

The superior-subordinate relationship and work climate in the Slovenian tourism industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to find out how managers, executives and operational workers evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship and what is the work climate and what influence does the work climate exert on the quality of work in Slovenian tourism organizations. Based on our empiric quantitative research, conducted as a questionnaire-based survey, some characteristics of the sample organizations and respondents were explained using the descriptive method. For comparison, evaluation and interpretation of individual causal relations, we have applied the correlational-explanatory method. We have identified the relevant factors on the level of the relationship where the employee is placed, his identification with the organization, the involvement of their personal goals with the common goal of the organization, their understanding of their assigned tasks, decision-making and implementation thereof, as well as success in achieving goals. A significant contribution to a good work climate comes from the management team, whose professional correctness in resolving conflicts has a bearing on the motivation of employees to engage in responsible and efficient work. Good relations and a proactive attitude among the team members is a pre-requisite for the innovative and creative work of an individual.

Key words: human resources management, relationship superior-subordinate, work climate, Slovenia

1 Introduction

This article is based on a doctoral dissertation entitled “Impact of tourism organization's management on the tourism education – example of Slovenia” (Tkalčič, 2009) at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences Kranj, University of Maribor.

The Development Plan and Directives of Slovene Tourism for the term 2007–2011 (Uran et al., 2006) reveals that tourism provides 54,000 jobs and employs 6.4% of the whole workforce who create 10% of the export of goods and services in the Republic of Slovenia (EUR 1.6 billion in 2005). The qualification structure of the employed workers in Slovenian tourism is unfavourable, there is an explicit lack of staff with higher (university or college) education. It is vital to enable and further the professional growth of current employees with a scheme for continuing training programmes. Tourism is an opportunity for progress for less-developed regions, as well as for regions with a strong depopulation process.

According to Jenkins (Potokar & Jug, 2003), tourism is seen as a catalyst of development that generates an increasing demand for a variety of services. That means new jobs. As the author highlights, tourism creates more jobs per unit of investment than other economic sectors. “Tourism is an economic activity capable of generating growth and employment in the EU, while contributing to development and economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence. With some 1.8 million businesses, primarily SMEs, employing approximately 5.2% of the total workforce (approximately 9.7 million jobs, with a significant proportion of young people), the European tourism industry generates over 5% of EU GDP, a figure which is steadily rising. Tourism therefore represents the third largest socioeconomic activity in the EU after the trade and distribution and construction sectors. Taking into account the sectors linked to it, tourism's contribution to GDP is even greater; it is estimated to generate over 10% of the European Union's GDP and provide approximately 12% of all jobs. In this regard,

observing the trend over the last ten years, growth in employment in the tourism sector has almost always been more pronounced than in the rest of the economy.” (European Commission, 2010)

The quality of services in tourism is largely determined by human resources. According to Ovsenik and Ambrož (2000), management in tourism is a key element that has a vital influence on changing and streamlining the concepts and values, as well as on monitoring the career growth and satisfaction of employees. Understanding of what the term “human resources” and its management encompasses. Baum (2007) argued that “this ambiguity includes the consequences of changes that have taken place at a functional level as the traditionally accepted concept of personnel management has given way to a broader functional application in human resource management, operating as part of a company's wider business and strategic environment.” Baum and Szivas (2008) argued that people are vital for the successful delivery of tourism services and, as a consequence, those who work in tourism are widely portrayed as a critical dimension in the successful operation of businesses within the sector. Cheng, Hui, and Wang (2011) argued “that neither personal value for service nor service climate alone affected the quality of employees' service-related behavior. There is, however, an interaction between service climate and employees' personal value for service.”

For the entrepreneurial innovative management system, Florjančič (1994) finds that the relationship between leaders and co-workers has essentially changed, which gives space for a different work climate and business spirit. According to Robbin and Coulter (2002) and Jong and Hartog (2007) the leadership style relates to leaders' behavior and actions where they may use their formal influence to establish work groups and affect them to support organizational strategy and goals. In the first period of the industrial era, the organizational leadership style was strongly affected by traditional management theories which support a mechanistic based leadership style in managing organizations (Robbin and Coulter, 2002; Yousef, 2000). Under this leadership style, leaders were focusing on production and on initiating structure, defining group activities,

concerned with production, practicing autocratic rule, and prioritizing goal attainment (Bass, 1999; Hartog, Muijen & Koopman, 1997; Bycio, Hacket & Allen, 1995). These styles can help to motivate subordinates to perform their current job, but it is not sufficient to attract, retain and motivate competent subordinates to increase organizational competitiveness in a dynamic marketplace (Bass, 1999; Bycio et al., 1995).

