

Christina MOSER, Mike PETERS, Marlies PONTASCH

MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN TOURISM

Abstract

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was developed by Deci & Ryan [1985a] to understand motivational aspects of human behaviour. Based on three fundamental needs of autonomy, competence and social relatedness, the SDT theory postulates that employee satisfaction leads to a greater motivation which in turn has a positive impact on job satisfaction. To test these assumptions in organisational context the Self-Determination Model of Work Motivation was adapted to the services sector in the present research. The aim of the research was to prove a relationship between the social environment with autonomous motivation and employee satisfaction.

Key words: SDT, Self-Determination Model of Work Motivation, Social Environment, autonomous motivation, employee satisfaction.

Introduction

Management in the services sector is right to attach special importance to personal interaction that takes place in direct contact between the customer and employees of a service enterprise [Normann, 1996; Fitzsimmons, Fitzsimmons, 2006].

Interaction between the customer and a service company employee determines the client's perception of service quality. The relationship between customer satisfaction and perceived service quality has already been proved many times theoretically and empirically in literature [Bieger, 2002; Heskett et al., 1997; Parasuraman et al., 1985].

Coming in direct contact with the customer, employees often independently and spontaneously provide personalised service, a process over which the firm has limited or no influence. Skills, techniques, motivation, and creativity determine to

the highest extent the employee's performance of a service. Further, these personal attributes contribute to a greater competence in problem solving, adequate projection of company culture and identity, and a flexible, customer-dependent reaction in the event of critical incidents [Bieger, 2002; Berry et al., 1994; Normann, 1996].

The social literature reports that there is a relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction [Bieger, 2002; Homburg, Stock, 2001; vom Holz, 2000]. Empirical support is increasingly being provided to the hypothesis postulating direct relationship between job satisfaction or employee motivation to provide a quality service, and customer satisfaction, customer retention, and consequently increased revenues. This relationship finds confirmation in the service-profit chain or self-reinforcing service cycle [Heskett et al., 1997].

Jerome and Kleiner [1995] point out that companies which place the emphasis on employee satisfaction and increased motivation are likely to gain long-term benefits in terms of company success, employee loyalty, greater productivity and lower staff rotation. Employee satisfaction is positively related to organisational commitment [Fletcher, Williams, 1996; Yavas, Bodur, 1999] and work efficiency [Vroom, 1994; Brayfield, Crockett, 1995; Babin, Boles, 1996; Birnbaum, Somers, 1993]. Shaw reports a negative relation between job satisfaction and employee turnover if personal skills of an employee are appreciated (positive effect) within the company. If existing circumstances provide a reason for employee frustration and dissatisfaction, loyalty disappears and the worker is more inclined to leave the company [Mobley, 1977].

Therefore it is necessary to identify those factors that have a positive impact on work motivation and in this context also on job satisfaction. The degree of employee satisfaction can in turn have an impact on client perception of the offered service [Parasuraman et al., 1985; Arnett et al., 2002].

Considering the importance of employee motivation and job satisfaction the present analysis will discuss the following questions:

- What elements of the social environment and personality differences between individuals have an impact on motivation?
- What other factors, important to the services sector, influence motivation?
- Does autonomous motivation affect job satisfaction?

1. Research hypotheses

Quoting after Gagnè & Deci [2005], there is one aspect that is common to most motivation theories: the total motivation of a person may be determined by various factors but represents a single variable that provides the basis for making

predictions. The main difference between SDT and other motivation theories is that SDT to a large extent focuses on the relative strength of autonomous motivation versus controlled motivation rather than on the total amount of motivation [Deci, Ryan, 1985b; Ryan, Deci, 2000].

Controlled motivation may reduce work effectiveness and employee well-being, particularly if the performed task requires creativity, flexible thinking and involves intensive processing of information. These requirements are predominant in the tourism and services sectors, and their fulfilment can significantly contribute to the company's success. Following the publication of McGregor's article [1960] in which he applied Maslow's [1943] hierarchy of needs model to the field of management, numerous studies were performed on human needs in the context of job attitudes and work motivation. Some of those studies were based on needs-hierarchy theories [Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1943].

