

# EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN SELECTED SPANISH HOTELS: MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Silvie Zámečník<sup>1</sup>, Radovan Kožíšek<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 1, 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic

Link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun.2021.022>

Received: 30. 1. 2020, Accepted: 2. 3. 2021

To cite this article: ZÁMEČNÍK SILVIE, KOŽÍŠEK RADOVAN. 2021. Employee Retention in Selected Spanish Hotels: Motivation and Satisfaction. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 69(2): 251–257.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand internal main activities in Spanish hotels that managers use to maintain a good working climate and to compare them with the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory of satisfaction in hospitality business environment. This analysis shows the fact of motivation factor which can influence an individual employee commitment in order to increase internal satisfaction, improve the performance and avoid the staff fluctuation in hospitality environment. For qualitative interviews there were selected full-time employed managers working in five- and four-stars hotels in Barcelona. The obtained results and comparison demonstrated that the analyzed perspectives lead to a higher efficacy, loyalty, and individual performance in the area of chosen three dimensions: strategy, communication, and common feedback, only to motivated employees. The results would support the importance of effective implementation of these three dimensions and implications for Czech hospitality organizations.

Keywords: motivation, working conditions, personal growth, job satisfaction, employee fluctuation, loyalty

## INTRODUCTION

According to AHRCR (2020) there are a total of 9007 accommodation facilities in the Czech Republic, but only 414 of them are formally certified by the EU-level classification system under the name of Hotelstars Union, which is an official standard classification structure of accommodation facilities in the Czech Republic. Except the international hotel chains, which have already developed standards and processes in the market worldwide, we can suppose that there is still a majority of hotels missing a coherent form of internal processes that can help them to improve quality of service towards client satisfaction and prevent staff fluctuation or motivate employees to become loyal within the corporate environment.

Kakyom and Giri (2010) explain, that while employee turnover has long been recognized as

a critical factor to be effectively managed by the hospitality industry, there has been little effort aimed at developing a systematic model to address and predict employee intentions to stay. Employee turnover has many negative impacts on hospitality properties and thus must be effectively controlled because it can result in poor customer service and dissatisfaction.

Rainey (2006) describes that the dynamics of how to influence client satisfaction and loyalty and differentiate in hospitality environment which has been crucial for most hotels and other companies in hospitality business in recent years and should be in synergy with global standards where high product quality and satisfied customer is a part of building a competitive advantage. Internationally, the composition of clients, demands, habits and requirements are also changing.

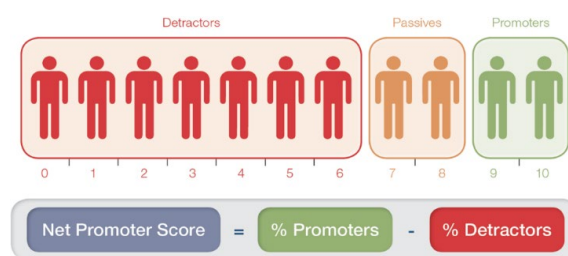
According to Inghilleri (2010) experience, unusualness, uniqueness, attractiveness, adrenaline, as well as utility, advantage or exclusivity are acknowledged. Highly valued is a healthy lifestyle, absolute relax and lifestyle regeneration. The segmentation and orientation of offers is continually specified for various types of clients from children, through the generation Y to seniors or singles. Communication channels for information and current offers are also changing. With the development of social media, especially internet and television, the structure of users and target clients has changed significantly. The hotel marketing and the entire hotel industry in general is open to client's requests; it is important create to the client some impression of exceptionality Yang *et al.* (2011).

Therefore, in order to strengthen the market position and develop the standards, it is very important to clarify how we want our customers to perceive us and be able to identify positive or negative internal and external clients' (employees and clients) needs and experiences. To create a good position on the market, the organization should first of all establish a lasting and emotional relationship with customers being internal or external. Loyalty of customers to the organization and recommendation (Net Promoter Score factor) to other clients is one of the most important aspects of an organization. This factor is a metric used in customer experience programs and measures the loyalty of customers to an organization. The scores are measured with a single question survey and reported with a number from -100 to +100, where higher score means better performance.