The concurrent processes of globalisation (interdependence in the world) and individualization (personal uniqueness) impose the requirement for a complex (comprehensive) and individualized product, which is all the more true for the tourism industry. Accordingly, the demand for new skills and knowledge is on the rise, in particular the needs for conceptual and integral know-how for various fields and levels. Apart from the knowledge related to high technology, business and organizational aspects, the focus has shifted to social and communication skills. The dynamic changes that occur outside and inside organizations have encouraged leaders to shift the paradigms of their behavior from a traditional mechanistic to a humanistic based leadership style in order to achieve organizational strategies and goals (Bass, 1999; Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Humanistic leadership style is widely implemented in organizations that operate in a dynamic market environment, focus on external competitiveness and emphasize high performing human resource practices (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta and Kramer, 2004; Bass, 1999; Hartog et al., 1997). This leadership style is strongly affected by human relations which emphasizes the quality of the interaction between leaders and subordinates, such as consideration, mutual trust, participatory decision-making, interaction oriented, consultative, democratic and concern for people (Amabile et al., 2004; Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Bartolo & Furlonger, 1999). This leadership style has two substyles: participative style and consultative style (Amabile et al., 2004; Jong and Hartog, 2007). The participative style is broadly seen as leaders often work closer and involve all levels of their followers in making decisions (consultation, empowerment, joint decision-making and power sharing). Whereas, consultative leadership style is viewed as leaders who

always request the opinions and ideas of their follower in establishing goals and task assignments (leaders appreciate followers' opinions and ideas in goal settings and task assignments) (Bass, 1999; Amabile et al., 2004; Jong and Hartog, 2007).

According to Dragoni (2005) managers transmit their belief systems to team members through role modeling, providing guidance in the form of direct and indirect feedback, and by reinforcing behavior that supports a manager's favored achievement orientation. Meindl (1995) recognized leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon heavily influenced by intra-team factors. Cole, Bedeian and Bruch (2011) have argued that transformational leadership behavior indirectly influences team performance through team empowerment.

Goleman (2001) finds that "50 to 70 percent of employees' perception of working climate is linked to the characteristics of the leader." For a Watkins (2000) "leaders can sustain performance improvements by creating a climate that motivates, develops, and retains talented people." Stringer (2002) argued that is "the most important determinant of work climate what the boss of a work group does. The boss's behavior drives climate, which arouses motivation. And aroused motivation is a major driver of bottom-line performance." According to Management Sciences for Health (2002) the manager who leads a work group, has to include his employees in his task creating and sustaining a desirable work environment that will motivate his staff. Even as a manager continually scans the external environment for information about clients' needs, competitors, challenges, and opportunities, the findings of his climate assessment can help him strengthen his leadership and management practices to provide his staff with clarity, support, and challenge.

Together, a leader and the other members of his group will create a climate that inspires every member to perform at the highest possible level. An organization can only be successful if it becomes a learning organization. For Burke (2002), a learning organization does not only stand for a sum of learning individuals, but rather an organizational potential for the implementation of change, improving the capabilities of an individual and

concurrently changing the organizational structure and culture; it involves a wide participation of employees and consumers, and promotes a systematic thinking and builds up the memory of the organization.

Firm growth is probably the best proxy for performance in the dynamic capabilities framework (Helfat et al., 2007). Denicolai, Cioccarelli, and Zuccella (2010) focus on the research question of how much does inter-firm network activity matter in tourism corecompetence development. It leads to a managerial view based on the appraisal of both firm core-competencies and network-specific assets. Individuals, organisations and firms are not isolated, independent actors separately contributing their piece to the total value created for customers; they are parts of value chains and networks through which value is co-created and co-delivered (March & Wilkinson, 2009). According to Wilkinson (2008) relations and networks enable and constrain what firms and organisations can see, know, think and do play two basic roles in business: a) Here they play a role “in accessing, combining, recombining and coordinating the activities, resources and outputs of people and firms specializing in different parts of the overall process of value creation and delivery”; b) “They are the means by which the knowledge, skills and resources required to develop, exploit and commercialise new ideas are marshalled and coordinated.”

Our research perceived the superior-subordinate relationship, work climate and organizational culture in the Slovenian tourism industry both as a challenge and as an outcome. As a challenge for learning and acquiring the skills that will (as a consequence) support the processes of adapting to future changes in the tourism environment. On the influential level, that requires an employee who is aware of the necessity for acquiring new knowledge and willing to dedicate their considerable own initiative, encouraged by good motivational, or motivating leadership respectively, where such employees participate in decision-making and shaping a favourable organizational culture. Such a relationship can be achieved by a personnel structure that interlaces mutual cooperation in networks and is capable of creating new order in the system out of a

chaotic interplay of innovative ideas. In their relations, it has a bearing on the self-esteem of each individual, on their self-confidence and trust in the organization and its goals. These goals bring about the identification of each individual with their organization and a high level of commitment to the corporate goals in an organization that welcomes such changes.