The SDT theory [Deci, Ryan, 1985a; Ryan, Deci, 2000] postulates that individuals have three intrinsic psychological needs: the need for competence which concerns succeeding at optimally challenging task and attaining desired outcomes [Skinner, 1995; White, 1959], the need for autonomy, which concerns experiencing choice and being the initiator of one's own actions [deCharms, 1968], and the need for social relatedness, which concerns the feeling of mutual respect and trust and excludes work atmosphere based on mobbing [Baumeister, Leary, 1995; Harlow, 1958]. Satisfaction of these basic psychological needs may in turn depend on the social environment. The concept of three fundamental psychological needs provides the basis within SDT for the formulation of judgements about conditions of the social environment that can lead to optimal or suboptimal development of personalities and human behaviours in concrete situations [Deci, Ryan, 2002].

Self-determination, which means having a space, choice and freedom in the performance of tasks, releases creativity [Amabile, 1983], and leads to conceptual learning [Benware, Deci, 1984], higher self-esteem [Deci et al., 1981], and finally to better well-being and greater satisfaction [Langer, Rodin, 1976]. Argyris [1957] and McGregor [1960] have indicated that organisational context (social environment, work climate) provides employees with an opportunity to satisfy their higher level needs [Maslow, 1943] and thus facilitates a more effective performance. Further, decisive for employee autonomous decision making and flexibility in task performance are workplace organisation and job characteristics [Hackman, Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, 1966]. These factors have positive relations to employee satisfaction, quality of professional career, and organisational efficiency. SDT assumes that both organisational and social contexts as well as individual differences affect the satisfaction of employee's innate needs and thus have an impact on employee motivation, performance and work attitude.

Some studies [Baard et al., 2004; Kasser et al., 1992; Gagnè et al., 2004; Bono, Judge, 2003] support SDT's assumption that both the autonomy supporting work

environment and methods used inside the firm facilitate satisfaction of basic psychological needs, intrinsic motivation and internalisation of extrinsic motivation, which in turn leads to more effective performance, job satisfaction, positive work attitudes, organisational commitment, and psychological well-being.

The present study considers the effects of employee social environment (choice, challenge, organisation’s goals, feedback, work climate, and leadership styles) and individual differences in causality orientation (autonomy oriented, control oriented, or amotivated) on employee motivation and, consequently, on job satisfaction.

The Self-Determination Model of Work Motivation proposed by Deci & Ryan, reflecting the structure of SDT, has been extended to the services sector to provide a research model adapted to this particular domain. The model assumes that motivation, job satisfaction, innovativeness, and staff turnover are affected by the employee’s social environment, causality orientation, remuneration, and favourable treatment of family members relative to other company employees. The following figure presents research hypotheses and the model’s structure.

The research model with hypotheses

Social environment		
Choice	Internalisation	Satisfaction
Challenge (H1)		
Organisation’s goals (H2)		
Feedback (H3)	Motivation	Staff turnover
Leadership style (H4)		
Work climate (H5)		
Individual differences (H6)		
Motivation orientation	Extension to tourism Remuneration (H8/9) Preferential treatment of family members (H10)	Employee innovativeness
Age		
Sex		

Source: Based on Deci, Ryan 1985a, 1985b, 2000, 2002.

Based on the above literature review and appropriate adaptation of the theory to the services sector (work remuneration, preferential treatment of family members, staff turnover, and staff innovativeness), the following theses can be put forward:

- H1:** If the needs for competence and autonomy are satisfied, employee motivation increases.
- H2:** If companies succeed in communicating their goals to the employees thus showing the importance of their work, the employees will be more motivated.
- H3:** If superiors and clients react positively to the employees' performance, their motivation increases.
- H4:** Employee motivation is lower with control oriented leadership style than with autonomy oriented leadership style.
- H5:** The better work climate, the higher employee motivation, or: the worse work climate the lower employee motivation.
- H6:** Higher education graduates are generally oriented towards autonomy. In other words: the higher the education level the stronger orientation towards autonomous motivation.
- H7:** The more positive perception of the social environment, the more internalised motivation. If the degree of internalisation increases so does employee motivation.
- H8:** If employees feel that their remunerations are commensurate with the work they perform, they have greater motivation and enjoy a better job satisfaction.
- H9:** The more employees are dissatisfied with remuneration, the more they are inclined to change their employer.
- H10:** If employees get the impression that family members are better treated by the firm, their motivation suffers.
- H11:** The greater employee motivation, the more readily they come up with innovative ideas

2. Empirical study

To test the above hypotheses a ten-page questionnaire was designed, based on the structure and questions already tried in Deci and Ryan surveys [e.g. Deci, Ryan, 1985b; Ilardi et al., 1993].

The survey was conducted among tourism employees. The survey intention was to query 600 randomly selected persons from the following provinces: Tyrol (270), Salzburg (180), and Carinthia (150). The respondents were arranged into three groups by their education path. The randomly selected population comprised: 70% students-apprentices, 20% students of evening high schools, and 10% university graduates. They were all asked to answer the questionnaire items.