Shaw (2002) explains that the individual approach is most important in the hotel and all service sectors and should be based on a unique quality of service. Every client should be treated with a positive attitude in any contact (employee, timeline) and this positive human attitude is necessary so that customers get only the best experience. Purposeful management of the quality of delivered service within the organization, primarily reduces the costs and risks of stress situations, and staff fluctuation. In every organization, offering quality of service, the correct implementation of internal values which is developed primarily at the human resources department should be a universal standard in all business models.

To create a good position in the market, an organization should first of all establish permanent and emotional relationship with its employees as Reicheheld (2003) describes. To measure the loyalty and employee experience, he recommends the Net Promoter Score factor (NPS factor).

As Rainey (2006) puts to realize the sustainable development of all processes, the symbiosis and the performance of intra-institutional operations are required to create economic, social and environmental value (the logical chain of standards



1: Model Net Promoter Score factor (Reichenheld, 2003)

within the organization). The right strategy of developing internal values can achieve and maintain client satisfaction and loyalty of both, employees and customers. According to Dijulius (2008), these processes need to be measured at partial points of contact and orientation to determine the right plan, definition and strategy for achieving a high customer satisfaction index, with the result: "We wish our client has an unforgettable experience with us and becomes loyal to us".

The main objective of the study was to identify the key satisfaction factors based on an analysis of the relationships between the partial satisfaction factors, which significantly affect employee loyalty and motivation within an organization, and loyalty, and to assess importance of these factors. The main research question is therefore put as follows: How to achieve a long-term sustainable World Class Service in the hotel management area?

Professional development and the growth of human talent also play a major role. Jakob and Jolly (2013) show as well that higher self-efficacy in a realm is associated with good outcomes, ranging from greater job satisfaction to better performance.

Parasuman *et al.* (1985) defined five basic dimensions of quality of service, which have been quantified on the basis of extensive research and which have a significant impact on the customer's understanding of service quality. These attributes are listed in order of importance and are theoretically expected to apply to all types of services, with dimensions to be specified using measurable variables that vary by service type: reliability, responsible attitude, confidence and trust, empathy, palpability.

### **The Motivation to Work: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Satisfaction in Business Environment**

This theory brought a simple model providing a practical way to gain detailed knowledge of employee attitudes about their job and reasons to stay or leave, which are based on scientific background and long-term research (Herzberg, 1959, 1974, 1987), thus stood well the test of time. Employers have a clear tool how to assess and approach particular employees using the „Motivation-hygiene profile“. According to the most detailed and integrated literature overview of this

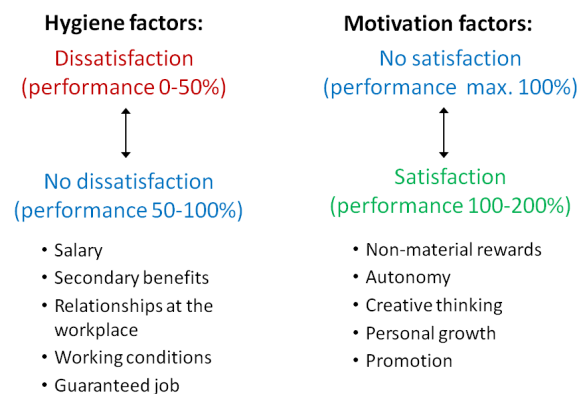
theory (Stello, 2011), this theory has been proved as not perfect in the course of time, but as a stable foundation upon which the current and future scholars can continue to build new and better theories of job satisfaction and work motivation.

Herzberg's dual-factor theory of job satisfaction should be put in historical context and seen as a milestone on the road of continuous attempts how to approach, understand and motivate people throughout the last hundred of years. Some of the below mentioned theories served as an inspiration for Herzberg's research:

- Edward C. Tolman's Expectancy Theory of motivation (1930)
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) – see Fig. 2
- Henry Landsberger's Hawthorne Effect (observed and described in 1950)
- Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959–1987)
- Bernard Weiner's Three-Dimensional Theory of Attribution
- Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y
- Theory Z, developed by William Ouchi

Herzberg's research was based on open questioning and almost no assumptions. He used an open interviewing method, which brought him more meaningful results than the conventional questionnaires using closed (yes/no) or multiple-choice questions, which might induce a desired type of response (thus often misused by organizations with particular agenda or public aim).

