bring multiple benefits, special attention should be paid to the discrepancy between these two concepts, because the negative effects that would result would cause incalculable consequences for the company's business (Janjićević, 2013).

2.2. Organizational culture in the hospitality industry

From the point of view of hotel companies, the concept of organizational culture is an indispensable segment of their business, bearing in mind the importance of culture on the behavior of employees, quality of service and guest satisfaction. By combining values and beliefs that more closely define the identity of the company, the benefit of organizational culture is also reflected in the ability to create employee loyalty and commitment (Lee et al., 2019). During the performance of business activities and tasks, defined within the organizational culture, employees are provided with a clear sense of

belonging to the company itself, which will certainly contribute to their greater work commitment. In this way, the behavior of employees is shaped, that is, the social system of the organization becomes less vulnerable to the turbulence imposed by the market. Certainly, employees guided by this business policy identify with the goals of the organization, which enriches the meaning of the job. Also, negative trends, i.e., business outcomes that are characteristic of the hospitality industry, such as burnout and the intention to leave the organization, have been reduced to a minimum (Sarhan et al., 2019).

Teamwork, interactive communication, development and training of employees are just some of the positive features of the implementation of organizational culture, which can significantly improve the image of the hotel company in the market. By focusing on innovation, a dynamic work environment is created, within which new ideas and approaches are developed. In this way, the organizational culture, on the one hand, improves the engagement and satisfaction of existing employees, while at the same time becoming very attractive to the new workforce (Lee & Choi, 2022).

The hospitality business sphere is characterized by a specific concept of organizational culture, which relies on the quality of services, interpersonal relationships, with a special emphasis on the experiences that employees create for guests. Human resource management, team support and collaboration are key factors in improving the quality of services and ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty, which is vital in a dynamic business sphere such as tourism and hospitality. The behavior of employees towards guests, as well as management decisions related to employee management, through organizational culture, will directly reflect on the organizational structure of management and flexibility in planning, with the aim of improving the overall business results of a hotel company (Leyva-Duarte, et al., 2020). The application of organizational culture in the hospitality sector allows employees to correlate individual goals with organizational ones, which on the one hand affects the motivation of employees, while on the other hand improves the efficiency and performance of the company. Consequently, it can be said that the concept of culture has such a potential that, through attracting and retaining a quality workforce, contributes to the creation of a satisfactory and sustainable user experience. The importance of the concept of culture and its application in the hospitality sector is also reflected in the fact that services are intangible, where the quality of the same is determined from the aspect of subjective assessment. The system of values and beliefs that arise from the behavior of employees will directly affect the satisfaction of guests. A strong service culture significantly affects the collegiality and quality of communication among employees, and thus the quality of the service provided. By respecting the basic principles of organizational culture and internal procedures based on them, employees will be able to provide their guests with an unforgettable experience, which will certainly be reflected in the competitiveness of the company in the market (Andriani et al., 2021).

In research circles, special attention is paid to identifying as many factors as possible, which will more closely determine the adequate concept of organizational culture for a particular enterprise. Namely, as stated by Simonović et al. (2023), the location, size and structure of the hotel company are just some of the antecedents, which significantly affect the creation of an appropriate concept of culture. In larger hotel companies, with a three-digit number of employees, the organizational culture will be much more complex in terms of its content. In such hotels, decision-making is centralized, so a hierarchical organizational culture should be expected.

The impact of service orientation on job satisfaction has been proven in numerous studies, which show that employees with a greater service orientation achieve greater satisfaction by meeting customer needs (Kim et al., 2005; Petrović et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Alavuk, 2023). Employees in the service sector who focus on customer satisfaction often report higher levels of personal job satisfaction, which also contributes to better business results. Catering workers with a greater service orientation achieve greater personal satisfaction, because meeting the needs of guests has a positive effect on their mood and efficiency. In addition, employees with a higher level of service orientation show lower levels of stress in the workplace, which has a positive effect on their overall work performance and job satisfaction (Alavuk, 2023). When this concept is combined with organizational culture, it becomes clear that maintaining a high level of service quality is directly related to employee motivation and satisfaction. In the hotel industry, the quality of service often depends on how satisfied employees are with their work environment, the support they receive from management, and the rewards they receive for their results. Hotels that establish a culture that supports employees and their service orientation create the basis for high customer satisfaction, thereby improving the company's performance and ensuring a competitive advantage in the market.

