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retailers in the UK

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Service Development
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way of establishing family-
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hospitality. Case study: MICE
Hotels in Kosovo

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Contents

An exploratory case study of resilience and the leading retailers in the UK <i>Peter Jones & Daphne Comfort</i>	5
Implementing a New Service Development process <i>Barry Davies & Vanessa Warren</i>	19
Responsible parenting as a way of establishing family-school partnership <i>Alma Švraka</i>	34
Analysis of service quality and customer satisfaction in hospitality. Case study: MICE Hotels in Kosovo <i>Ejup Fejza, Marigona Sogojeva & Labeat Fejza</i>	47

An exploratory case study of resilience and the leading retailers in the UK

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Abstract

The concept of resilience is attracting increasing attention across a wide range of academic disciplines and business sectors. At the present time retailers face a seemingly growing number of disruptive changes, including climate change and threats to the security of their supply chains and In the light of such changes, a focus on resilience might be seen to have much to offer retail organisations. However, little work has been published in the academic literature on if, and how, individual retailers are employing the concept of resilience in their business strategies and planning. With these thoughts in mind, this exploratory case study outlines definitions of resilience and retail resilience, provides an exploratory review of if, and how, the leading retailers in the UK have publicly recognised the importance of resilience in their business strategies and offers some wider reflections on the employment of the concept within retailing. The case study reveals that the majority of the leading retailers in the UK have publicly recognised the importance of resilience but the authors argue that the employment of the concept within retailing raises a number of wider issues including measurement, scale and corporate control, distributional equity and power and the relationship between resilience and growth: merit reflection and discussion.

Keywords: *Resilience, Leading Retailers in the UK, Climate Change, Supply Chain Security, Information and Cyber Security*

Introduction

The concept of resilience, loosely defined as the ability to withstand or to bounce back from adversity and disruption, is attracting increasing attention across a number of business sectors (Jones and Comfort 2018; Sarda and Pogutz 2018). At the present time retailers face a seemingly growing number of disruptive changes and under the headline '*Resilience in Retail*', AlixPartners (2019, webpage) the global consulting company, for example, argued '*in the UK, the high street is going through apocalyptic change.*' These disruptive changes include store closures, business failures, re-structuring and the job losses; the impact of disruptive technologies, particularly the continuing growth of online retailing; threats to supply chains associated with climate change and political instability: and ever changing customer expectations and the emergence of new types of retail experiences. In the light of such changes, a focus on resilience might be seen to have much to offer retail organisations. However, Dolega and Celinska-Janowicz (2015) suggested that its application in the retail sector '*is rather scarce.*' While Scope (2018), a German based business ratings agency, reported it expected European retailers '*to prove more resilient*' to '*the digital chill*' than bricks and mortar retailers '*on the US high street*', little work has been published in the academic literature on if, and how,

individual retailers are employing the concept of resilience in their business strategies and planning. With these thoughts in mind, this exploratory case study outlines definitions of resilience and retail resilience, provides an exploratory review of if, and how, the leading retailers in the UK have publicly recognised the importance of resilience in their business strategies and offers some wider reflections on the employment of the concept within retailing.

Resilience and Retail Resilience

A number of origins and meanings are claimed for resilience in the academic and business world. More specifically, Sharifi and Yamagata (2014) suggested that *'despite the abundance of research on resilience there is still no single, universally accepted definition for it'* and Fabry and Zeghui (2019) argued *'there are competing definitions of resilience.'* Hassler and Kohler (2014), for example, claimed that *'resilience as a design principle, was an implicit part of construction knowledge before the nineteenth century'* and Sharifi and Yamagata (2014) suggested that *'the concept of resilience has traditionally been used in physics and psychology.'* Davoudi et al. (2012) acknowledged that *'resilience was first used by physical scientists'* and argued that in the 1960's *'resilience entered the field of ecology.'* MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) suggested that *'the concept of resilience has migrated from the natural and physical sciences to the social sciences and public policy, as the identification of global threats such as economic crises, climate change and international terrorism has focused attention on the responsive capacities of places and social systems.'*

There is also growing recognition of the importance of resilience within the corporate world. PricewaterhouseCoopers (2017a), for example, emphasised their belief that *'enterprise resilience is the most important capability in business today.'* Here enterprise resilience is defined as *'an organisation's capacity to anticipate and react to change, not only to survive, but also to evolve'* (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2017b.) At the same time, there is growing interest in the creation of resilient business strategies. In introducing *'resilient business strategies'*, the BSR (2018) argued *'rather than integrate sustainability into company strategy, we believe companies need to create resilient business strategies.'* Such strategies are *'based on an understanding that rapidly-shifting external context – our changing demographics, disruptive technologies, economic dislocation and natural resource scarcity are not only sustainability issues but also business issues'* (BSR 2018).

Defining retail resilience is not straightforward and to date, definitions have been couched in terms of its role in wider economic and urban structures, rather than on the corporate dimensions of retail resilience. The emphasis here lies in town planning, urban regeneration, town centre management and geography and the focus is on *'the ways and means retail systems contribute to cities' sustainability and resilience* (Barata-Salgueiro and Erkip 2014). Dolega and Celinska-Janowicz (2015), for example, looked to define *'retail resilience'* specifically in terms of *'the resilience of an urban retail system'* as the *'ability of different types of retailing to adapt to changes, crises or shocks that challenge the system's equilibrium without failing to perform its functions in a sustainable way.'*

