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Job Satisfaction in Trade Sector: Evidence from the Retailers in the Largest Supermarkets of the Western Balkans

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The paper analyses the job satisfaction in the trade sector as an important component of a comprehensive social and socially responsible employment policy in the Western Balkans. The aim of the research is to use the empirically collected data and conducted tests for defining indicators of job satisfaction of employees in the retail sector in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Montenegro with a special emphasis on the relation between EU members and non-EU countries. This paper tests the hypothesis on a statistically significant correlation between indicators of job satisfaction, such as salaries and benefits, working conditions, reward system, career development, job security, collegiality and communication, and the analysed countries of the Western Balkans. The study included 356 retailers from the largest supermarkets in the Western Balkans. The results showed statistically significant correlation between the analysed indicators and countries, and served as the basis for defining the model of employees' job satisfaction in the Western Balkans retail sector. Practical significance of the research is that it can help managers influence motivation, satisfaction and productivity of their employees, and thus better prepare trading companies in the Western Balkan countries for international competition arena and entry to the European Union market. The results indicate the importance of further research on possible discrepancies in the impact of the observed indicators in the established model of job satisfaction.

Key words: trade, retail, supermarkets, job satisfaction, employees, salaries and benefits, human resources, the Western Balkans.

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INTRODUCTION

Many studies on social policy, organizational behaviour and management (Aristovnik et al., 2015; Kim, 2002; Bernhardt et al, 2000; Loverman, 1998) emphasize the correlation between employees' job satisfaction and productivity at work, willingness to work and motivation to perform their tasks. This study is grounded in the theory of Paul Spector, which defines job satisfaction as how a person feels about various aspects of his/her work and what motivates him/her to be more efficient, productive and loyal (Spector, 1997). Similarly, Aristovnik and Jaklič (2013), referring to Wright & Hamilton (1978), agree with the notion that satisfied employees are more motivated and achieve better business results.

The latest research (Riaz & Ramay, 2010; Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002) confirms these theses and indicates that satisfied employees are more devoted to job and more productive. The degree of correlation between job satisfaction and employees' productivity is 0.758 (Riaz & Ramay, 2010).

Many authors (Aristovnik & Jaklič, 2013; Kim, 2002; Fryxell & Gordon, 1989; Bateman & Organ, 1983) think that job satisfaction should be managers' priority and crucial to the business and economic success of a company. One study from 2001 confirms this assumption by explaining that job dissatisfaction of sales staff is the main reason for inefficient sales and poor management results (Schwepker, 2001). The similar conclusion is reached by another study on the quality of human resources management in companies of the region, which identified job dissatisfaction as the biggest problem for efficient management (Vemić-Đurković et al., 2013). Furthermore, Kim (2002) states that key segment of job satisfaction is participatory management, i.e. involvement of all employees in business decision-making, care for employees, working conditions, etc. Only employees who believe that management cares about them can be satisfied with their job (Kinzl et al., 2005).

The major issue with job satisfaction, identified by the authors (Aristovnik & Jaklič, 2013; Riaz & Ramay, 2010; Kim, 2002; Bernhardt et al., 2000), is imprecise definition of indicators that determine job satisfaction. This is particularly evident in the Western Balkans, where very few studies tackled this issue, and almost no studies dealt with job satisfaction in the retail sector. Moreover, retail sector is one of the fundamental drivers of economic and market position of the Western Balkans in the global market. The following data indicate how important and necessary this research is:

- The Western Balkans consists of six countries: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro (Milošević et al., 2012). Only Croatia and Slovenia are EU members, while other countries are in a long process of transition towards institutional and functional market economy and on their way to the European Union (Radosavljević & Borisavljević, 2014).

- The process of market economy transformation is most obviously manifested in trade that reflects the economic situation and the economic and market systems (Lovreta, 2008). The transformation was expressed through reduced market share of small and independent trading companies and through increased market share (about 11% in total GDP) of retail chains and supermarkets that dictate market supply and competition conditions (Radosavljević & Borisavljević, 2014; Lovreta, Končar & Petković, 2013).

▪ Market share of retail sector employees ranges from 8% to 10% of the total number of employees in the analysed countries, with the share in total income amounting to 20%, while the number of registered retail companies ranges between 33% and 37% of the total number of legal entities. (Statistical Yearbook of Serbia/2014/, Croatia /2014/, Slovenia /2014/, Bosnia and Herzegovina /2014/ and Montenegro /2014/).

These are the reasons why special attention should be paid to the retail sector, especially to the analysis of how to further increase its profitability and business success by achieving the maximum satisfaction and productivity of employees, that is, by creating the concept of an employee satisfied with his/her job.