We were particularly interested in the next two hypotheses:

H1: Managers and the Executives evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship differently.

H2: The creative work assignment approach primarily concerns the managers and executives.

2 Method

In our study of the superior-subordinate relationship, we relied on the variables: Leader type; Frequency of work-related communication with the superior; Frequency of consultation with the superior about work implementation, the needs of guests, any changes or new requirements; Approach to assigning the tasks (delegating); Mode of execution of work/task assigned; Main decision-maker; The perception of the leader on the part of subordinates; Encouraging cooperation and competition by the leader; The leader's response in the event of error; Frequency of commendation by the leader; What is the climate in your organization; What influence did the climate exert on the quality of work; How did the leadership endeavour to achieve a higher level of organizational culture in companies; Cooperation of leader with subordinates; Approach to conflict resolution.

Based on our empiric quantitative research conducted as a questionnaire-based survey, some characteristics of the sample organizations and respondents were explained with the descriptive method. For the comparison, evaluation and interpretation of individual causal relations, we applied the correlational-explanatory method. The data contributed by the questionnaire were processed in accordance with statistical methods. Statistical processing was performed

by the software Statistica of the manufacturer StatSoft and Microsoft Office Excel 2003. Data of attributive type are shown in the form of frequencies and percentages of responses (frequency distribution - hereafter referred to as f. d.). Abbreviations in some tables 'n. a.' or 'n. d.', stand for 'no answer' or 'no data'. Component analysis was applied for deriving the correlations between the variables, and contingency tables for displaying the correlations. The strength of correlation was tested by the contingency coefficient (CC) (derived from the Chi-square statistic and yielding equal statistical characteristics as Chi-square). Hypotheses were tested by Chi-square statistics. Degrees of freedom are displayed in contingency tables. Data in the form of ranges were normalized as a test. Processing of normalized data did not differ essentially from the analysis of non-normalized values.

The questionnaire-based survey "The Impact of Top Management in Tourist Organizations on Education for Tourism" was comprised of the responses from 161 tourist organizations ranging from the hospitality industry, tourist and travel agencies, other business or trade related to tourism, and organizations of the public sector related to tourism. The sample used in our research is representative for the target case study in tourism, which is an explicitly multidisciplinary activity. Tourism represents not only the conventional or core activities in tourist trade (such as hospitality industry and travel agency which are covered by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, but also numerous economic activities directly related to tourism (spas and natural resorts, gaming, meetings industry, providers of sport-related services, entertainment organizers, economic interest associations for tourism) and public institutions or services (local tourist and organizations for the promotion of tourism and civil societies for tourism). In other words, we can affirm that we have included in our sample of respondents and organizations in which they are employed, both the conventional activities of tourism trade and also the more propulsive players in the Slovenian tourism economy; the latter have already announced, also supported by the results of our research, a more promising and professional attitude to new knowledge that

is indispensable for an increased added value of the tourist products of Slovenia and beyond.

The data obtained by questionnaires were collected from October 2004 to March 2005. We used the list of organizations from the database of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS) – the Association of Catering and Tourism, and the Slovenian Chamber of Crafts – Section for Catering and Tourism, and the partner lists of the Slovenian Tourist Board (participating in the Slovenian Incoming Workshop). Respondents entered their responses or chose the appropriate answers in the questionnaire by themselves. We handed out 240 copies of the questionnaire and 161 were returned to us. The highest response (from about 90 respondents) was obtained from the participants of the Slovenian Incoming Workshop, organized by the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO). We acquainted the respondents with the purpose of our research.

3 Research outcomes

3.1 Respondent characteristics

According to the size of business entities from which the respondents came, the structure of the population involved in our survey corresponds to the well-known fragmentation of the Slovenian tourism sector consisting of a number of small entities. Just above one quarter of the sample (26%) were comprised of respondents coming from entities with up to ten employees, which are classified as small organizations. Less than one in four (23%) respondents came from medium-sized entities (relative for tourist industry) with 11 to 50 employees, and another quarter from large entities (relative for tourist industry) with more than 50 employees. More than one in four respondents or 28% did not provide an answer to this question. The size-related structure of entities from which our respondents came corresponded to the structure of entities in Slovenian tourist trade, in which small entities prevail; large organizations are few in number and their profile usually reflects a diversified scope of business - tourism is just added to their core business (e.g. transportation, trade, etc.).

