

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SATISFACTION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TOURISM AGENCY EMPLOYEES. COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN MESSINA (SICILY) AND CONSTANȚA (ROMANIA)

Irina MISOC

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
irina_misoc@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present paper aims to estimate if there is any correlation between the indices of the satisfaction of the employees who work in small tourism agencies and the indices of performances of the employees. In order to achieve the objective of the present paper, two studies were done in two different regions, one from Messina (Sicily), the other from Constanta (Romania). The data were collected by using a questionnaire with 31 questions (concerning the eight indices of employees satisfaction). The correlation between the satisfaction and performances was observed by calculating the Pearson coefficients. The case study showed that in Messina the employees are more satisfied with the work group environment and the relationships between the employees and managers; On the other hand, in Constanta the employees are less satisfied with the relationship with the direct supervisors and with the work environment. Both the employees from Messina and Constanta are rather unsatisfied with their salaries and with the social facilities. In terms of performances, one can notice that the Romanians obtain better results than the Sicilians. Concerning the correlation between the satisfaction and the performances of the employees, the indices of satisfaction that have the highest impact on performance are: the work group/team, the direct supervision, the wage/compensations, the profession.

Keywords: Satisfaction of the employees, Performances of the employees, Correlation between the satisfaction and the performance of the employees.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the business environment nowadays, the concepts of "employee satisfaction" and "employee performance" play an important role. The work satisfaction of the employees represents an important aspect, not only for managers, but also for those who are interested in the subjective evaluation, such as the specialists in Human resources (who are interested in finding out more about the variety of the work tasks, in order to find the best candidates to fit the jobs). Also, researchers may be interested in the satisfaction of the employees, because it has impact on productivity, profit and the quality of the service offered to the customers.

Many researchers have studied in the last decades, the impact of the employees' job satisfaction on the

outcomes of the company. For example, a positive relation between the employee satisfaction, the customer satisfaction and the company's performance, has been discovered (Homburg and Stock, 2005; Tang and Lee, 2014). The explanation of this aspect is that the service employees who scored high level of employee satisfaction will be more implicated in the work process, and, as a result, the customers will be satisfied, they will make new purchases and the business profit will increase (Chen, Yang, Shiau and Wang 2006; Briggs, Jaramillo and Noboa, 2015). The satisfied customers could also bring new customers and this will also help the business profit.

There are many studies related to the tourism sector revealing aspects such as tourism sustainability, development strategies or brand creation (Corbos and Popescu, 2011; Popescu and Corbos, 2009, 2010; Zamfir and Corbos, 2015). However, it can be observed that in the tourism sector, there have been few studies that could confirm the correlation between the satisfaction and performances of the employees that is why the present paper aims to become a starting point for studying this type of relationship in the tourism organizations.

The purpose of this paper is to establish if the indices that influence the satisfaction of the employees also impact in a certain manner their performance.

2. THE CONCEPTS OF "EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION" AND "EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE"

It has been noticed that nowadays more and more managers are interested in the concepts of "employee satisfaction" and "employee performance". In the present business environment, defined by a strong competition between organizations, the employees are seen as the most precious asset of a company. The managers are now interested in keeping their employees happy and content of their work. In order to do that, they are preoccupied of the employee job satisfaction. On the other hand, employees search hand employers ready to invest in their training so that to become better prepared for the job's demands. The manager's responsibility then becomes finding the most appropriate person for that specific job (Deac and Bârză-Nicoară, 2015).

The employees could experience a set of favourable or, on the contrary, unfavourable feelings and emotions towards their jobs. **Employee satisfaction** represents the level at which the employees are happy and content with their jobs. **Employment Satisfaction** represents how pleased the employees are of their work. Employment Satisfaction is usually measured with the aid of questionnaires/surveys. With these questionnaires/surveys the following data are collected; the level of compensation/pay, the work volume, the employee's perception of management, the work flexibility, team work, the

communication resources, the responsibility level, etc. (Heathfield, 2012).