Hence, the **main objective of this paper** is to define the job satisfaction model and indicators that directly affect the satisfaction of employees in the retail sector. **Result of this paper** is that managers can perceive the impact of the analysed indicators and create a business environment in which employees will be satisfied, more devoted to work and more productive.

In this context, the paper is structured as follows. The literature review indicates the most important theoretical aspects dealing with the issue of job satisfaction in the service sector, which is used as the basis for establishing the null and alternative hypotheses. The methodology specifies in details how the set hypotheses are tested by the Chi-square test and *P*-values test. The research results and analysis are presented in the Research section. Based on the conducted tests and obtained results, the parameters are ranked and the model of job satisfaction in the retail sector is created in the Discussion section. The most important study results are summarized in the last section, which also provides recommenda-

tions for future research on job satisfaction in the trade and retail sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction can be interpreted in several ways. Some authors believe that job satisfaction refers to the positive emotional responses of employees to a particular workplace. This is actually person's affective response to a job based on comparison between actual outcomes with desired, anticipated or expected outcomes (Judge et al, 2001; Oshagbemi, 1997). Other authors see it as motivation for work that is directly related to the manner of performing tasks, interaction with colleagues and managers, compliance with company rules and policies, meeting the standards of performance, and the manner of work in working conditions, which are usually not ideal (Davis, 2004; Wiliam & Anderson, 1991). Similarly, job satisfaction is seen as a sense of loyalty and identification with a company, job and a group in which an employee works. This sense is expressed in employees' motivation to make efforts in their work, to take responsibility and their willingness to learn how to do their job in the best possible way (Nijhof et al., 1998; Baron, 1991). Aristovnik and Jaklič (2013) say the level of job satisfaction is determined by six factors: job satisfaction itself, salary, advancement, supervision, working conditions, and colleagues. Basically, job satisfaction can be seen as internal motivation of employees, which is a direct consequence of emotional reactions to various working conditions.

When it comes to the retail sector, job satisfaction is of great importance, primarily due to the fact that this is a service business activity which largely depends on employees who directly provide services to customers. In many studies conducted to

date (Platis et al, 2015; Kabak et al, 2014; Brown, McIntosh, 2010; Gazioglu, Tansel, 2006; Rogers et al., 1994) motivation and job satisfaction of employees directly affect the quality of the service provision process, which then directly influences customers' loyalty and commitment to the trading company. The study conducted by Berman and Evans (2013) points out that employees' motivation is affected by two groups of factors: the first group consists of the job-related factors that make employees satisfied or dissatisfied with their positions, while the second group comprises management style that fits best for retailers and staff. With this regard, in a number of studies, authors stress the importance of the following key indicators that affect job satisfaction in the service sector, such as:

1) Salaries and benefits - which include the monthly income, wages, paid health, welfare and pension insurance, paid overtime, fair payment system in the company, etc. (Noe et al., 2006; Schwab & Wallace, 1974). Salary affects the employees' motivation in the sense that they are satisfied with the job, if there are no discrepancies between their monthly income and income in other companies (Clark et al., 2007; Brown 2001). This is corroborated by the results of the latest research done by Kabak et al. (2014), which shows a significant correlation of 0.062 between job satisfaction and salary. The biggest weakness of this indicator, according to De George (2003), is in shaping an employee who is exclusively guided by interest and profit, but quickly leaves current job, and turns to another that offers higher cash benefits.

2) Working conditions – relate to the work atmosphere, pleasant interior, satisfactory technical equipment of the workplace, hygiene, meal breaks, etc. (Kinzl et al., 2005; Wiliam & Anderson, 1991). Employees often say that pleasant working conditions raise their motivation and commitment to job (Loscocco & Spitze, 1990). In his study, Poggi (2010) says that 79.8% of employees emphasize that working conditions are very important. Although correlation between job satisfaction and working conditions is very high and amounts to 0.072, the same author sees excessive investment in interior design, equipment, etc. as a major weakness of the working conditions, because it often happens that investment in employees is neglected (Poggi, 2010).

3) Reward system – relates to distribution of salaries, financial incentives and promotion. The study by Bešlić (2008) shows that job satisfaction will increase if employees believe that the reward system is just, in terms of mechanisms that are used to determine the amount of incentives, rewards and benefits. According to the recent study by Hauff et al. (2015), the biggest problem regarding reward system is the impact of national culture on workplace. Consequently, Balj et al. (2011) report that in some transition countries, without clearly defined business and cultural standards, there are various and vague criteria for advancement within companies.