Under the banner, *'Retail Resilience'* Dolega and Celinska-Janowicz (2015) analysed the applicability of the concept *'to the retail sector within the context of the town centre'* and proposed *'a possible analytical framework for adaptively resilient retail*

centres. Further, Dolega and Celinska-Janowicz (2015) claimed this framework offered *a practical application for spatial and urban planning and can be beneficial to various stakeholders and practitioners, including retailers, policy makers, and town centre managers.* In a similar vein, Ozuduru and Guldmann (2013) were concerned to develop *'a framework for the effective integration of retail planning into urban policy to enhance urban economic resilience.'* Wrigley and Dolega (2011) argued that resilience offered *'analytical leverage in structuring understanding of the likely evolutionary paths of UK town centres and high streets.'* Singleton et al. (2016) developed the concept of 'e-resilience' to define *'the vulnerability of retail centres to the effects of rapidly growing internet sales.'* In their conclusions Singleton et al. (2016) suggested that *'a comprehensive classification of retail centres, based on their e-resilience levels provides a resource that can be used by a wide range of stakeholders, including academics, retailers and town centre managers.'*

In looking to provide a more specific business focus, the authors tentatively suggest the following working definition, namely that retail, or more specifically retailer resilience, is a retailer's capacity to anticipate and react constructively to unexpected events and disruptive changes in its operating environment, and thus to maintain business continuity. The limited work published to date on the resilience of retailers, has focused on retailers collectively, on anonymously, rather than on named retail organisations. In addressing the role of food retailers in improving resilience in global food supply, Macfadyen et al. (2016), for example, suggested that supermarkets occupied a critical point in the chain, which makes them *'highly sensitive to variability in supply.'* The authors also argued that the concentration in the chain down to a few retailers in each country provides an *'opportunity to increase resilience of future supply given appropriate, scale-dependent interventions'* (Macfadyen et al. 2016). Valikangas and Romme (2013) presented a case study of how an anonymised US retailer developed its quest for resilience capabilities. The case study described how the company deliberately engaged in advancing and practicing strategic resilience. In exploring the impact of retailers' resilience strategies on urban space in Ankara Turkey, Erkip et al. (2014) revealed that *'the resilience strategies of traditional retailers are reactive rather than proactive.'* Further, Erkip et al. (2014) suggested that while *'this provides them with the flexibility to adapt themselves more quickly to the changes in the sector'*, there is *'no holistic retail policy in Turkey, reactive strategies also result in unplanned use of urban space.'*

Method of Enquiry

In order to conduct an exploratory review of if, and how, the leading retailers in the UK have publicly reported on their engagement with resilience, ten of the leading UK retail organisations, as listed by Retail Economics (2018) and Deloitte (2019), were selected to provide the empirical information for this exploratory case study. The retailers selected were Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons, Kingfisher, Marks and Spencer, Dixons Carphone, John Lewis Partnership, Co-operative Group and Next. As large players within UK retailing, the selected companies might be seen to reflect cutting edge thinking in their approach to resilience at a time of when retailers are facing an increasing range of disruptive changes. The authors initially conducted a series of Internet searches in July 2019 for information, using the two key words and phrases namely 'resilience' and the name of each of the selected retailers. The nature of the subsequent navigation process varied from one retailer to

another as the authors pursued the most promising line of enquiry to reveal the retailer's approach to resilience. The information obtained from these searches provided the empirical information for this paper. The specific examples and selected quotations drawn from the corporate websites are used for illustrative rather than comparative purposes, with the principal aim being on reviewing the ways in which the selected retailers had recognised the importance of resilience in their business strategies. The case study is based on information that is in the public domain and the authors took the considered view that they did not need to contact the selected retailers to obtain formal permission prior to conducting their research.

The four largest retail companies in the UK, namely, Tesco, Sainsbury's Asda and Morrisons, are often referred to as food retailers, though in part this is a misnomer in that while they were all initially established as grocery retailers, they now all sell a wider range of consumer goods. Tesco is the UK's largest retailer, with some 3,400 stores and over 310,000 employees and it trades from hypermarket, superstore, and convenience store formats and increasingly online. Tesco was founded in 1919 as a group of market stalls and the first Tesco shop was opened in North London in 1931. Sainsbury's initially founded in 1869, trades from over 600 supermarkets, some 800 convenience stores and the 800 stores operating under the banner of Argos (a catalogue retailer acquired by Sainsbury's in 2016), throughout the UK. Asda, (now part of Walmart, the world's largest retailer) was founded in Yorkshire in 1965 and though originally based in the north of England, the company began to expand its retail operations into the South of England during the 1970s and 1980s and it currently trades from over 600 locations within the UK. Morrisons, founded in 1899 in Bradford, Yorkshire, trades from some 500 stores. The company's operations were concentrated in the Midlands and North of England up to 2004 but since then it has developed a growing presence in the South of England.

The John Lewis Partnership operates a chain of over 30 John Lewis department stores and some 600 Waitrose food supermarkets. Kingfisher, is a UK based home improvement retailer, with over 1,200 stores in 10 countries across Europe, Russia and Turkey and it trades as B&Q, Brico Depot, Screw Fix, Castorama and Praktiker. Marks and Spencer, arguably the UK's most iconic retailer, specialises in the sale of clothing, household goods and food and trades from almost 1,000 stores within the UK, including over 600 that sell only food products. Dixons Carphone is a multinational electrical and telecommunications retailer, which operates in 8 European countries under a number of brands including, Currys, PC World, Carphone Warehouse and Elkjop. The Cooperative Group is a consumer cooperative with a diverse range of retail operations, principally food retailing, but which also includes electrical retailing, travel agencies and funeral services. Next is a multinational clothing, footwear and home products retailer and trades from some 500 stores in the UK and a further 200 in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