If the employees are happy and content, they will be fully implicated in the work processes and they will help the organizations to achieve their objectives. A satisfied employee will be more polite and attentive with the customers, he/she will do the best to answer the customer's needs and to offer him/her the most suitable experiences.

The satisfaction of the employees is a multidisciplinary concept, which results from the perception of the employees of their own work and the fact that a good match between them and the organization exists (Ivancevich, et al., 2011).

As defined by the Business dictionary, **the employee performance** includes the job related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities were executed. Many business personnel directors assess the employee performance of each staff member on an annual or quarterly basis in order to help them identify suggested areas of improvement.

The job performance has been defined as the overall expected value from employees' behaviours carried out over the course of a set period of time (Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmidt, 1997).

The employees are nowadays seen as business partners and that is the reason why some service organizations should adopt measures of implicating them more in the production processes. Organizations should empower people through participation, supporting resources, information and rewards, freedom in handling tasks and opportunities to make decisions. Organization should create a supportive work environment and job characteristics to empower person to work effectively such as job enrichment and promotion (Ölçer and Florescu, 2015).

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

It should be mentioned the fact that problems regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and work performance have been studied since 1945. Brayfield and Crockett published in 1955 an article concerning the relationship between work satisfaction and work performance and concluded that the two variables are mutually independent (the study of the two researchers was limited by the small number of previous studies and by the overall general subjectivism of the qualitative reviews) (Judge, Bono, Thoresen, Patton, 2001). Before the study of Brayfield and Crockett, there were studies which expressed opinions regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and work performance.

Among recent studies, one can distinguish the study conducted in 2009, by Christina CHI and Dogan

GURSOY. This study concluded that employee satisfaction does not have a direct impact on the financial performance because the relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance is an indirect relationship mediated by customer satisfaction (the results clearly indicate that it is a direct relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction and between customer satisfaction and financial performance).

The results of the study in the financial sector, performed by Halil Zaim, Irfan Kurt and Selman Tetik, on the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance, revealed that employee satisfaction is an important factor of individual performance. In this study there were examined several aspects of employee satisfaction (supervision, payment system and benefits, working conditions and relationships between employees). The study conclusions were that all analyzed aspects of satisfaction have a positive and significant relationship with individual performance. Furthermore, from all the aspects studied, the payment system and the benefits have the most relevant impact on individual performance followed by the working conditions. Supervision and employee relationships have a significant impact on individual performance, but smaller than the other two aspects.

The study conducted by Ölçer and Florescu pointed out a significant positive relation between job satisfaction and job performance. Satisfied employees have positive attitudes regarding their jobs. The positive attitudes will increase the quality and quantity of employees' job performance. Moreover, satisfied employees tend to attend to work on time, manifest more concern about the given targets, work speedily, work free of errors and omissions, manifest loyalty and commitment to the job, less dependability, suggest new ideas, tend to improve knowledge, willing to accept more responsibility, obedience of rules and regulations, less absenteeism and effort to retain in the present job (Ölçer, Florescu, 2015). It has been observed that in the tourism sector, there are few studies on the relationship between the satisfaction of the employees and their performances, though the satisfaction of the employees is a key element of the business' success, because the satisfied employees will offer quality services to the customers. A recent study done in 2014, by Tamara Gajic, Bojana Kovacevic and Mirjana Penic, measured the satisfaction of the employees from the tourism agencies from Novi Sad (Serbia). The satisfaction of the employees was treated as being the difference between the aspirations of the employee and his/her accomplishments. The research showed that the respondents are quite satisfied of their work, the relationships and the level of the salary; the employees think that the job they occupied in the tourism agencies is below their level of education and experience (Gajic, Kovacevic, Penic, 2014).

Next, a case study will be presented, in which the relationship between the employee' satisfaction and

the employee' performance from the tourism agencies from Messina (Sicily) and from Constanta (Romania), is analysed.

4. A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE IN MESSINA AND CONSTANȚA

These two regions have been chosen because both of them are seaside regions, Messina gathering almost 250.000 inhabitants, in 2013, and Constanta gathering almost 700.000 inhabitants.