4) Career development – refers to individual experience of a range of attitudes and behaviours in relation to the activities during an individual's working career (Bernardin & Russell, 1993). Recent studies (Vemić-Đurković et al., 2013, 2011; Chen et al., 2004) underline imprecise and ambiguous program for career development as the greatest weakness of this indicator. Post's study (Post et al., 2004) confirms that company management must have a clearly defined program for career development, inform all employees about it, and thus provide them with continuous advancement in terms of salary, rank, position, etc.

5) Job security – employment contracts signed with employees for indefinite period of time, as opposed to part-time and temporary work, fixed-term contracts, and so on, make employees safer and more protected from dismissal, and therefore more motivated and more attached to the job (Vemić-Đurković et al., 2011). However, the authors (Vemić-Đurković et al., 2011; Balj et al., 2011, De George, 2003) emphasize shortcomings of this indicator and fixed-term contracts, such as lack of motivation and commitment of an employee as a direct consequence of permanent (secure) job.

6) Collegiality and communication – includes a good relationship and exchange of knowledge, information and experience with colleagues, help, two-way communication with management, participation in decision-making, etc. (Riaz & Ramai, 2010). Research (Gray & Laidlaw, 2002; Gliem & Gliem, 2001) shows that employees are dissatisfied with the job if they have a bad relationship with colleagues and inadequate communication about decisions that directly affect the performance of their tasks. Author, Rouse (2005), think that overemphasized communication and collegiality among employees are shortcomings of this indicator and can lead to strong informal organizational groups within a company.

Bearing in mind the presented aspects, we come to the following research question: Are the mentioned indicators of job satisfaction correlated with the analysed countries and whether it is possible to create a model of job satisfaction for employees in the Western Balkans retail sector?

METHODOLOGY

Aim and hypotheses

Scientific evaluation of how important job satisfaction is, so far presented in the paper, showed interest in studying indicators that determine job satisfaction among employees in the retail sector. The aim of this paper is to test whether indicators of job satisfaction, such as salaries and benefits, working conditions, reward system, career development, job security, collegiality and communication are equally represented among employees in the Western Balkans supermarkets, so that obtained results could define the model of job satisfaction in the regional retail companies. In the context of the research goal, two hypotheses are established:

Null hypothesis Ho reads: there is no statistically significant correlation between the indicators of job satisfaction in the retail sector, such as salaries and benefits, working conditions, reward systems, career development, job security, collegiality and communication and the analysed countries of the Western Balkans.

Alternative hypothesis Ha reads: there is a statistically significant correlation between the indicators of job satisfaction in the retail sector, such as salaries and benefits, working conditions, reward systems, career development, job security, collegiality and communication and the analysed countries of the Western Balkans.

Method

Established hypotheses are tested based on nonparametric statistical *Chi-square* test in several steps. In the first step of testing, the calculated χ^2_0 value is compared with the appropriate table value $\chi^2_{(\alpha, df)}$, from the statistical chi-square table for the risk of error of α=0.05 and α=0.01, and number of degrees of freedom df = (m-1)*(k-1) (Sullivan, 2007). In the next step, we compare the calculated values. If the following condition $\chi^2_0 > \chi^2_{(\alpha, df)}$ is met, formulated null hypothesis Ho is rejected, while the offered alternative hypothesis Ha is accepted, and

vice versa. Formulated hypotheses are further examined based on *P*-value tests. P-value represents the minimum probability of error of first kind for which the established null hypothesis is still rejected (Radnović et al., 2015). According to P-value test, if the calculated P - value is smaller than 0.01, there is strong evidence against Ho. If it ranges from 0.01 to 0.05, there is moderate evidence against Ho, or just a hint of evidence if P-value is between 0.05 and 0.10. There is no evidence against Ho if P-value exceeds 0.10.

Participants

Statistical set shaped according to the study's objective and available options included 356 employees. Out of this number, 52% of the analysed participants were women (average age 42.19), while 48% were men (average age 41.16). In terms of education, 41% had secondary education, 29% college education, and 30% university education. 61% of surveyed employees belong to sales (personnel) employees that establish a direct communication with costumers, while 39% of respondents belong to the group of lower managers considered as the most responsible for supermarket operation since they influence the attitude and behaviour of sales staff by issued directives and decisions. The research sample is non-random and appropriate, and falls into the category of large samples. The representativeness of the sample is proved by the following data (Radosavljević & Borisavljević, 2014): 1) the number of employees in the analysed supermarkets accounts for 53% of total number of employees in retail sector in selected countries of the Western Balkans; 2) they account for over 65% of the total turnover of goods and services in retail sector, 3) according to the research results of Deloitte - audit company in 2013, selected supermarkets represent the largest supermarkets in the analysed countries as per their turnover and number of employees, which argues the representativeness of the sample. Table 1 presents the research sample.