The following picture shows basic differences between hygiene and motivation factors and their impact on employees' performance:



2: Combinations and impact of satisfaction and motivation on employees performance in business environment (Kuijk, 2018, and own research)

Motivator factors that can motivate employees to work harder (work in flow, often overtime with no fixed relation between working hours and salary), and lead to on-the-job satisfaction that includes experiences of greater engagement in and enjoyment of the work, feelings of recognition, and a sense of career progression. Hygiene

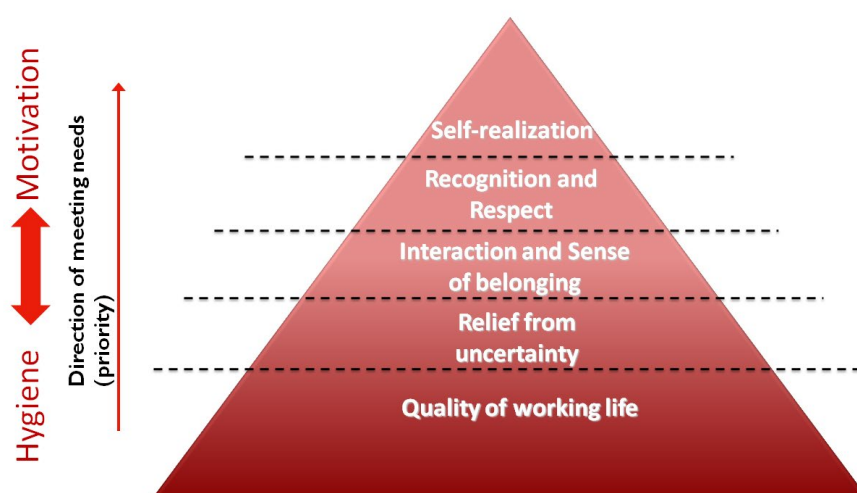
factors that can potentially lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation if they are absent like adequate compensation, effective company policies, comprehensive benefits, or good relationships with managers and co-workers.

Despite the current doubts, whether his theory still holds true in the modern business world (esp. ICT industry) with the millennials who are looking for meaningful work and growth regardless the basic working conditions (e.g., they highly prefer motivators over hygiene factors), Herzberg's central theory is truly relevant to modern understanding employer/employee relationships, mutual understanding, and alignment with the theories of hygiene and motivators (Stello, 2011).

Following four different (extreme) combinations can exist at work (Kuijk, 2018):

1. High hygiene and high motivation  
The most advantageous situation both for the employer and the employee: Employees are very motivated and have no complaints about the working conditions. It represents the most advantageous situation in long-term both for employers (competitive advantages, best "labour costs"/"value-added" ratio) and also for employees (feeling of self-realisation, which belongs to the top of the satisfaction pyramid – see Fig. 3).
2. High hygiene and low motivation  
Employees have only few complaints, but they are not really motivated, they see their work simply as a money source. It represents a dangerous situation for the employer in long-term. Only motivated employees bring and develop competitive advantages for the company, thus taking care of the sustainable development and long-term survival of any business entity.
3. Low hygiene and high motivation  
Employees are motivated, their job is challenging, but they have complaints about salary and/or work conditions. The most dangerous situation for the employer: people leave within couple of months, it means worst cost/benefit ratio, because of quite high recruitment and training costs vs. quite low value-added of the inexperienced staff. The employer usually does not understand the reasons, has no clues for necessary internal change (leaving short-term staff usually does not comment their reasons).
4. Low hygiene and low motivation  
Employees are not motivated and have a lot of complaints. This is an emergency (critical in short-term) situation for the employer. On the other hand, there are lots of clues (employees' feedback) available for the necessary internal change.

Adjusting the hygiene factors often has only a short-term effect. Improving the motivation



3: Hierarchy of satisfaction factors in institutional environment (Herzberg, 1959)

factors has a more lasting, long-term effect on employee performance (Herzberg, 1987).

People are motivated and make an effort to fulfil their unmet needs. Motivation of an employee usually self-arises. Leaders must be aware of constraints of self-motivation:

1. Motivation can be adversely affected by the inappropriate action of the manager.
2. Motivation value stops when the need is met.
3. Motivation is strictly focused; usually no broader context is considered (Kuijk, 2018).