The Leading Retailers in the UK and Resilience

All bar one of the selected retailers (namely Dixons Carphone) publicly acknowledged the importance of resilience across a range of business challenges. These challenges, included technology delivery and information and cyber security, relationships with local communities, the health and well-being of employees, political uncertainty and instability, and unexpected events and incidents but the issues of climate change, and particularly for the food retailers, of the security of

supply chains, loomed large. In addressing *'the challenge of a changing climate'*, Asda (2014), for example, reported *'our programme aims to bolster Asda's resilience to the risks of climate change'* and emphasised *'the role of responsible business is to adapt to change, help others to do so and to work with suppliers and customers to make sure we cut carbon emissions and deliver a more stable climate future for our children.'* More specifically, Asda (2014), reported carrying out what it claimed was a wide ranging analysis of long term climate trends and the implications for its supply chain and business operations and argued that it was *'working on our resilience strategy'* and *'bringing the issues to the fore across our stores, depots, suppliers and stakeholders.'* This analysis suggested that *'only 5% of our fresh produce will not be affected by changes in climate'* (Asda 2014) and more generally the company reported *'whether food sourcing, processing or transportation, there is a risk to all aspects of our operations.'* Further Asda (2014) argued that *'knowing what is at risk means we can look at more detail into the most vulnerable product, as well as developing a climate awareness programme for category directors where high risk has been identified.'*

Tesco (2019a) explicitly recognised that *'climate change is the biggest environmental threat the world faces'* and that it *'could pose particular challenges for our business, including our supply chain and operations.'* Tesco (2019a) further publicly acknowledged that disclosing its climate related financial risks, for the first time, is *'an important step in demonstrating our understanding of these risks and our efforts to mitigate them.'* Here Tesco (2019a) argued that their approach would not only be important in *'enhancing business resilience'* but that *'it also enables us to take advantage of any opportunities it may offer.'* More specifically Tesco (2019a) suggested that climate change is one of the foundations of its *'Little Helps Plan'* launched in 2017. This plan, which is updated annually, sets out the company's commitments to, and its progress towards, mitigating the climate change impacts of its own operations and of its supply chain. The company's Corporate Responsibility Committee is responsible for managing its impacts on climate change.

As part of its approach to planning for climate change Tesco has commissioned a series of scenario analyses. In 2017/2018, the focus was on the company's UK business and prioritised the company's estate, produce and animal protein, and looked to examine the risks and opportunities the company may face in 2030. Here the aim was to assess the company's exposure to *'physical climate risks such as rising temperatures, shifts in precipitation patterns and extreme weather events'* the analysis examined *'agricultural production by country and product'* (Tesco 2019a). At the same time, the scenario analysis also looked to assess the risks and opportunities arising from a transition to a low carbon economy and here the focus was on the material risks for the company arising from market and policy shifts in energy and agriculture. More generally, the results, from what will be a continuing series of scenario analyses, will be employed to inform long term strategic business planning.

Under the banner *'Empowering our farmers'*, Sainsbury's (2017) outlined *'how we are building strong and resilient supply chains'*, particularly in developing countries. Here the focus is on *'long term planning and working with our farmers to help them become stronger and more resilient'* and the company argued that *'by sharing information, insights and investment we can truly help them in making decisions that will improve their businesses and communities.'* The company outlined

how an *'unpredictable mix of draughts and floods, of soil depletion and loss of vital nutrients'* and *'new pests and diseases'*, was bringing daunting new challenges for farmers who are *'also struggling to compete in a world of volatile prices and political uncertainty.'* Sainsbury's (2017) reported launching an ambitious programme to support its farmers in meeting these challenges, which aims to build resilient businesses and improve the quality of life for farming communities, while also *'helping to secure the future of some of our best loved products.'* In practical terms support *'could include everything from soil conservation and pest management to finding ways to reduce costs – whether on inputs, energy, storage or transpiration; and improving the health of farmers and their families through initiatives like nutrition gardens and domestic livestock rearing'* (Sainsbury's 2017).

In looking to emphasise their commitment to British farming, Morrisons (undated a) and the John Lewis Partnership (2019) have contributed to the *'Princes' Farm Resilience Programme'*, which aims to help small farms that are under pressure because of volatile market prices and changes in agricultural policies. This programme looks to *'support and develop vulnerable farm businesses through a series of business skills workshops and competitor benchmarking as well as one-to-one support and resource'* (Morrisons undated b). Nationally, up to 300 farmers can join the programme each year and workshops, are run in 15 locations across the UK. Topics include business planning, understanding accounts and budgeting, and exploring new farming opportunities. On the international scene, Morrisons have also explored the risks and opportunities in sourcing bananas from independent growers in Latin America and West Africa. More generally, and looking to the future, Morrisons (2018) reported looking to increase resilience in its manufacturing and logistics operations. Food produce, aside, Kingfisher (2018) emphasised its commitment to protecting natural resources and to offering its customers products with a lower environmental footprint, and argued *'this is good for our business too, helping to increase the resilience of our supply chain and protect against price rises.'* This approach is also reflected at the other end of the supply chain in that Kingfisher (2018) argued that its home products helped to create *'a healthier home and connect with nature'*, which would be *'resilient to changing weather.'*

Some of the selected retailers emphasised their role in developing and enhancing the resilience of the communities within their supply chains. Tesco (2019b), for example, claimed to be *'building community resilience'* to help *'smallholder farmers (producing coffee in Latin America, Asia and Africa) who face challenges such as poverty, commodity price fluctuations and increasingly erratic weather patterns caused by climate change.'* More specifically, the company reported that from 2019, all of its instant coffee is accredited by the Rainforest Alliance. This certification scheme, first launched in 1996, looks to drive positive social, environmental and economic change to improve agricultural and farm management, to boost yields and to provide resilience to climate change. In a similar vein, Marks and Spencer (2019a) launched its Global Community Programme in 2014 and here the aim is to help to build resilient supply chain communities. Further, the company stressed its *'belief that if suppliers, workers, producers and communities are more resilient, the supply chain is more resilient and our supply for the future is more secure.'* The Co-operative Group (2018) reported that *'building capacity and resilience of our supply base to address the underlying causes of human rights issues'* was one of four strategic priorities of its work on ethical trade in food.