More than two thirds of the population surveyed has had up to five years of service, and less than one in four has had longer working experience - from 6 to 20 years. The share of respondents with more than twenty years of work experience is negligible. The results show that the young segment of respondents was the highest, which is typical of the age structure in tourist industry offering a lot of first-job opportunities due to its labour-intensive profile and higher fluctuation rates. The number of respondents who did not answer this question was negligible. We also obtained similar results to the question on their service period in tourist trade.

The service period in a concrete tourist organization is low: more than one half of respondents had been employed there for 2 years or less. Although tourism is a dynamic activity and the work is demanding, the advanced tourist countries show a tendency for people to remain in their workplaces for a longer period for two reasons: remuneration and the communicative character of the jobs.

Slightly more than one half of the surveyed population (55%) works in operational workplaces and is concerned with implementation; nearly three in ten respondents (29%) are executives, and only one in ten has a managerial position. The results reflect the classic pyramidal structure of our tourist organizations, with the least staff in managerial, slightly more in executive positions and the majority of staff in operational jobs. Compared with the situation in the Slovenian tourist economy, these data show that we have captured a slightly broader sample in the segment of executive

and managerial staff, which is favourable for the needs of our research.

3.2 Superior-subordinate relationship

We have identified the superior-subordinate relationship through next variables: Leader type; Frequency of consultation with superiors about operational execution of work, needs of guests, changes and new requirements; Approach to delegating the work assignment; Mode of execution of work assigned; Who decides on important issues in organization; Perception of the leader on the part of subordinates; Encouraging cooperation and competition by the leader; Leader's response to error; Does your superior give commendations for work well done.

About one half of our respondents have assessed their leaders (Table 1) as average professionals and accessible (38.5%), and unprofessional and inaccessible (11.2%); slightly more than one third of respondents views them as highly professional and committed to the career development of employees (13%), and as

Table 1: Leader type (f. d.)

Your leader is:	f _l	f ₁₀₀
Highly professional and committed to employee career development	21	13,0
Highly professional and cooperative	37	23,0
Highly professional, but inaccessible	8	5,0
Average professional and accessible	62	38,5
Unprofessional and inaccessible	18	11,2
No answer	15	9,3
Σ	161	100,0

Table 2: Correlation between the variables 'Your leader is' and 'Managers and executives'

Job/ Position	n. d.	Your leader is					Σ
		highly professional, but inaccessible	unprofessional and inaccessible	average professional and accessible	highly professional and cooperative	highly profess. and committed to employee career develop.	
No data	0	0	0	5	2	2	9
Operational	2	3	10	34	22	14	85
Managerial / executive	5	5	8	23	21	5	67
Σ	7	8	18	62	45	21	161

Table 3: Frequency of consultation with superiors about operational execution of work, needs of guests, changes and new requirements (f.d.)

	Frequency of consultation with superiors about							
	Operational execution		Needs of guests		Changes		New requirements	
	f _i	f _{i%}	f _i	f _{i%}	f _i	f _{i%}	f _i	f _{i%}
Frequently	86	53,4	77	47,8	98	60,9	98	60,9
Rarely	57	35,4	55	34,1	51	31,7	49	30,4
Never	13	8,1	17	10,6	5	3,1	8	5,0
No answer	5	3,1	12	7,5	7	4,3	6	3,7
Σ	161	100,0	161	100,0	161	100,0	161	100,0

highly professional and cooperative (23%), only 5% of leaders were assessed as highly professional and inaccessible, and less than one in ten respondents did not provide an answer.

We wondered whether there is any correlation between the role of respondents at work and their responses in Table 1 on: 'Leader type'. The correlation between 'Leader type' and 'Managers and executives' was checked by the χ^2 test (based on data from the Contingency Table 2). To satisfy the requirements of the test, we structured the classes [1-2], [3], [4], [5]. The result ($p=0,396$) shows no existing correlation between them. Accordingly, we confirm hypothesis 1: The managers and executives did evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship differently.

The results of research (Table 3) display the frequency of consultations in surveyed organizations as appropriate (slightly less than two thirds of responses) when it comes to changes to the work environment and introducing new requirements to a workplace, however, it is viewed as slightly weaker in addressing the changes in the operational execution of work and the needs of guests. The latter of the findings raises concern in particular with regards to the focus of employees that should be placed on the guests and their needs,

which is the underlying characteristic for quality-level hospitality service.

Responses from Table 3 reveal:

- More than one half of respondents frequently consult their superior about the operational execution of work. Slightly more than one third rarely consult their superior about their work; less than one in ten never seeks consultation with his superior.
- Similar results were also obtained in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about the needs of their guests. Despite the fact that almost one half of respondents frequently consult their superiors, it worries us that almost one in two respondents never or only occasionally consults his superiors about the needs of the guests.
- We obtained more favourable results in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about changes in the work environment. Nearly two in three respondents frequently consult their superiors, while the remaining one does it only occasionally. We view the share of respondents, who deny consulting their superiors about the changes, as negligible.
- Similar are the results obtained in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about

Table 4: Approach to delegating the work assignment (f. d.)