4.1 *The methodology of research*

It has been chosen a transversal method of research, because the research took place in a short period of time (it was analyzed the level of employee satisfaction and performances in Messina and Constanta in May 2015).

The instrument used to collect the data was the survey. The survey had 31 questions related to the eight indices of employee satisfaction and open questions for managers, in order to determinate the quantitative indices used for evaluating the employee performances. Also, the survey included some identification data such as: gender, age, studies, type of work contract.

The eight indices used for estimating the satisfaction of the employees were: the work group/team, the direct supervision, the profession, the organization, the opportunities for promotion, the wage/compensations, the details of the job, the existing facilities. For each index, a set of questions was designed.

The Likert scale was the instrument used in estimating the values of the indices of employee satisfaction. To each question, five answer choices were designated, noted with scores from 1 to 5 (unsatisfied=1 point, less satisfied=2 points, partial satisfied=3 points, satisfied=4 points, very satisfied=5 points). Each of the analyzed index received a score from one to five (1 representing the fact that the employees are unsatisfied by the index, and 5 representing the fact that they are very satisfied).

The quantitative indices used to evaluate the performances of the employees were: the value of the transactions done by employee per month, the number of contracts signed by employee per month, the number of clients who come back at agency for a new acquisition, the time in which the employee solves the client's demand.

The independent variables were the eight indices of employee satisfaction and the dependent variables were the indices of employee performances.

Sample: in Messina, five small tourism agencies were selected. Twenty employees and five managers answered the survey. For Constanta, six small tourism agencies were willing to participate in the research. They have between three and five employees. Finally, 25 respondents and 6 managers participated in this research. Eighty-five percent of the employees who responded to the survey in Messina were full-time employees, having indefinite duration employment contracts, fifteen percent were employees without work contracts, who were working only for a determined period of time. Seventy-three of the respondents were women, aged between 27 and 40 years old, the majority of them holding a high school diploma (55% holding a high school diploma, while other 45% of them holding a bachelor's degree). 27% of the respondents were male, aged between 30 and 55 years old, 70% of them had bachelor and master degrees in tourism. The managers of the tourism agencies were men, only 1 out of 5 had high school diploma, the rest of them had master's degrees in tourism. Regarding the respondents from Constanta, 70 % of them were full-time employees with indefinite duration employment contracts, twenty percent of them were working full-time and have fixed-term employment contracts (three or six months), and the rest of ten percent worked part-time (especially during weekends). 80% of the respondents were women, aged between 20 and 50 years old, 90% of them had master's degrees (they took tourism courses). 20% of the respondents were men, aged between 20 and 35 years old. 70% of the male respondents had high school diplomas. The six managers that participated in this study were four women and two men (aged between 35 and 45 years old), all of them holding a master's degrees in tourism. Next, the following hypotheses were presumed:

H1: The employees working in the Romanian travel agencies in Constanta, obtain better performances, compared to the employees who are working in the Sicilian travel agencies from Messina.

H2: The four indices of satisfaction that have the highest impact on employee performances are: ***The work group/The team, The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/benefits.***

H3: The satisfaction indices: ***The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/The compensations, The opportunities for promotion,*** have a huge influence on the performance of the employees.

H4: The satisfaction indices: ***The work group/Team, The Profession, The wage/compensations, The opportunities for promotion*** influence in a strong way the performance of the employees.

H5: The satisfaction indices: ***The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job*** have a moderate influence on the performance of the employees.

H6: ***The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job***

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have a moderate influence on the performance indices.

H7: The satisfaction indices: *The direct supervision, The profession, The wages/compensations, The social benefits*, do not considerably influence the performance.

H8: The satisfaction indices: *The organization, The social benefits/advantages, The specification of the job, The opportunities for promotion*, have little impact on the performance.