Table 1

Research sample

Sample structure	Number of respondents	Frequency (%)
Position		
Sales staff	217	60.96
Lower managers	139	29.04
Gender		
Female	171	48.02
Male	185	51.98
Age		
20-30	43	12.08
30-40	114	32.02
40-50	125	35.11
50-60	50	14.04
Over 60	24	6.75
Education level		
Secondary	146	41.01
College	103	28.93
University	107	30.06
Marital status		
Married	263	73.88
Single	93	26.12

Source: author's calculations.

Procedure

Empirical data was collected in the period July - September 2014, by anonymous e-survey with the list of answers prepared in advance. Approximately equal number of employees was surveyed in all five countries (Serbia=75; Montenegro=69, Bosnia and Herzegovina=70, Croatia=70, Slovenia=73). Survey participants were employees in supermarkets operating in Serbia (Delhaize Maxi, Univerexport, DIS, Metro AG), Croatia (CBA, Lidl, Idea, Spar), Slovenia (Mercator, Spar, Tush), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Roda, DP Market, Bingo Tuzla) and Montenegro (Ekspo, Voli, Roda). Employees were asked to choose one of the listed indicators of job satisfaction as the most important. The meaning of each listed indicator in the survey was explained. Surveys were electronically sent to HR departments in supermarkets, which then forwarded them to their employees. Obtained answers were electronically managed by CAWI (Computer-assisted web interviewing).

Data analysis

Statistical package for social sciences - SPSS 20 and Excel 2010 Data Analysis, was used for conducted testing and data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used for the relevance and homogeneity of respondents' opinions. *Chi-square* test and P-value test were used to verify the set hypotheses and determine differences between the observed countries. Coefficient of contingency (r) was used as an additional mechanism for checking the correlation between the variables. The job satisfaction model in the retail sector of the Western Balkans was created based on respondents' answers and conducted testing.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The following Table 2 shows the results of the survey grouped according to the indicators and analysed countries of the Western Balkans. The first row for each country shows the number of employees that perceives the subject indicator as crucial for achieving job satisfaction, while the second row presents the structure of the employees' responses in percentage. The table shows evident matching of employees' responses in transition countries (Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) on one hand, and the European Union member states (Croatia and Slovenia) on the other hand. Therefore, 25 employees or 33.3% in Serbia considers salaries and benefits as key indicator of job satisfaction. The similar percentage can be found in Montenegro with 29 employees or 42%, or even 33 employees or 47% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, there are only 16 employees or 23.2% in Croatia, and also 16 employees or 21.9% in Slovenia opting for the same indicator. On the other hand, working conditions are perceived as less important in Serbia (6.7%), Montenegro (7.2%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (4.3%), as opposed to Croatia and Slovenia with 15.9% and 11%, respectively. The indicator with the least discrepancies and high rate of over 20% in all analysed countries is job security. Detailed responses are indicated in the following table:

Table 2
Research results by indicators and countries

			Country					Total
			Serbia	Monte-negro	B and H	Croatia	Slovenia	
Indicators	Salaries and benefits	Count	25	29	33	16	16	119
		% within countries	33.3	42.0	47.1	23.2	21.9	33.4
	Working conditions	Count	5	5	3	11	8	32
		% within countries	6.7	7.2	4.3	15.9	11.0	9.0
	Reward system	Count	11	6	7	11	7	42
		% within countries	14.7	8.7	10.0	15.9	9.6	11.8
	Career development	Count	3	3	4	6	8	24
		% within countries	4.0	4.3	5.7	8.7	11.0	6.7
	Job security	Count	25	20	16	20	22	103
		% within countries	33.3	29.0	22.9	29.0	30.1	28.9
	Collegiality and communication	Count	6	6	7	5	12	36
		% within countries	8.0	8.7	10.0	7.2	16.4	10.1
Total		Count	75	69	70	69	73	356
		% within countries	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: author's calculations.