A commitment to the resilience of employees was reported by some of the selected retailers. The John Lewis Partnership (2019), for example, argued that *'key societal health challenges, such as rising obesity, and stress and mental health issues are prompting retailers to review how they support the health of their employees.'* Further, the company reported that *'at a time of disruption to the retail sector, it has never been more important to keep investing in the wellbeing and resilience of our Partners'* (John Lewis Partnership 2019). By way of an illustration of this investment commitment, the company outlined the roll out of Unmind, a health and wellbeing app., to its employees. As a result, the John Lewis Partnership (2019) reported *'the platform has helped engage Partners in positive conversations about mental health'* and *'there is now a growing community of Partners who are openly talking about mental health and taking proactive care of themselves and their colleagues.'*

A number of the selected retailers reported on their commitment to the resilience of their technology delivery, of Information and Communication Technologies and of information and cyber security. Tesco (2019), for example, argued that *'failure of our IT infrastructure or key IT systems result in loss of information, inability to operate effectively, financial or regulatory penalties, and negatively impacts our reputation.'* In response to these major risks Tesco (2019) reported that *'a multi-year programme is underway to enhance our technology infrastructure and resilience capabilities'* and that this *'involves significant investment in our hosting strategy, partnering with cloud providers and re-engineering some of our legacy retail systems.'* Kingfisher (2018), observed that *'cyber-attacks and security incidents have increased in recent years'* and that *'the retail sector is now a target.'* In response to these concerns Kingfisher (2018) reported that *'cyber security continues to receive Executive sponsorship and Board focus'* and that *'dedicated IT governance boards are established to monitor this evolving risk and the associated mitigation controls.'*

For some of the selected retailers, commitments to business continuity explicitly embrace resilience. Under the banner *'Business continuity, operational resilience and major incident response'* Sainsbury's (2019) for example, reported that *'a major incident or catastrophic event could impact on the Group's or individual brands ability to trade.'* In looking to address such concerns, Sainsbury's outlined a series of mitigations. These included the alignment of operational resilience, including incident management, across the company, regular meetings of the Operational Resilience Committee, which sets the operational resilience strategy and monitors progress against it and holding Group wide resilience exercises designed to imitate real life business continuity scenarios and to test the company's ability to respond effectively. While political stability on the international stage was perceived as a potential operational risk, not least in posing threat to the security of supply chains, by large retailers, at the time of writing, a number of the selected retailers were particularly concerned by the uncertainties associated with the departure of the UK from the European Union. Next (2018), for example, outlined the risks and operational challenges posed by Brexit but concluded that the company *'is well prepared for this eventuality and we have all the administrative, legal and IT framework in place to ensure that we are able to carry on running the business as we do now.'*

In some ways, Marks and Spencer (2019b) looked to capture the comprehensive nature of their approach to resilience by describing the company as *'A Resilient Business.'* Essentially the company argued *'we believe our Plan A sustainability agenda can make M&S distinctive and attractive for suppliers*

worldwide by helping them become more efficient, resilient and competitive.’ As such Plan A is seen to explicitly recognise that *‘global population is growing but our planet isn’t’, that ‘demand for certain crops, raw materials and resources will soon outstrip supply’ and that ‘fluctuations in availability linked to climate change can only make things worse* (Marks and Spencer 2019b). Marks and Spencer claimed *‘we’ve set a clear vision driving growth and increased efficiency through partnerships along our supply chain – and a clear objective to become more resilient by empowering people in our supply chains to build more resilient local communities.’* The company specifically emphasised that empowerment, rather than helping, is the key in that *‘incremental progress can’t take us much further’, rather ‘we need to spark transformative change’, which is seen to involve ‘changing mindsets and giving people the tools to address key challenges for their businesses, their communities and their lives’* (Marks and Spencer 2019b).

Reflections

In the face of a number of potential disruptions and unpredictable events, including climate change, the security of supply chains, threats to information and cyber security, relationships with local communities and the health and well-being of employees, the majority of the selected retailers, albeit in differing measure, have publicly recognised the importance of resilience. However, while the growth of online retailing is widely described as a disruptive change within retailing, none of the selected retailers’ acknowledged it as a threat. In truth, this reflects the reality that all the selected retailers have actively developed their online offer, in part of their development as multi-channel retailers. At the same time, four wider sets of issues, namely measurement; scale and corporate control; distributional equity and power; and the relationship between resilience and growth; merit reflection and discussion.

Firstly, measuring resilience is a thorny issue and the measurement process faces a number of conceptual and methodological challenges. Conceptually, different definitions of resilience do not make measurement an easy task and given that resilience is generally seen as being both time and place specific, then it is difficult to establish generic measures which facilitate comparisons over time and space. Methodologically the collection of reliable and meaningful data, particularly in environments and communities, which have suffered shocks, crises and threats, may prove difficult and here companies, organisations and researchers may resort to using available and/or surrogate data rather than looking to collect original data at the local level.