Empiric research supports Herzberg's theory, e.g. the analysis of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), which employs more than 100.000 people (Groysberg and Sherman, 2008). The RBS "Human Capital Strategy" is described as a tool which gave their business dealers a detailed understanding of how to effectively attract, retain and engage the best people, and how is the business developed, maintained and driven by applying it in long-term.

Groysberg and Sherman (2008) use the 'Human Capital Toolkit' giving the HR staff an online access to a range of diagnostic tools, benchmarking resources and employee research and measurement tools in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of employees' performance and allowing them to continually improve on their approach.

They say that the motivator factors are mainly based on an individual's need for personal growth. Job satisfaction is actively created by motivator factors if these exist. An individual can be made to achieve their performance and effort above average when they are being effectively motivated. Dissatisfaction of employees is primarily the result of hygiene factors. These hygiene factors, if absent or inadequate, cause dissatisfaction, but their presence has little or no effect on long-term satisfaction (Groysberg and Sherman, 2008).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main research question was as follows: "How to achieve a long-term sustainable World Class Service in the hotel management area?"

Based on Herzberg's motivation theory and his approach to interviews, the data were collected through interviewing 10 managers based in Spain which were recruited with relevant knowledge and experience as working minimum 15 years in hospitality environment, (minimum \*\*\*\* category of SUP), middle or high management, hospitality university degree and direct contact with clients. During the interviews, the important focus was on questions to explore the strategies of hospitality managers to improve employee motivation and retention within the organization. The interview questions that were used to interview managers for this proposed study were sorted into 3 blocks: strategy for good climate, communication and feedback within the hotel.

There was used a thematic analysis for the study. the responses to the interview questions have been transcribed using the software NVivo to analyse the data.

Secondary data were obtained by means of analysing articles and web presentations of CzechTourism, ICCA association, The Czech association of hotels and restaurants and Barcelona Convention Bureau. There were used multiple sources of data to maximize the range of data needed to contribute to the understanding of the patterns of motivation and examination of the motivation, needs and expectancy on strategies to improve employee motivation and retention.

Barcelona city in Spain was chosen as the location as it is one of the world's most popular destinations for conferences and congresses: in 2018 there were organized 1,800 congresses in the city, attended by more than 650,000 participants and it is an agglomeration of the most \*\*\*\*\* certified hotels in Europe.

I: *Selected hotels in Barcelona*

1	Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Hotel Sofia Barcelona	<a href="https://sofiabarcelona.com">https://sofiabarcelona.com</a>
2	The Ritz – Carlton	Hotel Arts Barcelona	<a href="https://hotelartsbarcelona.com">https://hotelartsbarcelona.com</a>
3	Selenta Group	EXPO Barcelona	<a href="https://expohotels.com/">https://expohotels.com/</a>
4	Hospes Hotels	Hotel Hospes Maricel Majorca	<a href="https://hospes.com">https://hospes.com</a>

II: *Respondents managers selected for interviews in Barcelona*

	Name	Age	Gender	Education	Position	Hotel
1	Sofie	31–40	F	University degree	Quality Director	Sofia
2	Diego	41–50	M	University degree	Front Office Manager	Sofia
3	Susana	31–40	F	University degree	Event Manager	Arts
4	Ismael	61–70	M	University degree	General Manager	Hospes
5	Cecilia	41–50	F	University degree	Room Division Manager	Selenta Group
6	Juan	41–50	M	University degree	General Manager	Expo hotel
7	Joan	41–50	M	University degree	Human Resources Manager	Arts
8	Ana	31–40	F	University degree	Sales Manager	Expo Hotel
9	Ester	31–40	F	University degree	Club Manager	Selenta Group
10	Raimon	41–50	M	University degree	Food and Beverage Manager	Selenta Group

The following hotels have been selected strategically for the study, which meet all the standards and requirements or can be interesting for their internal ethics, location, and best practices:

Selected managers were interviewed from July 2019 to November 2019 and the interview questions were inspired by the topics discussed at Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory according to motivators and hygienic factors. These themes are motivation, working conditions, personal growth, job satisfaction.

There are three blocks of areas of interest and interview questions:

1. Strategy for good climate within the hotel:
  - a) What strategies have you used to maintain a good climate within the hotel for your employees to avoid a staff turnover?
  - b) Which of these strategies have you implemented to motivate employees in the organization? – a plan for employee development? – work productivity factor based on financial/working hours compensation? Or motivation factor based on talent management?
  - c) Which of these strategies have helped to improve hotels standards? Quality department/regular reporting between departments.
2. Communication within the hotel:
  - a) Does the employee identify himself/herself with the Mission/Vision of the organization and its values?
  - b) What strategies have you used for effective handling of employee complaints?