Testing of the Null hypothesis on lack of correlation between a country and the job satisfaction indicators using the chi-square test will be performed for three groups of data: (1) at the level of the entire study sample, (2) at the level of the EU countries and non-EU countries, and (3) within mentioned two groups of countries. The following Table 3 presents the data necessary for testing the hypothesis Ho at the level of the study sample. Job satisfaction indicators are set as dependent characteristics in the analysis, while the analysed countries of the Western Balkans are independent characteristics. The test results, the chi-square statistics value and P-value are presented as follows:

Table 3
Chi-Square tests – entire study sample

	Value	df	*P-value*
1	2	3	4
Pearson Chi-Square	38.739**	20	0.003**
$\chi^2_{(0.01, df)}$	37.566	20	
$\chi^2_{(0.05, df)}$	31.410	20	
N of Valid Cases	356		

Source: author's calculations.
** strong evidence against the null hypothesis Ho

Column 2 in the table indicates the calculated and the limit values for the chi-square statistics, column 3 is the degrees of freedom (df), while column 4 is a P-value.

The respondents from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia and Croatia helped testing the hypothesis on lack of correlation between a country and the job satisfaction indicators. The tested variable (of job satisfaction indicators) is given in 6 categories: salaries and benefits, working conditions, reward systems, career development, job security, collegiality and communication. By chi-square test we investigated the hypothesis of independence of two characteristics. Chi-square test significance ($\chi^2_0 = 38.739 > \chi^2_{(0.05,\ 20)} = 31.410$ and $\chi^2_0 = 38.739 > \chi^2_{(0,01;\ 20)} = 37.566$) allows us to reject the hypothesis Ho on the independence of these two characteristics. In other words, there is a correlation between a country and the job satisfaction indicators. Null hypothesis rejection is further confirmed via the calculated *P*-value, which in the total sample of employees is *p*=0.003, which means there is strong evidence against the null hypothesis Ho, since *p*=0.003 < 0.01. In addition, these findings are confirmed by a statistically significant contingency coefficient (Table 4, *sig.=0.003* is less than 0.05).

Table 4
Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Contingency Coefficient	0.473	0.003
N of Valid Cases	356	

Source: author's calculations.

The next step in testing is to examine the correlation between the indicators of job satisfaction in EU countries (Slovenia, Croatia) and non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro). Table 2 shows that the most important indicator of job satisfaction in non-EU countries is Salaries and benefits (n = 87; 40.7%), while EU countries emphasize Job security (n = 42; 29.6%). The following Table 5 presents the data necessary for testing the hypothesis Ho at the level of EU countries (Slovenia, Croatia) and non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro). The job satisfaction indicators are set as dependent characteristics in a given analysis, while two groups of analysed countries of the Western Balkans are independent characteristics.

Table 5
Chi-Square tests – at the level of EU countries (Slovenia, Croatia) and non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro)

	Value	df	*P-value*
1	2	3	4
Pearson Chi-Square	17.853**	5	0.003**
$\chi^2_{(0.01,\ df)}$	15.086	5	
$\chi^2_{(0.05,\ df)}$	11.070	5	
N of Valid Cases	356		

Source: author's calculations.

** strong evidence against the null hypothesis Ho

Based on the data in Table 5 with respect to the met condition $\chi^2_0 = 17.853 > \chi^2_{(0,05;5)} = 11.070$ and $\chi^2_0 = 17.853 > \chi^2_{(0,01;5)} = 15.086$ it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between the EU and non-EU countries on the one hand, and the job satisfaction indicators on the other hand. P-test values *sig.=0.003* (Table 5) and coefficient of contingency *sig.=0.003* (Table 6) confirm the existence of a statistically significant correlation between these two variables.

Table 6
Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Contingency Coefficient	0.219	0.003
N of Valid Cases	356	

Source: author's calculations

The last step in testing the hypothesis Ho refers to the observation of independence between the job satisfaction indicators in the EU countries and non-EU countries. The job satisfaction indicators are set as dependent features, while as independent features we observe Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro separately from Slovenia and Croatia. The data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Chi-Square tests – conducted separately in non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro) and separately in EU countries (Slovenia, Croatia)

Serbia, B and H, Montenegro	Value	Df	*P-value*	Slovenia, Croatia	Value	df	*P-value*
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pearson Chi-Square	5.413	10	0.862	Pearson Chi-Square	4.516	5	0.477
$\chi^2_{(0.01, df)}$	23.209	10		$\chi^2_{(0.01, df)}$	15.086	5	
$\chi^2_{(0.05, df)}$	18.307	10		$\chi^2_{(0.05, df)}$	11.070	5	
N of Valid Cases	214			N of Valid Cases	142		

Source: author's calculations.