Approach to delegating the work assignment	f _i	f _{i%}
The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own	68	42,2
You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you	33	20,5
The criterion for performance is explained to you	8	5,0
You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas	50	31,1
No answer	2	1,2
Σ	161	100,0

Table 5: Identifying the correlation between the variables 'Approach to delegating the work assignment' and 'Role of respondents in their organization'

Approach to delegating the work assignment	Role at work			Σ
	No data	Operational	Managerial, executive	
No data	0	1	1	2
Task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.	3	41	24	68
You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you.	4	22	7	33
The criterion for performance is explained to you.	0	4	4	8
You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas.	2	17	31	50
Σ	9	85	67	161

new requirements in their work environment. Slightly less than two thirds of respondents often consult their superior about new requirements for a correct execution of their work. Only one in three practices that very rarely. Again, the share of respondents who never consult their superiors about the new requirements imposed on their work is viewed as negligible.

Slightly more than two fifths of surveyed population (Table 4) believe that their superiors delegate tasks to them and expect the employees to execute the work independently. About one in five respondents says that (s)he gets a detailed explanation on what is expected from employees. A negligible share of respondents explain that they only get an explanation on the criterion to be met for the required performance in executing particular work assignments, all the rest is left over to the employee. The resulting number of responses to the assertion 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas' is surprising (almost one third). We presume that these respondents are very creative in their work.

We were interested in how the Managers and Executives responded to this question. Based on Table

5 we conclude that as many as 31 of 67 Managers and Executives mostly marked the answer 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas', fewer (24 of 67) responded 'The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.' These responses are quite logical in the light of the role of respondents in organizations.

The responses by the operational workers were grouped logically: 41 of 85 respondents answered 'Task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.', and 22 of 85 answered 'You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you.', which reflects the fact that operational workers often find themselves in a position when they have to be 'resourceful' and act independently, which points to the fact that independence and a responsible approach to work is often required (expected) from operational workers, too.

We were in particular interested in the correlation between 'Managers and Executives' and 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas', which was checked by the χ^2 test in the Contingency Table 6. The calculated $\rho=0.0018$ reveals that there is a characteristic correlation between both these groups

Table 6: Identifying the correlation between the variables 'Role at work' and 'Contributing own ideas to the assignment'

Role at work	You are expected to contribute your ideas to the assignment			Σ
	No data	This reply was not chosen	The chosen reply was	
No data	0	7	2	9
Operational	1	67	17	85
Managerial, executive	1	35	31	67
Σ	2	109	50	161

Table 7: *Mode of execution of work assigned*

Mode of execution of work assigned	Yes	No	No ans.	Σ
According to instructions	75%	23%	2%	100%
As a team	85%	14%	1%	100%
Independently	70%	27%	3%	100%

and thus it affirms the hypothesis 2 that such 'creative work assignment approach' primarily concerns the Managers and Executives.

Among data listed in Table 7 we were quite surprised by the highest share of positive responses to the assertion about performing their 'as a team' (85%), followed by the assertion 'according to instructions' (75%) and 'independently' (70% of positive responses). Considering that smaller organizations prevail, the result is not that surprising because also bigger organizations in tourist trade and businesses related to tourism are structured into smaller units in which we can observe team-work dynamics to a certain extent.

To our question on 'Who decides on important issues in your organization?' almost one half of respondents (44%) answered that the leader decides on his or her own after consulting with the employees. One in three respondents (33%) answered that team members take part in decision-making with leaders. One in five (20%) responded that the leader decides on his/her own, without consulting the employees. These responses reveal that respondents understand team work as work done in a group regardless of how decisions are made.

Table 8: *Perception of the leader by subordinates (f. d.)*

Perception of the leader by subordinates	f _i	f _{1%}
First among equals (primus inter pares)	65	40,4
Superior in the hierarchy, conveying decisions verbally	80	49,7
Does not talk to subordinates, has no time, is inaccessible	10	6,2
No answer	6	3,7
Σ	161	100,0

According to Table 8, we can see that more than two in five respondents believe that the leader is just the

first among equals (Primus inter pares). Slightly less than one half of the surveyed view their leaders as their superiors in corporate hierarchy, who convey their decisions verbally. Only a very small number of them is extremely authoritarian, i.e. never talk to their subordinates and have no time for them, or are inaccessible for employees.