- c) How is the communication within the organization?
- d) Is there any measurement based on the relationship with managers of the company? (eNPS).
3. Feedback within the hotel:
  - a) Does the organization know about personal and professional aspirations of the employees?
  - b) Does the organization offer employee training programs? (i.e.cross-training).
  - c) What method does the organization use for motivating employees?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on an analysis of qualitative data, it has been verified that all 10 managers participating in the research highlight communication and importance of the motivation to increase the staff productivity. The element of employee growth, cross-training opportunities, regular training, investment in human talent, constant support of talent management are applied by 80% of managers.

However, there is a very important requirement to invest in the motivational element of employee growth as it will have a positive impact on employee performance, which was mentioned by 80 % of the interviewed managers, because if there is a symbiosis with the company expectation the results will be achieved easily.

Another important component identified by the interviewees is the selection of a proper role and constant support of talent management. Regular

III: *Number of Associations Derived From Interview Questions*

No.	Aspect	Number of participants with this perception	Times mentioned
1.	Good relationship with management	10	49
2.	Good working conditions	10	38
3.	Talent management	10	25
4.	Good climate within the hotel	10	22
5.	Financial aspect	9	21
6.	Professional development	8	21
7.	Good communication between all departments	8	20
8.	Respect from management	8	19
9.	Opportunities for promotion	8	16
10.	Compensation with holidays	7	13
11.	Good standards of the company	7	11
12.	Personal benefits as company growth	7	9
13.	Strong attachment to the job	5	7

training and investment in human talent is priceless and cheaper than hiring new employees.

Even offering cross-training opportunities within the organization saves money. Given the correlation between the training programs and staff turnover (Choi and Dickson, 2009) we can understand that the more motivated the human talent is, the more the employee has a need to stay in the company. The reason is a sense of appreciation and well-done work, involvement in the decision-making process of the organization, the possibility of personal and professional growth what increases loyalty to the organization.

Almost all respondents think that the employee must acquire the need and the feeling of being his own entrepreneur in the company. Only a respected and valued worker will engage overall.

On the other hand, two thirds of respondents respect that there is a common standard for service organizations to invest primarily time in their staff, but also finance through internal training tools or special programs (such as cross-training, extra trainings), which can also be supported by external suppliers for individual development and the professional growth of staff to maximize efficiency and results for the organization, avoiding a high staff turnover rate.

## CONCLUSION

Our research tried to answer the question: “How to achieve a long-term sustainable World Class Service in the hotel management area?”

Thanks to a similar research don in the HR department of the Royal Bank of Scotland we can support our conclusions by their results, which were achieved by applying their strategy of “Human Capital Toolkit” (Groysberg and Sherman, 2008), also based on the Herzberg two-factor theory of job satisfaction. They came with the following motivators as the most beneficial ones: Achievement, Recognition, Challenging/stimulating work, Responsibility, Promotion/advancement, and Growth. The most frequently mentioned hygiene factors were Pay and Benefits, Company Policy and Administration, Relationships with co-workers, Physical Environment, Supervision, Status, and Job Security.

Those priorities are comparable with our conclusions based on the results of the interviews – it is recommended to take seriously the motivational programs that maintain a positive climate and trust between the same co-workers and even superiors. It is very important to conduct regular surveys or random individual interviews to show the level of employee satisfaction and evaluate how they feel inside and outside of the organization when their needs are met or their problems are addressed, or if it is not good to support interest in other areas, or (if permitted by the company) change the location. It is also advisable to avoid all complex formats of motivational programmes and tasks that can discourage employees.

It is advisable to constantly work on a strategy of benefit plans and rewards for an outstanding benefit to the organization. These benefits can be discounts on accommodation for the whole family, restaurants benefits and other spa, wellness services, cash rewards, or increased number personal leave days.