Within the retail sector of the economy, Kativhu et al. (2018) proposed an approach for *‘developing performance measures of resilience for use in the small retail business sector’* but argued that *‘resilience measuring has been a highly contested aspect in this sector.’* More specifically, they suggested measuring retail resilience within this sector faces two challenges. Such measurement is described as *‘complex’* in that it requires not only *‘a clear understanding of the multifaceted connections of a business and its immediate environment’,* but also *‘a detailed understanding of the inherent attributes of the enterprise, which contribute to its resilience prowess’* (Kativhu et al. 2018). In conclusion, while Kativhu et al. (2018) stressed the *‘need for future studies to develop simple and customized approaches to resilience measuring that are applicable to small retail businesses’,* the need for studies which

look to explore the measurement of resilience in large retail companies might be seen to be more pressing.

Secondly, there are issues about scale and corporate management and control. The disruptive and unpredictable events retailers face, and will continue to face, occur at a range of spatial and temporal scales. The spatial scale refers to the extent of the area affected by a disruptive event while the temporal scale refers to the duration or time length of such an event. Some of the disruptive and unpredictable events that impact on retailers may occur at a local level, for example an electricity failure affecting a single store's lighting, refrigeration, cash registers and point-of-sale systems, while others, for example an ICT system failure across the company, may have major implications at the national level. While climate change can be observed at the global scale, because it is essentially a global process, regionally it can also have a major impact on retail supply chains and at the local level increasing temperatures may prompt retailers to install air conditioning systems in their stores. At the same time, time scale is also important in that the duration of disruptive events may vary considerably and while the type of local electricity failure cited above may be temporary, the impact of climate change on supply chains may be both long term and irreversible.

The different spatial and temporal scales of the disruptive events that impact on retailers pose varying management challenges. On the one hand, all large retailers have standard plans and procedures in place to manage temporary power failures in store, which usually include calmly and efficiently clearing and locking the store, contacting the electricity suppliers to ascertain the likely extent of the failure, and possibly in large stores switching in emergency generators to safeguard frozen and chilled food produce. In such circumstances retailers generally feel they have the situation under control and that trading activities will be quickly returned to normal. On the other hand, the impacts of continuing climate change and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events are unpredictable and not only are they much more difficult to manage but in many ways, they defy the corporate control that large retailers have come to exert on their supply chains. As such, climate change may be seen to threaten the large retailers' current business models. While the sophisticated scenario modelling exercises cited earlier may offer a way forward, they may also signal an uncertain future for the retailers, which in extreme form could herald the decline of large scale retailing and the growth of small retailers who rely on local, rather than international, supply chains.

Thirdly, there are a set of issues around distributional equity and power. Martin et al. (2018), for example, suggested that *'the apparent failure of resilience to attend to the distributive and power dimensions of environmental and development problems is a serious limitation of the concept for analysis and practice.'* Meerow and Newell (2016), argued that the *'underlying politics of resilience have been ignored'* and have stressed the importance of questioning what they describe as *'the five w's'* namely resilience for whom, of what, when, where and why. In addressing the question of resilience for whom, Vale (2013), for example, argued that *'the significance of resilience depends on whose resilience is being described.'* Further, Vale (2013) suggested that many governments and corporations may seek to claim the term, but asked *'how do they decide whose resilience to care about?'* and *'whose resilience is omitted in the process?'* In outlining the importance of the 'when' question, Meerow and Newell (2016) questioned whether the primary goal is to *'build resistance to*

short term disruptions (e.g. hurricanes) or long term stress (e.g. precipitation changes caused by climatic change?) More generally Martin et al. (2018) argued that *'as resilience becomes more prevalent in policy and practice, attention to the demands of equitable resilience becomes ever more pressing.'*

In addressing power, MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) argued that the concept of resilience *'is conservative when applied to the social sphere'* and that, as such, it is *'not only privileges established social structures, which are often shaped by unequal power relations.'* Arguably more contentiously, some critics have argued that popular conceptions of resilience privileges the capitalist mode of production. Martin and Sunley (2014), for example, argued that *'the concept of resilience is easily captured by neoliberal ideology, to prioritise the status quo, and the importance of self-reliance, flexibility and the role of self -correcting market adjustments.'* More pointedly, MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) concluded *'resilience thinking has become implicated within the hegemonic modes of thought that support global capitalism.'*

The issues of distributional equity and power certainly resonate within the retail world. One of the key themes in the selected retailers' resilience plans and planning is that of business continuity. In his Introduction to Asda's (2014) *'The Challenge of a Changing Climate'*, Paul Kelly (Vice President Corporate Affairs) stressed the company's commitment to *'deliver low cost every day'* and more generally the company's commitment is to *'saving our customers money every day.'* However, business continuity can be seen to be the most important issue in that the company (Asda 2014) also emphasised *'our mission is to be Britain's most trusted retailer'* and in outlining the impact of long term climate change on supply chains and business operations, the company reported *'we're going to implement a framework to adapt.'* More generally, while the majority of the selected retailers report on their commitment to the resilience of their suppliers, workforce and communities, the underlying focus is on privileging corporate business interests and goals above those of other stakeholders.

Finally, there are issues about resilience and economic growth and the continuing demands such growth makes on the planet's finite natural resources. On the one hand, all the selected retailers are firmly committed to continuing business growth. In outlining its commitment to *'A Resilient Business'*, Marks and Spencer (2019b), for example, emphasised its *'clear vision'*, namely *'driving growth and increased efficiency.'* On the other hand, and more radically, Amsler (2019) argued that *'there is a blind spot in analyses that uphold the sustainability of globalized capitalism'* and that mainstream thinking, learning and policy effectively help societies to *'become resilient within harmful environments that are conceived as inevitable'* rather than to *'generate possibilities for fundamentally other ways of organizing life.'* This reinforces Amsler's (2009) earlier invitation *'to explore the complex processes through which competing visions of just futures are produced, resisted and realized.'* Such thinking is clearly linked to the notion that resilience has become implicated in supporting global capitalism, outlined earlier, but such approaches are unlikely to find any favour within the corporate retail world.