4.2 Results and Discussions

The results of the indices of employee satisfaction are presented in the table below:

TABLE 1: THE EMPLOYEE'S SATISFACTION INDICES

The indices that influence the employee' satisfaction	Messina	Constanța
The work group/team	4.54	3
The direct supervision	4.46	2.7
The profession	4	2.85
The organization	3.1	3.53
The opportunities for promotion	2.8	2.14
The wage/compensations	3.3	2.68
The details of the job	4.21	3.65
The existing facilities	2.5	3

Source: Table made by author

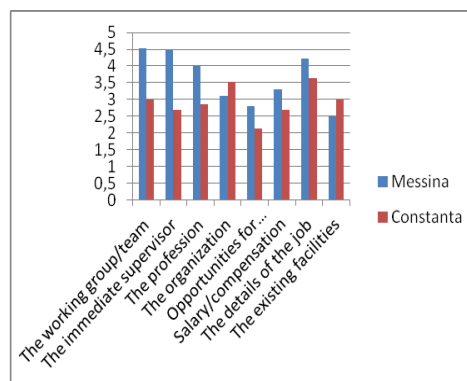


FIGURE 1 - THE EMPLOYEE'S SATISFACTION INDICES IN MESSINA AND CONSTANTA

Source: made by the author

From the Graph 1, one can notice that the employees from Messina are more satisfied with the environment inside the working group, with the relationships between the co-workers, and in the way in which the direct supervisors communicate with subordinates and solve the problems that appear at the workplace. Moreover, the respondents from Messina think their managers are qualified to execute the task designated to them. On the contrary, the respondents from Constanța are less satisfied with the workplace environment, the communication between co-workers, the relationship with their superiors,

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and they think the present job does not offer future perspectives and it does not correspond to their level of studies and experience (it is below their level). The employees from Messina think that the current job corresponds to their level of knowledge and they are positive when it comes to find better jobs. They perceive their work as use full and they think it helps them to develop.

Both the employees from Messina and Constanta are not satisfied with the social facilities offered by the organizations, with the payment system and they consider that there are few opportunities for promotion and the promotions are not given taking into consideration objectives criteria. From the graph, one can observe that Romanians are less satisfied compared with the employees from Messina.

Next, in the Table 2, the performances from the analyzed tourism agencies from Messina and Constanta, in May, will be presented:

TABLE 2: THE INDICES OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN MAY

Indices of performance	Messina	Constanța	The share of obtained value/Maximum Value in Messina	The share of obtained value/Maximum Value in Constanta
1. The average transaction done May/agency	1540	2015	0.51	0.67
2. The average number of signed contracts/agency/May	20	36	0.2	0.36
3. The average number of clients who return to make a new acquisition in May	3	3	0.3	0.3
4. The average time for solving a demand/agency/May	35	21	0.77	0.46

Source: Table made by author

In Graph 2, the performance indices obtained by the employees who work in tourism agencies in Messina and Constanta, are presented.

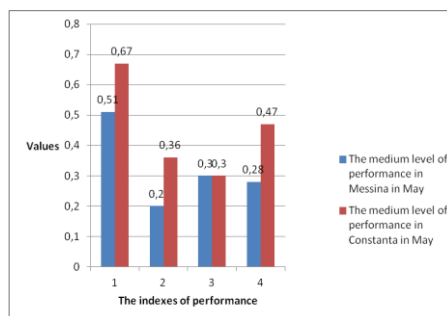


FIGURE 2 - THE PERFORMANCES OF THE EMPLOYEES FROM MESSINA AND CONSTANTA IN MAY

Source: made by the author

It can be noticed that the employees from Constanta have higher incomes and have signed more contracts in May, compared with the employees from Messina. But, if we take into consideration the minimum wage (the medium wage) in the two countries, Italy and Romania, we get to the conclusion

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that one sale of a holiday package of 1000 Euros in Italy is valued less compared with the same holiday package sold in Romania. Also, from the graph one can see that the Romanians are more efficient when it comes to the time spent for solving a tourist's demand (the time spent in solving the demand could be influenced by the work schedule - Romanians have only one hour break in eight hours of work, compared with the employees from Messina, who have a 3-4 hours lunch break).