The following table shows the population sample.

The survey's sample structure

Provinces	Random sample			
	total	apprentices	students of evening high schools	university graduates
Tyrol	270	189	54	27
Salzburg	180	126	36	18
Carinthia	150	105	30	15

In the sample selection no attention was paid to respondents' sex. Eventually 110 women and 46 men participated in the survey. Noteworthy is the fact that in the tourism sector female employees clearly outnumber men. The queried population comprised mainly students of vocational schools and tourism profiled evening high schools, hence the average age of respondents ranging between 16 and 19 years old.

3. The results*

The H1 hypothesis about the need for autonomy and competence was verified with a 0.00% error probability ($\text{sig} = 0.00$). The computed Spearman correlation coefficient shows a positive relation ($r = 0.24$). This confirms the supposition that the degree of autonomy has an impact on the extent of employee motivation.

The second aspect included in hypothesis H1, i.e. the challenge, was verified at the level of significance 0.007% ($\text{sig} = 0.007$). Challenges facing employees in the performance of tasks affect their motivation. Even though the Spearman correlation coefficient is somewhat lower, it still shows a positive relation ($r = 0.285$) between test variables.

Thus, the H1 hypothesis and consequently SDT suppositions were positively verified. If employees can decide about the way they perform their work, and the task poses a challenge, then their autonomous motivation is greater. If they see no challenge in the task they perform and cannot decide themselves about the work they do, their motivations are negatively affected.

* In all tests verifying the hypotheses a 5% level of significance was used as a starting point. If both variables were ordinal, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to process data. If one variable was ordinal and the other nominal, a Chi-square test was used. In order to establish the direction of relationship between tested variables, the Spearman correlation analysis was used (Spearman Rho).

Hypothesis 2 assumed that employees' identification with the organisation's goals, and their conviction that the tasks they perform are important, positively affects their motivation. A positive correlation between the tested variables was confirmed ($r = 0.350$) at 0.00% error probability. Similarly, a positive relation exists between employee identification with the company's goals and job satisfaction ($\text{sig} = 0.00$; $r = 0.361$). A negative correlation ($\text{sig} = 0.004$; $r = -0.285$) was found only between employee motivation and the perception of performed work as meaningful.

The third hypothesis (H3) postulated a relationship between positive feedback and motivation. This assumption was supported by the survey results ($\text{sig} = 0.033$; $r = 0.196$).

Hypothesis 4 concerned the effect of leadership style (control oriented or autonomy oriented) on employee motivation. A negative correlation was found between control oriented leadership style and employee motivation and satisfaction ($\text{sig} = 0.000$; $r = -0.551$).

The relation between work climate and motivation was tested in hypothesis 5. Here a positive correlation was found between both tested variables ($\text{sig} = 0.031$; $r = 0.281$). A pleasant work atmosphere has a positive impact on employee motivation.

Hypothesis 6 assumed that employees' level of education influences their motivation or motivation orientation. The survey results indicate no relation whatsoever between the level of education and employee causality orientation ($\text{sig} = 0.466$).

Hypothesis 7 assumed that perception of the social environment facilitates internalisation of extrinsic motivation. A correlation was found between these two variables ($\text{sig} = 0.003$), confirming an influence of the social environment on internalisation of extrinsic motivation.

If employees feel that remuneration for their work is fair they show greater motivation and satisfaction (H8). This assumption with respect to motivation was confirmed by a positive correlation ($\text{sig} = 0.007$; $r = 0.277$). Similarly, a correlation exists between job satisfaction and the employee's perception of economic reward as fair ($\text{sig} = 0.000$; $r = 0.425$).

Hypothesis 9 assumed a relationship between remuneration and employee turnover. This relation was not confirmed in our study ($\text{sig} > 0.5$).

Favouring family members over other employees of the company has a negative effect on employee motivation (H10). This relation was confirmed in the study ($\text{sig} = 0.019$; $r = -0.255$).

Hypothesis 11 assumed that the employee's motivation affects his/her innovativeness. This relationship was confirmed by a positive correlation ($\text{sig} = 0.011$; $r = 0.289$).

4. Interpretation of results

As the diagram shows, the present study has managed to partially confirm the validity of Self-Determination Model of Work Motivation. The effect of motivation on employee satisfaction was confirmed by a positive correlation (sig = 0.000; $r = 0.580$).