Conclusion

The findings of this exploratory case study revealed that In the face of a number of potential disruptions and unpredictable events, the majority of the leading retailers in the UK publicly recognised the importance of resilience. More specifically, the case study outlines how the leading retailers are responding to a number of challenging issues including climate change, the security of supply chains, threats to information delivery and cyber security, relationships with local communities and the health and well-being of employees. While resilience plans and policies are being developed to respond to all these challenges, climate change, and its potential impact on the security of supply chains, is seen as the most important and the most unpredictable by the leading retailers in the UK. The authors recognise that this case study has its limitations, not least in that it is based on secondary information drawn from the retailer's corporate websites. However, they believe that in providing an initial exploratory review of the resilience plans and policies being developed by the leading retailers in the UK, it provides a foundation for more detailed research studies which may be rooted in primary research amongst a number of the stakeholders who are contributing to retailers' resilience planning.

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Implementing a New Service Development process

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Introduction

Services have grown to dominate output, value added and employment globally (WTO, 2017). Research into services has covered a number of fields: quality, productivity, service design; less research focuses on service innovation, often comparing services and manufacturing (Omachonu & Einspruch, 2010).

Early studies on service innovation suggested that service firms did not innovate, but the innovation measures used were designed to assess innovation in the manufacturing. Later studies ascertained that service firms do innovate but their innovation activities are “different” (Sheenan, 2006) and “hidden” (NESTA, 2008), unlike manufacturing. Omachonu and Einspruch (2010) highlight the areas in which innovation in services and manufacturing differ. These potential differences between innovation processes in services (new service development – NSD) and manufacturing (new product development - NPD) have produced a particular literature. (The terms for “product” and “service” are used here in a conventional sense, consistent with their use in much of the literature.)

Literature Review

Differentiating NSD from NPD

Voss et al.'s (1992) early work intimated that the new service development (NSD) process is “ad hoc” and “haphazard”. Voss et al. suggested that service firms particularly need formal and structured processes for the development of new services. Formal processes were needed, as service firms' innovation outputs can be rapidly copied by competitors. Sundbo's (1997) work examined how NSD processes are organized and managed. Sundbo reported that service firms lack formal processes. Similarly, several other researchers show that service firms use unstructured and informal innovation (NSD) processes (de Brentani, 1993; de Jong and Vermeulen, 2003; Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005; Gottfridsson, 2011). Bessant and Davies (2007) established that ‘borrowing’ systematic processes similar to those used in the manufacturing sector (NPD) may be relevant and useful in new service development (NSD). In contrast, another school of thought (Hipp & Grupp, 2005) argue that a new set of methodologies specifically designed and developed for the service sector should be used.

Manufacturing: New Product Development (NPD) Process Models

Research about general new product development (NPD) processes in the manufacturing sector (Papastathopoulou and Hultink, 2012; Holzweissig and Rundquist, 2017) abounds. Cooper (2001) says NPD processes are key to the

improvement of manufacturing's innovation productivity, as firms need a 'stream' of continuing product innovation. Producing a stream of innovative products is itself not a sufficient goal: some at least must achieve commercial success.

There is therefore extensive research on those factors that contribute to new goods success (See, for examples, Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1995, 1996; de Brentani, 1991, 1993; Griffin, 1997; Edvardsson et al., 2013). These "success" studies establish that market-driven processes have positive impact on innovation outcomes.

Nature of New Product Development (NPD) Processes

Whether market-driven or not, NPD processes in the manufacturing sector are often depicted as a formal roadmap, driving a new good from an idea through to market launch (Cooper, 2001). Generally, formal NPD processes consist of sequential phases, each followed by review points. Cooper's particular model is no exception – it is known as a "stage-gate" model. The "stages" are the key phases required in the execution of a major project, while the "gates" are the decision-making review meetings that occur at the end of each stage. Cooper's "stage-gate" model (2001) is widely referenced in the literature and there is substantial evidence that many manufacturing companies have (similar) "staged-gated" processes that allow them to manage their innovation activities effectively.

New Service Development (NSD) process research

Research in NSD remains fragmented and underdeveloped (Kuester et al., 2013; Biemans et al., 2016). In general, the current debate divides between those who suggest that, unlike manufacturing companies, service companies do not use a structured and formal new service development process (de Brentani, 1993; Sundbo, 1997; Griffin, 1997; de Jong and Vermeulen, 2003; Stevens and Dimitriadis, 2005; Gottfridsson, 2010) and those researchers who note that the NPD models established in the manufacturing sector may be relevant and useful in new service development (Lovelock, 1984; Bessant and Davies, 2007).

Papastathopoulou and Hultink (2012) state that "After 27 years of research, this field needs to progress further. Focusing on neglected aspects of NSD...could provide the compass for future research attempts in the important and growing field of NSD." (p. 714). Two of their 'neglected aspects' of NSD research concern the nature of the firms and the markets served.

Some query if the innovation practices uncovered from studies of large firms applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises (McDermott and Prajogo, 2012). Others emphasize the need for service research into NSD within business-to-business (B2B) services firms (Vermeulen, 2004; Droege, Hildebrand, and Forcada, 2009; Salunke et al., 2011; Toivonen and Tuominen, 2009; Kuester et al., 2013). These gaps in the literature are compounded by a lack of in-depth studies into what firms actually do to develop new services (much of the literature relies on surveys).