3. Methodology

The study of theoretical issues of organizational culture was carried out through the so-called cabinet research, which was based on the analysis of scientific and professional literature with special reference to this concept and its application in hotel companies. The research and data collection for the purposes of work was carried out by the method of surveying employees in the hotel company "Zlatibor". The research method of surveying implies a procedure within which purposeful questions of scientific interest are presented, through which the opinions of respondents are collected (Mihailović, 1999). In order to obtain the most credible answers, the survey was conducted anonymously, with employees having the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire in person or electronically. The survey consisted of 22 questions, of which the first 4 were general introductory questions, which were used to examine the profile of the respondents, while

the remaining 18 were scaled questions, which represented employees' perception of the organizational culture in their work environment. In support of this, three important criteria were identified, presented through six carefully selected questions, which were created by the authors, based on the results of previous studies (Simović et al., 2023; Kabangire et al., 2023; Dawson et al., 2023; Jigijiddor et al., 2021; Escobar et al., 2024; Morales-Huaman., 2023; Prescah et al., 2018). Respondents were offered statements that they rated on a Likert scale, i.e., scores from 1 to 5 (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree). The sample consisted of 62 respondents, employed at all hierarchical levels within this hotel. The survey was conducted in the second half of 2024, during the months of September and October.

5. Results and discussion

In the first part of the results, the processing and analysis of independent variables of the survey was performed: gender, age, education and position. Of the total number of respondents in the survey, 33,9% of them were men and 66,1% were women. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the dominance of the female gender in the structure of employees is observed, which may be the result of the specific nature of jobs in the hotel industry, i.e., the dominance of women in administration and guest service.

Table 1. Gender structure of the respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Men	21	33.9
Women	41	66.1
Total	62	100

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

An overview of the age structure is presented in Table 2, in which the respondents are divided into five age groups. By analyzing the age structure, it is observed that the largest number of respondents, 35.4%, are between 20 and 29 years old. Approximately the same number of respondents aged 30-39 years (30.6%). A similar percentage is shared by the first and fourth categories, i.e., employees up to 20 and 40-49 years old. The smallest number of respondents (6.5%) are over 50 years old. This schedule indicates a young and dynamic workforce, which can contribute to innovation and energy in the hotel's work.

Table 2. Age structure of the respondents

Age structure	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
> 20	8	13%
20 to 29	22	35.4%
30 to 39	19	30.6%
40 to 49	9	14.5%
≥ 50	4	6.5%
Total	62	100%

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

Of the total number of respondents (Table 3), the largest percentage of them have a college or university degree, 51.6%, followed by respondents with a high school degree (29%). The next category of respondents has a master's degree 14.5%, while the smallest percentage of respondents have the title of doctor of science, only 4.9%.

Table 3. Educational structure of the respondents

Educational structure	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Elementary school	0	-
High school	18	29%
Bachelor/Faculty	32	51.6%
Master	9	14.5
Ph.D.	3	4.9%
Total	62	100%

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

Of the total number of respondents, more than half of them have a diploma with the seventh level of professional qualification, which represents very encouraging results in terms of education of employees in the hotel company. The reasons should certainly be sought in a large number of higher vocational schools and faculties in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, which have study programs in the field of tourism and hotel management.

Table 4. Hierarchical structure of the respondents

Position	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Non – managerial staff	24	38.7%
Lower management	14	22.6%
Middle management	17	27.4%
Senior management	7	11.3%
Total	62	100%

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

Based on Table 4, it is observed that 38.7% of respondents are in non-managerial positions. Just over a fifth of respondents (22.6%) are in positions that are positioned as lower management. Jobs positioned as middle management are performed by slightly more than a quarter of respondents (27.4%), while the lowest percentage of respondents is about 11.3% from the senior management group. Such a hierarchical structure of the respondents is very favorable from the aspect of the analysis of opinions on the application of organizational culture in the hotel company "Zlatibor Mountain Resort & Spa", given the approximate share of non-managerial to managerial levels.

After examining and analyzing the profile of the respondents, the second part of the survey was conducted, which contained a set of questions by which employees could express their agreement or disagreement with carefully selected questions, i.e., statements. This part of the survey is divided into three parts, each of which, as an important segment of the concept of organizational culture, is an important link in the business of hotel companies. The aim of the first group of questions, presented in Table 5, was to survey the opinions of employees on the application and importance of the concept of organizational culture in the hotel company "Zlatibor Mountain Resort & Spa".