SDT Model

The social environment		Performance: – complex – creative – citizenship
Aspects of job content and context – challenge – rationale – feedback Work climate – managerial autonomy support		Psychological well-being
	Autonomous (relative to controlled) Work Motivation	Organizational trust and commitment
Individual differences Autonomous Causality Orientation		Job satisfaction

Source: Deci, Ryan, 1985a.

On the basis of these results we can state that autonomous motivation can be used as the starting point in facilitating job satisfaction of tourism employees. In the services sector, like in many other industries, increased motivation and consequently employee satisfaction can be achieved by appropriate design of job content and context as well as adjustment of the leadership style. Satisfied workers are more efficient, and their work attitudes are positive. The work attitude of a service department employee has in turn a positive or negative impact on the client's perception of the service quality.

According to SDT, if performed work leaves enough space for freedom and discretion and provides a degree of challenge, the employee's needs for autonomy and competence can be satisfied, contributing to a greater motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, as an overriding objective, organisations should give their em-

ployees the opportunity to exercise more self-control over the job they perform. Autonomy-oriented work environment can mobilise workers. If goals and tasks are mutually agreed between managers and workers, and employee self-reliance is encouraged, in the longer term the organisation gains more creative and better motivated staff. The survey results also confirm the supposition that good work atmosphere positively affects motivation.

Deci and Ryan [1985a] argue that work climate is critical for satisfying the need for social relatedness. Therefore, in order to increase employee satisfaction, organisations should support positive work atmosphere. Consistent with the SDT model, praise and appreciation expressed by superiors positively affect employee motivation and job satisfaction in the tourism enterprise. Therefore company management should pay particular attention to this aspect of their duties. Every time an employee deserves it, he or she should receive appreciation for a job well done. Such positive feedback, acknowledging the employee's contribution to the organisation's success, will further strengthen his/her motivation to continue good work or even improve performance quality.

5. Perspective

The study has shown that young employees' satisfaction from working in the tourism industry can easiest be achieved by motivational actions. The SDT model, although only partially tested here, has been confirmed in all aspects. The study has shown that only individual and demographic characteristics have no impact on the respondents' motivation.

Feedback, provided not only by the management but also by workmates and customers, contributes to improved performance. Workmates can express appreciation for their colleagues by using "thank you" cards prepared beforehand by the management. The purpose of such gesture is to directly thank the colleague for his/her helpfulness, kindness, etc. Small gestures and expressions of appreciation on the part of workmates can often be more effective than praise expressed by the management.

The survey has also confirmed an SDT postulate whereby the employee's motivation and job satisfaction is greater if he/she is aware of the organisation's goals and thus the meaningfulness of work. To utilise the company's full potential it is important for the management to understand possible reasons why their employees might not know the organisation's goals or why they do not identify with these goals.

Consistent with all that has been said here, motivation is crucial for achieving job satisfaction. Employee satisfaction in turn has a positive effect on organisational commitment, customer loyalty and retention, and the quality of offered service.

References

- Alderfer C.P. (1972), *Existence, Relatedness, and Growth: Human Needs in Organizational Settings*, Free Press, New York.
- Amabile T.M. (1983), *The Social Psychology of Creativity*, Springer-Verlag, New York.
- Argyris C. (1957), *Personality and Organization*, Harper, New York.
- Arnett D.B., Laverie D.A., McLane C. (2002), *Using Job Satisfaction and Pride as Internal-marketing Tools*, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* vol. 43, no. 2.
- Baard P.P., Deci E.L., Ryan R.M. (2004), *The Relation of Intrinsic Need Satisfaction to Performance and Wellbeing in Two Work Settings*, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* vol. 34.
- Babin B.J., Boles J.S. (1996), *The Effects of Perceived Co-worker Involvement and Supervisor Support on Service Provider Role Stress, Performance and Job Satisfaction*, *Journal of Retailing* vol. 72, no. 1.
- Baumeister R., Leary M.R. (1995), *The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation*, *Psychological Bulletin* vol. 117.
- Benware C., Deci E.L. (1984), *Quality of Learning with an Active versus Passive Motivational*, *American Educational Research Journal* vol. 21.
- Berry L.L., Parasuraman A., Zeithaml V.A. (1994), *Improving Service Quality in America: Lessons Learned*, *Academy of Management Executives* vol. 8, no. 2.
- Bieger T. (2002), *Dienstleistungsmanagement, Einführung in Strategien und Prozesse bei persönlichen Dienstleistungen*, Haupt, Bern-Stuttgart-Wien.
- Birnbaum D., Somers M.J. (1993), *Fitting Job Performance into Turnover Model: An Examination of the Form of the Jobperformance e-turnover Relationship and Path Model*, *Journal of Management* vol. 49, no. 2.
- Bono J.E., Judge T.A. (2003), *Self-concordance at Work: Understanding the Motivational Effects of Transformational Leaders*, *Academy of Management Journal* vol. 46.
- Brayfield A.H., Crockett W.H. (1995), *Employee Attitudes and Employee Performance*, *Psychological Bulletin* vol. 52.
- deCharms R. (1968), *Personal Causation: The Internal Affective Determinants of Behaviour*, Academic Press, New York.
- Deci E.L., Nezlek J., Sheinman L. (1981), *Characteristics of the Rewarded and Intrinsic Motivation of the Rewarded*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* vol. 40.
- Deci E.L., Ryan R.M. (1985a), *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behaviour*, Plenum, New York.
- Deci E.L., Ryan R.M. (1985b), *The General Causality Orientations Scale: Self-determination in Personality*, *Journal of Research in Personality* vol. 19.
- Deci E.L., Ryan R.M. (2002), *Handbook of Self-Determination Research*, The University of Rochester Press, New York.
- Fitzsimmons J.A., Fitzsimmons M. (2006), *Service Management: Operations, Strategy and Information Technologies*, McGraw-Hill, Boston.
- Fletcher C., Williams R. (1996), *Performance Management, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment*, *British Journal of Management* vol. 7, no. 2.