Based on the presented data, it is concluded that the tested Null hypothesis on independence of the indicators and countries for the group of non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro) is accepted with regard to the met requirement $\chi^2_0 = 5.413 < \chi^2_{(0,05;10)} = 18.307$ and $\chi^2_0 = 5.413 < \chi^2_{(0,01;10)} = 23.209$. The same observation is confirmed by the P-test ($sig. = 0.862$). This basically means that if we observe the correlation of the job satisfaction indicators within a specific group of non-EU countries, there will be no statistically significant discrepancies between the countries and indicators. Identical observations are found for the second group of countries (EU countries) where we accept the hypothesis Ho based on chi-square test

$(\chi^2_0 = 4.516 < \chi^2_{(0,05;5)} = 11.070$ and $= \chi^2_0 4.516 < \chi^2_{(0,01;5)} = 15.086)$ and P-test (*sig. = 0.477*).

The conducted tests confirmed the alternative hypothesis Ha and defined a statistically significant correlation between the job satisfaction indicators in the retail sector and the analysed countries of the Western Balkans at the level of the entire study sample and at the level of EU and non-EU countries. On the other hand, if testing is carried out within the sub-sample of the study (EU sample and non-EU sample), Ho is confirmed as well as the independence of the job satisfaction indicators from a country.

DISCUSSION

Based on the obtained results, respondents' answers and completed testing of hypotheses we can create the job satisfaction model in the retail sector in the supermarkets. This model is provided by ranking the indicators from 1 (lowest impact) to 6 (highest impact) for each analysed country separately. For instance, the indicator - Salaries and benefits is assigned rank 6 in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, since the largest number of subjects specified this indicator as the most important, while chi-square test did not show statistically significant discrepancies in these countries. According to the same methodology, rank 6 is assigned to Job security for Croatia and Slovenia, and so on. Detailed scale with ranking of job satisfaction indicators is presented in Figure 1.

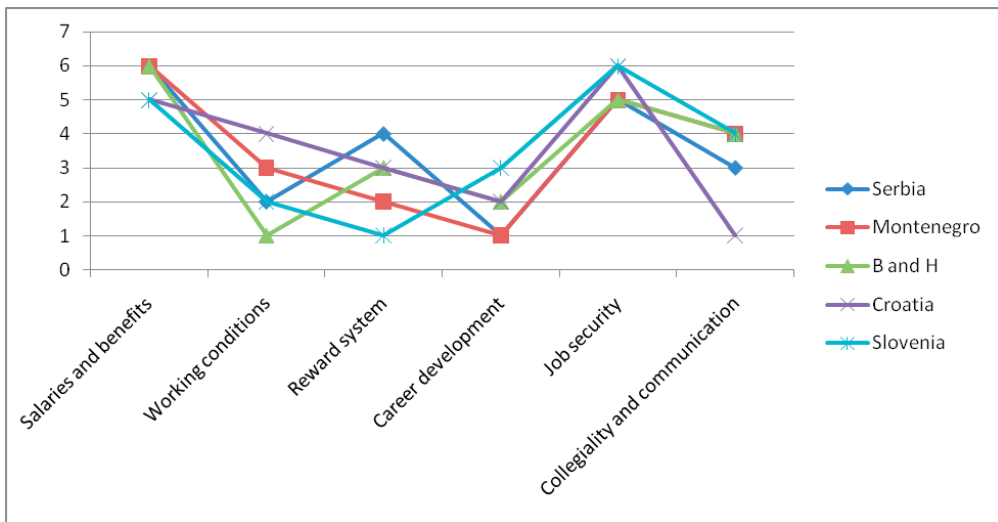Figure 1
Job satisfaction model in supermarkets

Figure 1 illustrates Job satisfaction model for employees in supermarkets of the Western Balkans. Based on the provided model, we can conclude that the most important factors that affect the satisfaction and commitment to the job are Salaries and benefits and Job security (rank 6 and rank 5). The reason for such a high rank of

this indicator lies in the fact that the Republic of Serbia is going through a period of transition and serious economic reforms characterized by high unemployment rate, low purchasing power of the population, double-digit inflation, etc. The situation in the market is exacerbated by recession and the crisis in the Serbian economy. Since economic crisis outburst (2009) until today, GDP growth has ranged from -3.1% to 1.4%, unemployment rate is 19.2%, average net salary is EUR 350, while Serbian public debt has been estimated at EUR 25.7 billion or 71% of total GDP (Bulletin on Public Finances of RS, 2015). Such a difficult macroeconomic situation is directly reflected in indicators of job satisfaction, and therefore employees solely value regular income, paid medical, social and pension insurance, paid overtime, contract for indefinite period of time, etc. Employees in the supermarkets in the Serbian retail sector attached slightly less influence to fairness in distribution of rewards and advancement, good relationship with colleagues at work and a clear two-way communication with superiors. Therefore, the next ranked indicators are reward system, collegiality, and communication (rank 4 and rank 3). The lowest importance is given to career development and working conditions (rank 1 and rank 2).