By analyzing the graph, one can notice that the Romanians are more efficient, but the living conditions and the level of salaries and expenses should be taken into consideration. Then, it can be observe that the differences in terms of performance are quite small between the two analyzed regions. All of the same, the Romanians are more efficient in terms of time. In conclusion, the hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Forward, in order to see if there is a correlation between the satisfaction and the performances of the employees, the Pearson coefficients were calculated. Also, it was desirable to find out which of the eight employees satisfaction indices has the highest impact on the performances of the employees. In order to discover this issue, it was presumed that the four indices of satisfaction that have the highest impact on employees performances are: The work group/The team, The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/benefits. The Pearson coefficients are: $r_{Messina}=0.55$, $r_{Constanta}=0.85$. It can be noticed that for Messina there is a substantial association between the indices of satisfaction of the employees the work group/the team, the direct supervision, the profession, the wage/benefits and the indices of performance. In other words, an increase in value of the indices of employees' satisfaction will bring an increase of the values of performance indices. In Constanta, the association between the indices of satisfaction The work group/The team, The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/benefits and the performance indices, is very strong ($r_{Constanta}=0.85$). In other terms, an increase of the value of satisfaction indices will lead to a significant increase of the performance indices. The hypothesis 2 is true, the satisfaction indices The work group/The team, The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/benefits have a substantial influence on the performance of the employees.

Next, one of the satisfaction index The work group/team was replaced by The opportunities for promotion, to see what type of correlation exists between The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/The compensations, The opportunities for promotion and the performance indices. The Pearson coefficients showed that in Messina the satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/The compensations, The opportunities for promotion have a strong impact on the performance indices of the employees ($r_{Messina}=0.74$). Consequently, if the employees have better relationships with superiors, if the current job offers them better future perspectives, if they have more opportunities for promotion and last, but not least, if they are better paid and have more benefits, then their performances will considerable increase.

On the contrary, in Constanta, the same satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/The compensations, The opportunities for promotion do not have a strong influence on the performance indices ($r_{Constanta}=0.23$). An increase of the value of the satisfaction indices will produce an insignificant increase of the performance indices. The hypothesis 3 is partial true because in Constanta, the satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/The compensations, The opportunities for promotion have little influence on the performance.

By calculating another set of Pearson coefficients, one can observe, that in Messina there is a substantial association between the satisfaction indices The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations and The opportunities for promotion and the performance indices of the employees ($r_{Messina}=0.76$). The increase/decrease of the values of the satisfaction indices will bring a significant increase/decrease of the performance indices. Similarly, in Constanta, an increase/decrease of the indices The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations and The opportunities for promotion will bring an increase/decrease of the performance indices The average income/May/agency, The average number of signed contracts/May/agency, The average number of clients who return to agency for making a new acquisition/May/agency, The average time for solving a demand/agency/month ($r_{Constanta}=0.59$). However, one can notice, that in Messina, the relationship between the satisfaction indices and the performance indices is stronger than in Constanta. Hypothesis 4 e is true, the satisfaction indices The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations, The opportunities for promotion strongly influence the performances of the employees.

Another set of Pearson coefficients were calculated, in order to see the type of correlation between the satisfaction indices The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job and the performance. The Pearson coefficients showed that in Messina there is a substantial correlation between the four indices of satisfaction and the performance of the employees ($r_{Messina}=0.68$). In Constanta, on the other hand, the correlation between the analyzed indices and the performance should not be taken into account ($r_{Constanta}=-0.06$). The hypothesis 5 is false, because in Messina there is a strong correlation between the satisfaction indices The work group/team, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job and the performance, and in Constanta the correlation is insignificant.