Table 5. Awareness of the importance and importance of organizational culture

Rank	Items	Average rating
1	Communication between employees in our company is open and transparent.	4.45
2	Our guests react positively to the atmosphere that prevails in our hotel, which is the result of a good organizational culture.	4.28
3	Employee satisfaction is directly related to the organization's culture.	3.95
4	All employees are aware of the core values and principles of our organizational culture.	3.91
5	The organizational culture of the company is clearly defined.	3.88
6	Employees identify with the values and goals of our hotel.	3.85
	\bar{X}	4.05

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

Based on the overall average assessment of the respondents' opinion on the application and importance of organizational culture (4.05), it can be stated that employees are very well acquainted with the mentioned concept and all the advantages in business during its implementation. Namely, communication between employees, which has been highlighted on several occasions as one of the important prerequisites for the quality of the service provided, was recognized during the employee survey, which can be concluded from the average score (4.45). By creating a positive working environment and a pleasant atmosphere, the respondents recognized the importance of applying organizational culture, which is again evidenced by a high average score (4.28). Room for improvement in the implementation of the concept in the hotel company "Zlatibor Mountain Resort & Spa" is certainly possible and should primarily be directed in identifying the goals of the same with the goals of the employees, as evidenced by the average score of 3.85. Also, clear guidelines and identification with the goals of the mentioned concept can be implemented by the management of the company through various forms of internal campaigns, with regular internal meetings with their employees, in order to raise the level of awareness of this concept to an even higher level.

Table 6. The importance of organizational culture in the implementation of management activities

Rank	Items	Average rating
1	Management activities affect the implementation of the organizational culture.	4.23
2	Changes in organizational culture are effectively communicated to all employees.	4.01
3	There are clear guidelines for employee behavior that are in line with the organizational culture.	3.95
4	Management regularly monitors and improves the organizational culture.	3.93
5	Organizational culture helps to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.	3.84
6	All employees feel involved in the decision-making process.	3.60
	\bar{X}	3.92

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

The next group of questions was related to the implementation of management activities within the framework of the applied concept of organizational culture. Looking at the overall average grade, it can be stated that there is room for

improvement, as evidenced by the individual average scores of respondents on clearly defined questions. By analyzing the average scores on the first four questions, it can be said that employees clearly recognize the effort and all the activities that the management undertakes in order to present the basic postulates of the organizational culture in the best possible way. However, based on the average scores derived from the last two questions, there is a need to improve the manager/leader-employee relationship. Namely, an average score of 3.60 clearly indicates that employees are not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, nor that the researched concept contributes to a more constructive resolution of conflicts. There are two interpretations for such claims, the first of which is reflected in the fact that this is a hotel company with a large number of employees, where it was necessary to implement and enforce a clearly defined hierarchical organizational culture, within which the possibilities for involving employees in the decision-making process are limited. The second view should be sought in the wrong choice of leaders, i.e., the application of alternative leadership styles, such as transactional or service, which promote a high degree of employee involvement during decision-making, and therefore a significantly lower representation of the occurrence of conflict (Alavuk, 2023).

Table 7. The impact of organizational culture on business outcomes

Rank	Items	Average rating
1	Organizational culture contributes to the quality of service to guests.	4.35
2	Through organizational culture, a competitive advantage is achieved in the market.	4.25
3	Organizational Culture Contributes to Employee Satisfaction.	4.01
4	Organizational culture has a positive impact on teamwork.	3.98
5	Organizational culture is a positive source of innovation and creativity.	3.91
6	Organizational culture helps to reduce employee turnover.	3.34
	\bar{X}	4.06

Source: Author's calculation based on SPSS 21.0

The last group of questions was related to business outcomes in the hotel business, as a consequence of the application of organizational culture. At the very beginning of the discussion on this group of questions, it is necessary to point out that the highest overall average score (4.06) was achieved during the evaluation of the same. Employee satisfaction and the quality of the service provided are clearly recognized as key cause-and-effect factors in the application of the researched concept. On the basis of previous achievements, a competitive position in the market has inevitably been achieved. However, the presence of a negative business outcome such as employee turnover, which is clearly evidenced by the rating examined (3.34), the application of this concept has not achieved significant results.

6. Conclusion

Organizational culture in a hotel company plays a key role in shaping the identity of the organization and affects the quality of services provided to guests. It integrates the values, beliefs and norms that guide the behavior of employees, which has a positive effect on their commitment and loyalty. Successful integration of organizational culture and structure enables effective management and adaptation to changes in the dynamic environment of the hospitality industry. Therefore, strategic management of organizational culture is the basis for achieving sustainable success in the hotel industry. In particular, organizational culture is crucial for hotel companies because it shapes the behavior of employees and affects the quality of service, which directly affects guest satisfaction. A strong service culture fosters team collaboration and communication, reducing staff turnover and increasing their commitment. In addition, an effective culture attracts and retains qualified personnel, thereby creating a competitive advantage in the market. In the end, investing in organizational culture is transformed into a higher quality of service and a positive image of the hotel.