The share of responses to the question 'Encouraging the cooperation and competition by the leader' reveals that superiors in nearly two thirds of organizations (65%) encourage cooperation, and in one tenth (11%) of organizations surveyed they encourage positive competition. Nevertheless we have to point to nearly one fifth (17%) of respondents who believe that the leaders spur negative competition in their subordinates, and 7% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question. When speaking about fostering or encouraging cooperation, we primarily refer to the cooperation among co-workers, not the cooperation between superiors and subordinates. We could say that spurring negative competition is too frequently found in our economy, which reveals a relatively low level of organizational culture and rather unsound personal relations in such organizations.

According to the results in Table 9, 'Leader's response to error', more than one half of respondents stated that when an error occurs, the leader would choose to discuss with employees and analyse the reasons for such error, and they find a solution together. Slightly less than three in ten respondents say that the leader would remind the employees of an error and leave it to them to resolve the problem or make good for it. An explicitly authoritarian approach in which the leader decides on how to remedy the error is represented only in 6.8% of responses, and even lower number of responses (5.6%) point to an explicitly liberal approach (dealing with and solving the problem is entirely left over to employees).

Table 9: *Leader's response to error (f. d.)*

Leader's response to error	f _i	f _{i%}
Reminds you and leaves it over to you to solve the problem	46	28,6
Discusses with you to and analyses the reasons for such error, and you find a solution together	88	54,7
Decides on how to remedy the error	11	6,8
Leaves it to you	9	5,6
No answer	7	4,3
Σ	161	100,0

The question 'Does your superior express a commendation for you?' was answered by more than one half (54%) with 'rarely', and almost three in ten respondents (29%) answered 'frequently', which proves that an encouraging attitude of Managers and executives to their subordinates is present in these organizations, but still not sufficiently practised.

3.3 Work climate and organizational culture

We have identified the problematic issues relating to work climate in the organizations surveyed through the eyes of respondents who conveyed their considerations on the climate in their organization and the culture of decision-making. We wondered what influence did the climate exert on the quality of work; how did the leadership endeavour to achieve a higher level of organizational culture in companies, how they resolved conflicts in the organizations.

The responses to the question 'What is the climate in your organization?' reveal that working, friendly and motivating climate prevails (43%) in the organizations surveyed. One in three respondents (33%) believe that the climate in their organization is primarily of a hard-working character. One in seven (14%) finds her/his work environment as 'working but cold' climate, only

4% reveal to be working in an extremely unpleasant work environment. If we highlight a fairly high share of responses proving that the work climate in their organization is friendly, working and motivating (almost one half of respondents), we may conclude that work climate in catering and tourist trade is good, in general. People working in this service industry are usually more extraverted and communicative persons who easily establish contacts with guests and co-workers too.

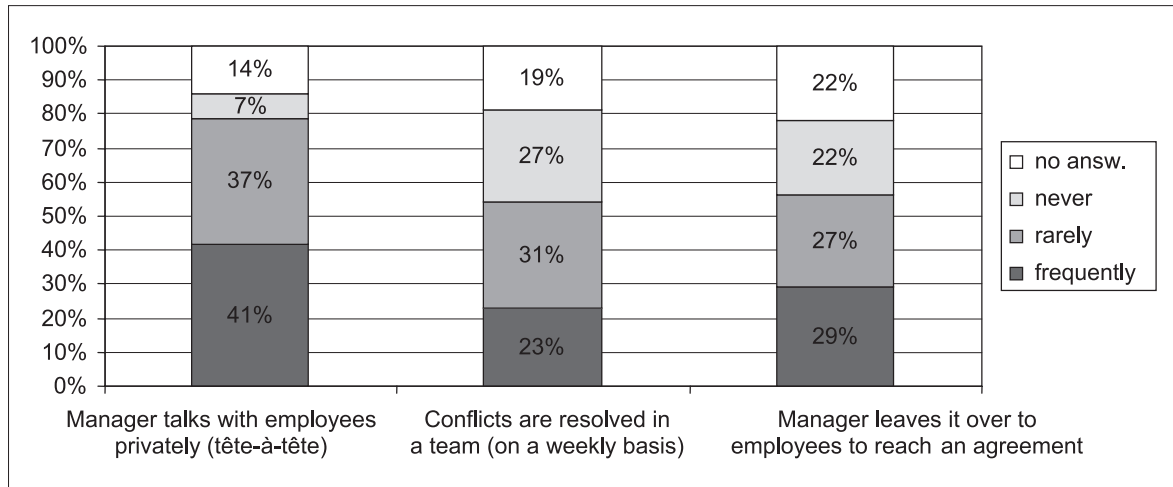
The impact of 'climate in the organization on the quality of work' has been proved with numerous practical cases, both home and abroad. We wondered if the respondents involved in our survey would share this opinion with us. According to data from our research, as many as two in three respondents (67%) believe that the impact of (bad or good) climate on the quality of work is quite strong. One in four (26%) believes that this impact is moderate only. Only a negligible number of employees view such an impact as unfavourable, or as irrelevant (non-existing).