Next, the Pearson coefficients were calculated, having the following satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession The wage/compensations and The details of the job (The index The work group/Team was replaced by the index The details of the job). The results showed that in Messina there is a substantial correlation between the satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession, The

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wage/compensations, The details of the job and the performances of the employees ($r_{\text{Messina}}=0.63$), in other words, when the employees are more satisfied of their direct managers, of the future perspectives of the current job, when they appreciate the fact that the current job helps them develop new skills and competencies and when they obtain more benefits, their performance improve significantly. In Constanta, there is a moderate negative association between the satisfaction indices The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job and the performance indices ($r_{\text{Constanta}}=-0.38$). Then, when the employees receive better salaries, their performances will decrease some extent. A possible explanation could be the fact that the employees consider that they do not have to work so much as they used to work when they were paid less. By acting like this, their performances will decrease. The hypothesis 6 is partially true, because in Messina there is a substantial correlation between The Direct supervision, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job and the job performance.

Another hypothesis was that the satisfaction indices The direct supervision, The profession, The wages/compensations, The social facilities do not considerably influence the performance. The Pearson coefficients were: $r_{\text{Messina}}=0.69$, $r_{\text{Constanta}}=-0.47$. In conclusion, in Messina there is a visible connection between The direct supervision, The profession, The wages/compensations, The social facilities and the performance of the employees. For example, when the employees are more satisfied with the direct supervisors, with the manner they are rewarded, with the new future perspectives offered by the current job, and with the increase of the social facilities, they are more productive and they obtain better results. On the other hand, in Constanta, there is moderate negative connection between the analyzed variables. For example, this could be explained by the fact that if the employees consider that the current job helps them to easily find another job (the value of the satisfaction index The Profession increases), then the employees will search for other jobs, and they will be less involved in the working process at the current job. As a result, they will have worse performances. The hypothesis 7 is false, because the connection between The direct supervision, The profession, The wages/compensations, The social facilities and the performance was quite strong.

The Pearson coefficients calculated for showing the connection between the satisfaction indices The organization, The social facilities, The specification of the job, The opportunities for promotion and the performance of the employees, revealed that in Messina, these indices have an insignificant on the performances of the employees ($r_{\text{Messina}}=-0.06$). On the contrary, in Constanta, the satisfaction indices The organization, The social facilities, The specification of the job, The opportunities for promotion, have a moderate impact ($r_{\text{Constanta}}=0.43$). For that purpose, a raise of the degree of satisfaction of the employees concerning the attention manifested by the organization for its employees, an increased

preoccupation of the employees for the values of the organization, an increase of the social facilities offered by the organization, an increase of the opportunities for promotion and an improvement of the role of the current job in helping the employee to develop, will lead to a certain increase in the performances of the employees. The last hypothesis is partially true, because in Constanta, there is a moderate influence of the satisfaction indices The organization, The social facilities, The specification of the job, The opportunities for promotion on the performance.

The differences between the Pearson coefficients from Messina and Constanta are due to the different cultural backgrounds of the two regions.

To sum up, in Constanta, the satisfaction index with the greatest impact on the performances of the employees is "The work group/team"($r=0.85$). Consequently, for the Romanian employees who work in small travel agencies in Constanta, the most important aspect that should be taken into consideration by managers is the environment at the workplace. The type of relationships inside the work group influence directly the performances of the employees. In order to cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation and comity, the managers should implement non-formal communication trainings and should also organize team buildings. The purpose of these action is to give the employees a chance to know each other better and to feel comfortable one with another. The set of satisfaction indices The work group, The profession, The wage/compensations, The opportunities for promotion are the indices with the highest impact on the performances of the employees, both in Messina and Constanta ($r_{\text{Messina}}=0.76$, $r_{\text{Constanta}}=0.59$). The managers of the tourism agencies should pay attention to the following aspects: the atmosphere inside the work group, they should offer their employees opportunities for promotion and for developing both professionally and personally, the managers should make sure that they recrute the most suitable candidates for the job as tourism consultant. Also, the managers have to be sure that their employees are properly paid for their work. The set of indices The direct supervision, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job, has a huge influence on the performances of the employees from the two studied regions ($r_{\text{Messina}}=0.63$, $r_{\text{Constanta}}=-0.39$). In Constanta, the negative correlation between the indices of the satisfaction of the employees and the performances of the employees, demonstrates the fact that an increase of the value of one of the indices The direct supervision, The profession, The wage/compensations, The details of the job, will bring a decrease of the performances. For example, if the relationships with the direct managers improve, the employees will be relaxed, they will focus less on work-related tasks and their performances will decrease. In Messina, the set of indices of the satisfaction of the employees The organization, The existing facilities, The details of the job, The opportunities for promotion, has no significant impact on performances ($r_{\text{Messina}}=-0.06$).