- Gagné M., Boies K., Koestner R., Martens M. (2004), *How Work Motivation is Related to Organizational Commitment: A Series of Organizational Studies* (manuscript), Concordia University.
- Gagné M., Deci E.L. (2005), *Self-determination Theory and Work Motivation*, Journal of Organizational Behaviour vol. 26.
- Hackman J.R., Oldham G.R. (1980), *Work Redesign*, Addison-Wesley, Reading.
- Harlow H.F. (1958), *The Nature of Love*, American Psychologist vol. 13.
- Herzberg F. (1966), *Work and the Nature of Man*, World, Cleveland.
- Heskett J.L., Sasser W.E., Schlesinger L.A. (1997), *The Service Profit Chain: How Leading Companies Link Profit and Growth to Loyalty, Satisfaction, and Value*, The Free Press, New York.
- Homburg C.H., Stock R. (2001), *Der Zusammenhang zwischen Mitarbeiter- und Kundenzufriedenheit: Eine dyadische Analyse*, Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft H. 7.
- Ilardi B.C., Leone D., Kasser R., Ryan R.M. (1993), *Employee and Supervisor Ratings of Motivation: Main Effects and Discrepancies Associated with Job Satisfaction and Adjustment in a Factory Setting*, Journal of Applied Social Psychology vol. 23.
- Jerome L., Kleiner B.H. (1995), *Employee Morale and its Impact on Service: What Companies do to Create a Positive Service Experience*, Managing Service Quality vol. 5.
- Kasser T., Davey J., Ryan R.M. (1992), *Motivation and Employee-supervisor Discrepancies in a Psychiatric Vocational Rehabilitation Setting*, Rehabilitation Psychology vol. 37.
- Langer E.J., Rodin J. (1976), *The Effects of Choice and Personal Responsibility for the Aged: A Field Experiment in an Institutional Setting*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology vol. 34.
- Maslow A.H. (1943), *A Theory of Human Motivation*, Psychological Review vol. 50.
- McGregor D. (1960), *The Human Side of Enterprise*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Mobley W.H. (1977), *Intermediate Linkages in the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Turnover*, Journal of Applied Psychology vol. 62, no. 2.
- Normann R. (1996), *Service Management*, John Wiley & Sons, West Sussex.
- Parasuraman A., Zeithaml V.A., Berry L.L. (1985), *A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and its Implications for Future Research*, Journal of Marketing vol. 49, no. 1.
- Ryan R.M., Deci E.L. (2000), *Self-determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Wellbeing*, American Psychologist vol. 55.
- Skinner E.A. (1995), *Perceived Control, Motivation, and Coping*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- vom Holtz R. (2000), *Der Zusammenhang zwischen Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit und Kundenzufriedenheit*, FGM-Verlag, München.
- Vroom V.H. (1964), *Work and Motivation*, Wiley, New York.
- White R.W. (1959), *Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence*, Psychological Review vol. 66.
- Yavas U., Bodur M. (1999), *Satisfaction among Expatriate Managers: Correlates and Consequences Career*, Development International vol. 4, no. 5.