As regards the 'culture in the organization', we find that project-based approach to work prevails in more than one in three organizations (35%) surveyed. Almost one third (30%) of respondents believes that the culture of roles prevails in their organization, which is in fact a modified autocratic leadership style. Despite that, one in six (16%) respondents still sees an authoritar-

Table 10: *Cooperation of leader with subordinates (f. d.)*

Cooperation of leader with subordinates	f _i	f _{i%}
Envisions better terms to improve organizational climate and culture	46	29
Endeavours for problem solving	73	45
For supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress	6	4
No answer	36	22
Σ	161	100

Fig. 1: Approach to conflict resolving (N=161)



ian culture of power as a prevailing culture in their organization. The least share of respondents (13%) believes that the culture of personality prevails in their organization, in which every individual is important. Only 6% of respondents have not provided an answer to this question.

It appears from the answers to the question in Table 10 whether the superiors ‘envision and plan jointly with employees to improve organizational climate and culture’, or ‘endeavour for problem solving’ and organize ‘supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress’ that slightly less than one half (45%) of organizations surveyed endeavour to resolve the problems together with employees. Less than three in ten (29%) leaders plans/ envisions better terms to improve working climate and organizational culture. The very low share (4%) of respondents who believe that their superiors ‘take part together with employees in supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress’ raises concern. Even more worrying is the information that one in five respondents has not answered this question.

The authoritarian leadership style in the approach to conflict resolving (Figure 1) is slightly more present in tourist organizations than in other branches of economic sector; time for dealing with conflict is scarce, therefore leaders often take the right to urge the employee to do the work without unnecessary

negotiations. Employees in catering are quite used to such modus operandi; we could assume that such communication style in resolving the conflicts has resulted from the broad HR pyramid, with too few of executives and a large number of operational staff.

Comment to results in Figure 1 according to columns:

- a) These results show that in two conflict situations out of five the Manager approaches the respective employees and talks to them privately (tête-à-tête), using his/her authority to resolve the problem optimally and settle the tensions among employees. In one third of the organizations surveyed, leaders only rarely decide to discuss with their employees in private in order to resolve a conflict. In nearly one in ten organizations surveyed, the superiors never talk to their subordinates tête-à-tête.
- b) Quite balanced scores were obtained in the answers to the question whether the conflicts are resolved in a team (on a weekly basis). This is frequently done in less than one quarter of organizations involved in the survey; only rarely are conflicts resolved in this way in slightly less than one third, and never in one quarter of organizations. A comparison of the share of organizations that frequently (23%) practise such approach to conflicts with those that never practise it (27%) shows that the latter prevail. Evidently team work is not gaining ground in most Slovenian tourist

organizations yet, in fact the findings from section a) about the prevailing authoritarian approach to conflict situations have been confirmed. Also the medium response (Conflicts are resolved in a team only rarely 27%) in fact means a lack of team-based approach.

- c) Similar situation as under section b) was also obtained for the variable 'the leader leaves it over to employees to reach an agreement'. The results are evenly distributed, in quarterly shares. The responses to this question additionally confirm the conclusive finding regarding the authoritarian approach under section a) and b). It is notable that a very high share - almost one in four respondents - have not provided an answer to this question.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The results of our empiric research (high fluctuation of workforce) have confirmed the assertion of Nemeč Rudež (2005) that the Slovenian tourism leadership has a rather low awareness of the know-how dedicated to tourism trade and is still hesitant about the eligibility of investing in knowledge and HR development. These results also indicate that Slovenian tourism leadership is still far from Burke's idea of 'learning society' (Burke, 2002).

With regards to professionalism, almost one half of our respondents view their leaders as average professional or unprofessional; only slightly more than two fifths (41%) of respondents assess their superiors as highly professional. The results on the attitude to subordinates are even more disappointing. More than one half of respondents (55%) assess their leaders as average accessible or inaccessible; slightly more than one in three (36%) respondents view their superiors as cooperative and committed to the career development of employees. If we generalise these findings, the resulting data raise concern: Of the leaders in Slovenian tourist industry, nearly one half is scored as average or below-average professionals, and more than one half as average accessible or inaccessible. It is obvious that about one in two of Slovenian tourist

organizations does not have highly professional and motivating leadership staff.