Personal development plans should help to avoid falling into mental and physical routine or monotony through the rotation of tasks. The psychological stress can reduce team spirit within the institution. There is another aspect, that management should improve the self-efficacy of the employees through effective training initiatives and let them successfully perform the complex tasks. Management should also improve the cognitive skills and support them in taking up challenging tasks through talent trainings, taking responsibility, being in a position to influence others. In any case, the most important thing to avoid staff turnover is the initial employee selection or the promotion of professional talent in adaptation in the company. A colleague, as well as a client who spends money in services, need to be given a positive initial adaptation, confidence, ability, trust, respect and security. Only organizations that pride themselves on human talent and human factor can become leaders in retaining employees and reducing staff turnover.

## REFERENCES

- ASOCIACE HOTELŮ A RESTAURACÍ ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY (AHRČR). 2020. *Official Standard Classification of Accommodation Facilities in the Czech Republic*. Available at: [http://www.hotelstars.cz/resources/files/metodika%202015-2020-13\\_5.pdf](http://www.hotelstars.cz/resources/files/metodika%202015-2020-13_5.pdf) [Accessed: 2020, January 6].
- BARCELONA CONVENTION BUREAU (BCN). 2020. Statistics. *Barcelona Turisme*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.barcelonaconventionbureau.com/en/section/statistics/6.html> [Accessed: 2020, January 10].
- CZECHTOURISM. 2020. Statistics. *Czech service quality system*. [Online]. Available at: <http://organizace.csks.cz/redakce/index.php?clanek=179&xuser=&languageG=cs&slozka=1> [Accessed: 2020, January 10].
- CHOI, Y. and DICKSON, D. 2009. A Case Study into the Benefits of Management Training Programs: Impacts on Hotel Employee Turnover and Satisfaction Level. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(1): 103–116.
- DIJULIUS, J. R. 2008. *What is the Secret to providing a World Class Experience*. John Wiley & Sons.
- GROYSBERG, B. and SHERMAN, E. 2008. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group: the human capital strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 9(408): 1–34.
- HERZBERG, F., MAUSNER, B. and SNYDERMAN, B. B. 1959. *The motivation to work*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- HERZBERG, F. 1974. Motivation-hygiene profiles. *Organizational Dynamics*, 3(2): 18–29.
- HERZBERG, F. 1987. One more time: How do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review*, 65(5): 109–120.
- ICCA. 2019. City and country rankings by estimated total number of participants. *ICCA*. [Online]. Available at: <https://es.iccaworld.org/newsarchives/archivedetails.cfm?id=1100291> [Accessed: 2019, December 10].
- INGHILLERI, L. and SOLOMON, M. 2010. *Exceptional Service, Exceptional Profit: The Secrets of Building a Five-Star Customer Service Organization*. AMACOM.
- KAKYOM, K. and GIRI, J. 2010. Effects of Individual and Organizational Factors on Job Satisfaction and Intent to Stay in the Hotel and Restaurant Industry. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(3): 318–339.
- KUIJK, A. 2018. Herzberg Two Factor Theory of Motivation. Toolshero. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.toolshero.com/psychology/two-factor-theory-herzberg/> [Accessed: 2020, November 21].
- PARASURAMAN, A., VALARIE, A. and BERRY, L. 1985. A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implication for Future Research (SERVQUAL). USA. *The Journal of Marketing*, 49(4): 41–50.
- RAINEY, D. L. 2006. Enterprise thinking, the driving forces of change, and leadership. In: *Sustainable Business Development*. Cambridge University Press.
- SHAW, C. and IVENS, J. 2002. *Building Great Customer Experiences, Revised Edition (Beyond Philosophy)*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- YANG, C., JOU, Y. and CHENG, L. 2011. Using integrated quality assessment for hotel service quality. *Quality & Quantity International Journal of Methodology*, 45: 349–364.
- STELLO, C. M. 2011. *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction: An Integrative Literature Review*. Unpublished Paper. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/26679106/Herzbergs\\_Two\\_Factor\\_Theory\\_1\\_Herzbergs\\_Two\\_Factor\\_Theory\\_of\\_Job\\_Satisfaction\\_An\\_Integrative\\_Literature\\_Review](https://www.academia.edu/26679106/Herzbergs_Two_Factor_Theory_1_Herzbergs_Two_Factor_Theory_of_Job_Satisfaction_An_Integrative_Literature_Review) [Accessed: 2021, January 10].

Contact information

Silvie Zámečník: [silvaz@volny.cz](mailto:silvaz@volny.cz)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 \(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0\) International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