NSD model implementation

This paper draws on several recommendations in the literature. Firstly, it utilizes a longitudinal, in-depth case study, rather than survey work. Secondly, the setting is also deliberately chosen: the under-researched area of small firms serving business markets (Biemans, et al., 2016). Thirdly, the research uses Cooper and Edgett's (1999) "stage-gate" model, which has its roots in manufacturing.

The product innovation literature does report on the implementation experiences of the managers who tried the "stage-gate" methodology (Harmancioglu, et al. 2007). Cooper and Edgett's (1999) model has six stages: idea generation; preliminary investigation; business case development; test and validation; full operations, and market launch. The model's five gates are: idea screen; investigation screen; decision on the business case; post-development review, and a decision to launch. The model, the authors say, is built on "best practices" adopted in both services and manufacturing. Cooper and Edgett assume that these "best practices" lead to effective, successful development, and then launch, of new services and products.

We use Cooper and Edgett's model to unpick processes and then scaffold the learning about the new process implementation within the case study firm. Our focus is on learning from the implementation abductively and demonstrating how business service firms can organize and manage their innovation process. The study has addressed two challenges: firstly, that the limited NSD process models proposed in the literature are often prescriptive, yet ambiguous; secondly, the literature still does not offer adequate guidance on how NSD processes can be implemented within service firms (Tether, 2005; Storey and Hull, 2010; Biemans et al., 2016).

We identified few studies focusing on business services and NSD process implementation, and what there is frequently focuses on large firms. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in particular may have an emergent need for more systematic NSD processes: as they grow to a certain size, they need to manage both the current business and explore new opportunities concurrently. This is an obvious resource 'pinch point' for a small growing firm.

This matters, as SME service firms are the backbone of most European economies, and in particular the UK. The little available empirical evidence suggests that SME service firms are not well equipped in organizing and managing their innovation process. Research has however shown that NPD processes have a direct impact on increasing productivity in the manufacturing sector. Given SMEs' economic importance, the question of how can B2B services SMEs manage the implementation of a systematic NSD process, is significant.

This research addresses two key questions: "What are the critical factors affecting the implementation of a systematic NSD process?" and "How can a B2B service SME manage NSD process implementation"? In focusing on these questions, we assume that service firms differ in their ability and capability for innovation and growth.

The particular case setting allowed observation over a period of 18 months. The focus was on the implementation of a systematic NSD process, drawing on the experiences and perspectives of the participants in terms of how to organize and manage a fresh NSD methodology.

Methodology

This research follows the approach suggested by Berglund (2004). Berglund's methodological suggestion is to gain interesting insights by conducting research close to a firm's normal operations, through intimate interaction with innovation participants.

Methods used in this research included participant-observation, direct-observation, interviewing participants, interviews in groups, online questionnaire and document analysis. The primary method was participant-observation. This method has its roots in ethnographic research as "[ethnographers] do not merely make observations, they also participate." (Spradley, 1980, p. 51). There is little research that uses a similar approach to study NSD processes.

Abductive analysis was applied to generated data. Timmermans and Tavory (2012, p. 180) define abductive analysis as a "qualitative data analysis approach aimed at generating creative and novel theoretical insights through a dialectic of cultivated theoretical sensitivity and methodological heuristics". In particular, abductive analysis here centred on theory construction, through repeated and close interaction with both empirical data and existing literature. Blaikie and Stacy's (1984, p. 1-11) approach to the logic of abduction were used to generate concepts. A fieldwork notebook (see Spradley, 1980) was used as a key tool to record all field interactions. A comprehensive logbook was created of the empirical material produced over the course of the project (see van Maanen, 1983).

To allow wider interpretations and insights to be developed, all those involved in the innovation practices, including decision-makers, middle managers and employees at lower hierarchical levels and the firm's external networks participated. In total there were 45 identified participants who contributed. During the research, around 100 meetings were observed and the entire implementation of the innovation process, from initiation to launch of a new service was studied.

The aim was to understand and explain participants' perspectives; consider different experiences to innovation events, actions and situations, and unearth different insights by trying to understand (or interpret) what was happening within the context of the case study setting, and then to generate a theory or pattern.

Firstly, the data from different sources was integrated and analysed to unearth the critical factors affecting the implementation of the NSD processes in this case. Secondly, data was used to demonstrate how the challenges were overcome by the participants, in order to manage the implementation, and realize the benefits of a systematic approach.

The case study firm

Delta, the case in point, delivers business support services to other organizations, on behalf of UK local government. Delta has been successful in its market place for over 10 years. However, the firm had not been proficient in growing other lines of business and experienced performance difficulties due to cutbacks announced by the UK government that affected its markets. During the research, Delta launched two new enterprises, Gamma and Omega. All three firms delivered B2B services and shared the same ownership, management, staff, resources and premises.

The firm's owners planned to reposition strategically and offer business services such as training, business support and consultancy, recruitment, and outsourcing to both public and private sector customers. They would do this through Delta itself, or the new related enterprises, Gamma and Omega. Delta's owners established a partnership with a local University to support the implementation of a fully integrated NSD process in order to drive business growth through B2B services.

Analysis of the findings and discussion

The critical factors

Notably, for us it became clear that studying the NSD process required understanding of the factors that both enable and hinder implementation. Four critical factors emerged in the course of the case study. The factors are: leadership; strategy and strategic capabilities; the NSD process itself, and organizational resources and structure. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 – The critical factors influencing the implementation of systematic NSD process



Delta experienced challenges associated with each of the above critical factors. First, we discuss these challenges, and then an account is provided of the offsetting actions put in place by the participants to overcome the challenges. We foreground evidence and suggestions from the innovation management literature, and propose ways to manage the implementation of new NSD processes successfully.