Similar rankings are present among employees in supermarkets in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where indicators Salaries and benefits have rank 6, and Job security - rank 5. As in the Republic of Serbia, the economic crisis had negative consequences for their economies, which reflected, above all, in public debt crisis (over 60% of the total GDP), growth of unemployment rate (Montenegro 14.9%; Bosnia and Herzegovina 27%), low labour cost (average net salary in Montenegro is EUR 480, and EUR 430 in Bosnia and

Herzegovina), negative GDP growth, etc. (Statistical Yearbook of Bosnia and Herzegovina /2014/ and Montenegro /2014/). As a result of such processes, employees find only satisfaction in monthly income and permanent employment. The next ranked indicators are Career development, Reward system and Collegiality, with modest importance according to employees, while the impact of working conditions, technical equipment of the workplace, pleasant working atmosphere, hygiene, etc. hold the lowest rank 1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In terms of influence of analysed indicators, ranking is somewhat different in Croatia and Slovenia, which are economically more developed countries and EU member states, and therefore value job security as the most important indicator (rank 6), followed by salaries and benefits (rank 5). Croatia and Slovenia are characterized by stable economic situation and better macroeconomic indicators compared to the rest of the Western Balkans. The average labour cost is EUR 740 in Croatia, and EUR 1,000 in Slovenia, unemployment rate is 13.5% in Slovenia, and 17.6% in Croatia, public debt is at the average for EU member states, while their legal systems are fully compliant with EU legislation. Improved purchasing power and a higher standard had an impact on employees in these countries, so they do not regard salary as the main motivator of satisfaction, but prioritize job security and permanent employment. Croatian employees see reward system and working conditions as somewhat less significant (rank 3 and rank 4). The surprising result is that employees of supermarkets in Croatia believe that collegiality has almost no influence on job satisfaction (rank 1). On the other hand, employees in Slovenia emphasize the importance of good communication and relationship with colleagues at work (rank 4). The Slovenian companies

also value the influence of career development and advancement opportunities for employees (rank 3), while it holds the lowest rank in Croatia (rank 1) because the management is not committed to accurately define and familiarize employees with the methods and programs of advancement with respect to hierarchical position, salary, rank, power, etc.

Based on the results in Table 5 and Table 7, job satisfaction can be comparatively overviewed (Figure 2) between the Western Balkan countries that are EU members (Croatia and Slovenia) and candidate countries for EU accession (Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina). As in the previous case, a scale from 1 (lowest impact) to 6 (highest impact) will be used. Detailed scale with rankings of job satisfaction indicators in these two groups of countries is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Job satisfaction model in supermarkets (EU members vs. candidate countries for EU accession)
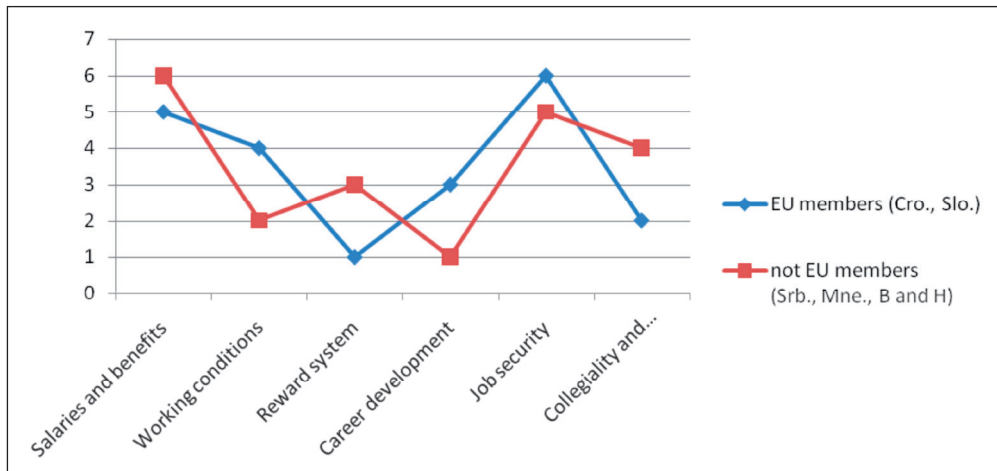
Highest irregularities are noticeable for working conditions (EU members rank 4; not EU members rank 2), and career development (EU members rank 3; not EU members rank 1). This can be explained by the fact that countries that are not EU members did not clearly define career development programs, socially acceptable working conditions, etc. The research done by Vemić-Đurković shows that employees in Serbian companies often do not know the meaning of career development, who should implement it and what are their career development opportunities (Vemić-Đurković et al., 2011, 2013). Irregularities are obvious in terms of the most important indicator. EU members prioritize job security (rank 6), while candidate countries for EU accession favour Salaries and benefits (rank 6). Employees in EU member states, due to better living standards, give priority to job security (since unemployment rate is still high, from 13.5% to 17.6%), while poor standard, low purchasing power and low labour cost forced employees from countries outside the EU to choose Salaries and benefits as the most important indicator for job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The main reason for the research of job satisfaction in the retail sector stems from the fact that this is service activity, where its profitability and business results largely depend on employees who directly provide services to end consumers. Getting familiar with indicators that influence job satisfaction and their actual implementation is directly reflected in the employees, the quality of services and sales performance, which directly affects the customers' satisfaction, loyalty and commitment to trade company. In addition, the reasons for the research of the retail sector are also increasing participation of this sector in the overall economic development in the Western Balkans.