The final conclusion of this study is that the indices of satisfaction which have the highest impact on the performances of the employees are: The work group/team, The direct supervision, The wage/compensations, The profession.

Limitations: in Messina, the limitations consist of the difficulty of finding the tourism agencies in territory, the managers who did not want to participate in the study, some of them because the lack of time and others because they do not understand English and the purpose of this research. The sample was quite small, because of the lack of time and money (the author only had one month to collect the data). In Constanta, both the managers and the employees were reluctant to answer the survey, because of the lack of time. They were also afraid of sharing data regarding the relationship between employees, or between employees and direct supervisors, they were afraid of being punished if they state the aspects that cause dissatisfaction. The study should be extended to other tourism agencies in order to obtain a representative sample. Also, it is indicated that the study to be extended on a long period of time (several months), in order to observe the evolution of indices in time.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In a society based on consumption, in which the customer decides the fate of the organization, the importance given to the satisfaction of the employees is crucial for the success of the organization. When speaking of the satisfaction of the employees, some determinants are taken into consideration, such as: the relationships with the superiors, the relationship with co-workers, the work tasks, the payment and reward system, the opportunities for promotion, the facilities offered by the organization.

Considering the recent research in the field, the study of Christina Chi and Dogan GURSOY, states that between the satisfaction of the employees and their performance, is an indirect correlation, mediated by the satisfaction of the customers. Furthermore, the conclusions of the study conducted by Zaim, Kurt and Teti, in the financial sector, show a strong correlation between the satisfaction of the employees and performance. In the same study, the authors concluded that the payment and reward system has the greatest influence on the individual performance.

The results of the case study showed that the employees from Romania achieve better performance, compared with the employees from Messina, especially if one takes into account the number of signed contracts per employee/month and the average time allocated for solving a demand. Differences between the levels of performances of the employees could be explained by the structure of the working schedule (the Romanian employees work 8 hours shifts with one hour break, while the employees from Messina have a 3-4 hours break in the middle of the 8 hours working schedule).

Concerning the employee's level of satisfaction, one can notice that the employees from Messina are more satisfied with the atmosphere from the workplace, the relationship with the direct supervisor, the way in which the managers deal with the problems that occur at the workplace. The employees from Messina think that the current job corresponds to their level of experience and studies. Moreover, they consider that the experience gained at the current job will help them in the future when searching for another job. On the other hand, the employees from Constanta consider that they are overqualified for the current job and they consider that this job does not help them to develop.

Both the employees from Messina and Constanta are rather unsatisfied with the payment system and with the way the promotions are given (these are not always given taking into consideration objectives criteria, as they should be done). Furthermore, the employees argue there are few opportunities for job promotion. The Romanians are rather unsatisfied with the promotion opportunities, compared with the employees from Messina. The tourism organizations offer few advantages to their employees.

As for the correlation between the satisfaction and the performances of the employees, the Pearson coefficients demonstrate that the satisfaction indices that have the highest impact on the performance are: The work group/team, The direct supervision, The wage/compensations, The profession. Also, for the same set of satisfaction indices, the results are different in Messina compared to Constanta, in other words, a set of satisfaction indices can greatly influence the performance of the employees from one region and has no impact on the performances of the employees from the other region. This happens because of the cultural differences between the two analyzed regions. For example, the employees who work in travel agencies in Messina are not interested in the values and objectives of the organization, in the opportunities for promotion and of the aspects related to the job itself ($r_{\text{Messina}}=-0.06$).

This research should be the starting point of future studies, which will have the purpose of studying in detail the relationship between the satisfaction and the performances of the employees, in the tourism agencies.

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