We found a characteristic correlation in assigning (delegating) the work between 'Managers and Executives' segment and 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas' answer, which affirms the presumption that such 'creative work assignment approach' primarily relates to delegating the tasks to Managers and Executives. In the operational staff segment the concrete delegating of work prevails: 'The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own' and 'You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you'. It is clear that independent acting and responsible approach to work is sometimes required (expected) also from operational staff members in tourism. On that basis we can presume that in future, the level of complexity of tourist professions will be increasing and the expected educational / qualification profile will rise also in operational segment of staff (also corresponding to higher average educational profile of tourists - especially of more demanding, individuals). Similar findings are also listed by the RNUST 2007-2011 (Uran et al., 2006): The Slovenian offer for tourists must become integrated, quality-based, specialized, innovative and based on knowledge and information.

We were surprised by the result that 'team-based' work was found in 85% of organizations involved in the survey; however, it should be noted that such a large share is attributable to the nature of work in tourism. Additional study will be needed to find out whether the true team work is meant, or just work groups with a hierarchy structure and management concept. Considering the remaining results of our survey (in particular the responses in Table 9), we tend to believe the second variant. Nevertheless we can conclude that true team work does occur in about one third of organizations comprised in our survey, which is quite favourable for the personnel structure of Slovenian tourism and its (presently still) labour-intensive character.

It is interesting to find that our conviction has been confirmed, namely that first signs of a shift toward

democratisation of relations in the organizations surveyed (two fifths of responses 'first among equals') have occurred, however, the former authoritarian approach is still deeply rooted (approximately one half of answers to the assertion 'Superior in the hierarchy, conveying decisions verbally'), which is merely supplemented by a modest number of answers to the third assertion 'the superior does not talk to subordinates, has no time, is inaccessible' (6%).

Although the responses show that working, friendly and motivating climate prevails in the organizations surveyed (43%), one third of respondents believe that the climate in their organization is only of a working character. The fact that the climate in almost one fifth of organizations surveyed is negative (working but cold, unpleasant) raises concern despite the prevailing positive climate in the majority of sample.

We further find that the modern, democratic concept of the organizational culture - the culture of tasks and the culture of personality - prevails (48%) in our tourist organizations, however, the autocratic concept - the culture of power and roles - (46%) is not overcome yet. Therefore, the culture of power and roles is still important in the Slovenian tourism organizations, while the modern, democratic culture of tasks and culture of personality (every individual is important) is gradually gaining ground and taking the lead.

The authoritarian leadership style in the approach to conflict resolving is slightly more present in tourism organizations than in other branches of economic sector; time for dealing with conflict is scarce, therefore leaders often take the right to urge the employee to do the work without unnecessary negotiations.

Our sample of tourism organizations surveyed obviously comprises a group of organizations that is dynamic in its physical growth and development, but still lagging behind in terms of qualitative growth. We have identified the relevant factors on the level of the relationship where the employee is placed, his identification with the organization, the involvement of their personal goals with the common goal of the organization, their understanding of the task, decision-making and implementation thereof, as well as the success in achieving the goals. At this level, the employee is creating communicative relations with others, be it with the superior or with his co-workers, and thus participating in shaping the Organization's climate and culture. A favourable climate is also an outcome of professional resolving of conflicts that adds to the motivation of employees for responsible and efficient work. Good relations and favourable climate are indispensable for innovative and creative work of an individual. On the process-based level, that means well done work, effectively delegated tasks and a cooperation with co-workers that leads to synergy.

Odnos nadrejeni – podrejeni v slovenskem turizmu

Povzetek

Namen članka je ugotoviti, kako vodilni in vodstveni ter ostali delavci ocenjujejo odnos nadrejeni-podrejeni ter kakšna je delovna klima in njen vpliv na kakovost dela v slovenskih turističnih organizacijah. Na osnovi empirične kvantitativne raziskave, izpeljane s pomočjo anketnega merskega instrumenta, so z deskriptivno metodo pojasnjene nekatere značilnosti vzorca organizacij in respondentov. Za ustrezno primerjanje, vrednotenje in interpretiranje posameznih vzročnih odnosov je uporabljena korelacijska eksplanativna metoda. Identificirali smo pomembne dejavnike na odnosni ravni, kjer srečamo zaposlenega, njegovo identificiranost z organizacijo, vpletanje osebnih ciljev v skupni cilj organizacije, razumevanje, odločanje in izvedbo njegovih nalog ter uspešnost pri doseganju ciljev. Ugodno klimo pomembno sooblikuje vodilni tim, ki s profesionalnim in korektnim reševanjem konfliktov (problemov) vpliva na motivacijo zaposlenih za dobro delo. Dobri odnosi in ugodna klima so osnovni pogoj za inovativno in ustvarjalno delovanje posameznika.

Ključne besede: management človeških virov, odnos nadrejeni-podrejeni, delovna klima, Slovenija

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