The scientific significance of the research reflects in precisely defined representation of each analysed indicator on the level of job satisfaction in the retail sector of the largest supermarkets. Such a model should serve as a basis for further research that will study the representation of the sub-indicators on the defined job satisfaction model. For instance, the most important indicator - Salaries and benefits, should be researched to find the most acceptable salary for employees in every country, etc. It is also important to carry out research that would focus on assessing the degree of correlation between the profitability of retail companies and job satisfaction of employees in the Western Balkans. Further research could be directed toward analysis of certain discrepancies in this paper, such as the impact of indicators, like career development, collegiality and communication in Croatia, or working conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.

Besides its scientific importance, the conducted research is significant in practice, because the results can help the supermarket management define the working conditions and methods, which will satisfy retailers and directly affect their motivation, satisfaction, productivity, etc., and thus satisfaction of customers. Consequently, management of retail companies affects business efficiency of trading companies, prepares them for the EU market and international competition.

Shortcomings of the research could be the following two: the first is the analysis of a single economic sector (retail, supermarkets), and the second relates to indicators of job satisfaction that are prepared in advance and presented to employees for ranking. The future studies should certainly modify this approach.

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Sažetak

ZADOVOLJSTVO POSLOM U SEKTORU TRGOVINE: NALAZI IZ ISTRAŽIVANJA MALOPRODAVAČA IZ NAJVEĆIH SUPERMARKETA ZAPADNOG BALKANA

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Rad se bavi analizom zadovoljstva poslom u sektoru trgovine, kao važne komponente sveobuhvatne socijalne i društveno odgovorne politike zapošljavanja u regiji Zapadnog Balkana. Cilj istraživanja je da se na temelju empirijski prikupljenih podataka i provedenog testiranja definiraju indikatori zadovoljstva poslom zaposlenih u sektoru maloprodaje Srbije, Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine, Slovenije i Crne Gore s posebnim osvrtom na odnos između zemalja članica EU i zemalja koje nisu članice EU. U radu se testira hipoteza o statistički značajnoj povezanosti između indikatora zadovoljstva poslom, kao što su: plaće i naknade, uvjeta rada, sustava nagrađivanja, razvoja karijere, sigurnosti posla, kolegijalnosti i komunikacije kao pokazatelja zadovoljstva poslom i analiziranih država Zapadnog Balkana. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo 356 maloprodavača iz najvećih supermarketa Zapadnog Balkana. Dobiveni rezultati su pokazali da postoji statistički značajna povezanost između analiziranih indikatora i država. Na temelju danih rezultata kreiran je model zadovoljstva poslom zaposlenih u sektoru maloprodaje Zapadnog Balkana. Praktičan značaj istraživanja je u tome da može pomoći menadžerima da upoznaju date indikatore kako bi utjecali na motiviranost, zadovoljstvo i produktivnost svojih zaposlenika i tako trgovinske tvrtke regije zapadnog Balkana što bolje pripremili za borbu s međunarodnom konkurencijom i ulazak na tržište Europske Unije. Rezultati pokazuju i važnost budućih istraživanja o mogućim odstupanjima glede utjecaja promatranih pokazatelja u utvrđenom modelu zadovoljstva poslom.

Ključne riječi*: trgovina, maloprodaja, supermarketi, zadovoljstvo poslom, zaposleni, plaće i naknade, ljudski resursi, Zapadni Balkan.*