If we look at the results of the survey conducted on the employees of the Zlatibor Hotel, it can be seen that there is a relatively positive image of the organizational culture, at least according to the perceptions of the employees who responded to the research. Overall average scores based on three groups of questions clearly indicate multiple benefits in business during the implementation of organizational culture, which are recognized by employees. Certainly, the highest average score on the group of questions focused on business outcomes (4.06) most obviously presents the benefits of applying the mentioned concept. However, as pointed out, one of the most prevalent negative outcomes in the hospitality industry, such as employee turnover, recognized by employees, remained "immune" to the application of the concept of organizational culture. The overall awareness of employees about the importance of applying the concept of organizational culture in the business of the hotel is at a high level with an overall average score of 4.05, with clearly identified segments, such as identifying the goals of employees with the goals of the concept, in which improvement is desirable.

Open and transparent communication as well as active promotion of organizational culture by management is also recognized by employees. Respondents clearly stated that the application of the concept also affected the quality of the service provided. However, inadequate involvement of employees in decision-making and a low level of trust in conflict resolution processes require the application of modern leadership styles, whose business philosophy and leadership concept will significantly reduce these negative trends recognized by employees.

The expected results will have a dual application: scientific and practical. From a scientific point of view, the results can be used for further scientific research. In practical terms, the expected results can be presented to the hotel management as a set of guidelines and a guide with special reference to the basic postulates of the concept of organizational culture. By organizing education and adequate training, based on the results of work, and through human resources, it would respond to the specific wishes and needs of guests and ensure better business results of hotel facilities.

The research conducted contains certain limiting factors. Taking into account the number of subjects, generalization of the results is not recommended. Also, the examined claims were measured over time, which can be a limiting factor, if we take into account the seasonal operations of hotel facilities. Another limiting factor is reflected in the fact that the created questionnaire was delivered via e-mail, with a request to forward it to employees. It is questionable whether this was done, given that most of the questionnaires were carried out personally during the field research. Based on these limitations, it is possible to single out several directions for future research. To begin with, it would be very useful to carry out the survey in other hotels of the hotel chain to which the hotel within which the survey belongs. In this way, the user would be able to find out whether the principles of organizational culture and their application are unified at the level of the hotel chain or whether there are certain discrepancies among hotel facilities. Secondly, it would be very useful to examine other influences that organizational culture has on employees in the hotel industry, such as work engagement and burnout. Thirdly, within this work, exclusively descriptive statistics were used, therefore, for future research, it would be of great importance to extend the analysis to other methods within the software for statistical data processing.

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Appendix 1. Descriptive statistics organizational culture

Items	M	Min	Max
1 Communication between employees in our company is open and transparent.	4.45	1.00	5.00
2 Our guests react positively to the atmosphere that prevails in our hotel, which is the result of a good organizational culture.	4.28	1.00	5.00
3 Employee satisfaction is directly related to the organization's culture.	3.95	1.00	5.00
4 All employees are aware of the core values and principles of our organizational culture.	3.91	1.00	5.00
5 The organizational culture of the company is clearly defined.	3.88	1.00	5.00
6 Employees identify with the values and goals of our hotel.	3.85	1.00	5.00
7 Management activities affect the implementation of the organizational culture.	4.23	1.00	5.00
8 Changes in organizational culture are effectively communicated to all employees.	4.01	1.00	5.00
9 There are clear guidelines for employee behavior that are in line with the organizational culture.	3.95	1.00	5.00
10 Management regularly monitors and improves the organizational culture.	3.93	1.00	5.00
11 Organizational culture helps to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.	3.84	1.00	5.00
12 All employees feel involved in the decision-making process.	3.60	1.00	5.00
13 Organizational culture contributes to the quality of service to guests.	4.35	1.00	5.00
14 Through organizational culture, a competitive advantage is achieved in the market.	4.25	1.00	5.00
15 Organizational Culture Contributes to Employee Satisfaction.	4.01	1.00	5.00
16 Organizational culture has a positive impact on teamwork.	3.98	1.00	5.00
17 Organizational culture is a positive source of innovation and creativity.	3.91	1.00	5.00
18 Organizational culture helps to reduce employee turnover.	3.34	1.00	5.00