The challenges associated with the four critical factors and ways to overcome them

I Leadership

A range of documents suggested that Delta had grown exponentially and was ambitious to reposition itself, diversify its customer base and differentiate its service offerings. Yet a strategic analysis document highlighted that Delta depends on key contracts with their major public sector customers. The firm is over-reliant on tendering to secure contracts; one director argued that this approach has paid off, as it has made Delta a capable competitor in its market over the years.

Following a brainstorming session as part of the initial idea generation stage of the NSD process, Delta's directors saw an opportunity to develop some of the proposed ideas before the new process has been formalized. The comments were: "we know what we are doing"; "we need to see quick gains"; "we are already innovative"; "we don't have time to get involved in a formal process". At meetings, the managing directors said more than once that their involvement "already costs us".

Delta's leadership lacked time, were worried about issues such as the ending of major contracts and cuts in public funding; they expected an early payoff from the innovation process and looked for (essentially) quick profit gains. Involvement in the new formal NSD process was perceived as a distraction from the firm's main operational targets. There was a conviction that the involvement in innovation activities was done at a high cost in terms of time and resources. Attempts to develop new services without a formal process resulted in no new services being formally launched. The leadership needed to be persuaded of the utility of the new systematic NSD process.

Meeting the challenge

The emerging challenges associated with the "leadership" factor included:

- Lack of leadership commitment
- Lack of understanding what NSD process can deliver

II Strategy and Capabilities

During the study, it emerged, that there was a perceived lack of strategic clarity, coupled with no clear understanding of the firm's strategic capabilities, which hindered the innovation activities and effort. Challenges associated with the "strategy and capabilities" factor included:

- Lack of consensus between top management on strategic direction
- Lack of strategic clarity
- No clear understanding of the firm's strategic capabilities

At the start of the implementation of the novel NSD process, it became clear that the five directors had different views on strategic direction and priorities. One reason for this was that Delta's business plan incorporated the objectives of Gamma and Omega, the two recent separate subsidiaries. These new entities were managed as "projects" by the same leadership and staff and shared the same office space. Some of the directors were prioritizing the existing projects and were interested in delivering the existing services, while others were focusing on the development of new services through the new NSD process. Our participant observation notes from meetings implied that top management had different views and consensus was seldom achieved. This added complexity; as a result, too many projects commenced using the same limited human and financial resources. This led to a failure in executing and delivering those projects targeted at delivering "new services".

Early internal survey results and interviews suggested Delta did have a degree of focus, but not everyone agreed that the firm would be able to stand the pressure from competition and changing external environment. This was largely due to government funding cuts. One of the directors stated: "we do manage change very well. We can change the focus of the organization into something very quickly. It is about using the skills you already have got and then you can transfer them into something else". In the past, Delta had been nimble and flexible in adapting to the government's agenda. This had resulted in Delta winning complex projects with low profit margins, which then required additional resources in order to maintain Delta's good reputation.

The challenges experienced by other participants were related to this lack of clear strategic direction from the directors. The directors were also unwilling to explore opportunities, and refine any proposed new services, with potential customers. The failure to integrate customer input into the early phases of development of the new services ran counter to the formal process stipulation.

The implementation of the new NSD process challenged the Delta's business model. Senior management found themselves in a situation where they had not fully considered Delta's future strategic direction. Another problem was that top management was indecisive as to what (new) service(s) to offer. They believed that they had services to sell (based on the ideas generated from the brainstorming session). The rest of the staff, however, felt that they themselves could not "see" these services. The participants were unable to define their "existing" services. The firm had achieved growth, but fresh demands from an increasingly adverse external environment thwarted participants' flexibility, clarity, focus and resilience.

Necessity of long-term adaptation

This new organizational complexity (new subsidiaries, government funding cuts, other external changes) required a radical change in terms of mindset,

behaviour, skills and capabilities if “new services” were to be delivered using the novel NSD process.

III The NSD Process

The implementation of the new NSD process brought a different understanding that challenged the status quo, old behaviours and required re-assessment of the priorities and value system of Delta, particularly of its top management.

The participants experienced difficulties in formulating business strategies. Attempts were made to develop a new service strategy and align this with the business planning process. Actions were undertaken to formulate an innovation strategy by clarifying what innovation means to the firm and identify specific areas for innovation focus. The firm's business goals, strengths, and weaknesses were explored and determined. Then barriers/obstacles that hindered the achievement of Delta's goals were explored. Surprisingly, the new process helped the top management clarify the business objectives, and the new initiative was seen as a driver of business strategy. This was reflected in particular in the development of a new service strategy and decision criteria for use at the “stage - gate” meetings.

This study demonstrated that determining a new service innovation strategy, as a (pre-cursor) stage at the very beginning of the NSD process has major implications for the new services process per se. Organizing and managing the activities of new service development without a clear strategy appears impossible, and success in launching new services seems unlikely - the development of a strategy for new service development is a novel requirement that has to be introduced as an initial stage.

During the study, it seemed that the process requirements could not be defined before some degree of understanding was achieved of what an NSD process is. At the beginning, the top management had different perspectives on what innovation system is, as these quotes from different individuals show: “Eureka moments – ‘ad hoc’ innovation”; “Structured way of doing business”; “Letting go old habits, being aware”; “Ways of converting ideas into profitable business”; “System is a vehicle to commit”; “Ways of improving culture and performance”.

Early “dummy” services projects failed to clear the new process. One reason was that these projects were led by the top leaders, who themselves felt that the process “bureaucratic” and “unnecessary”. Later, it emerged that early services did not reach subsequent stages of the process because the process itself was sidestepped and the prescribed activities were skipped all together. In particular, by reviewing these failed services, it was clear that they failed because the activities within the stages were entirely omitted. The case research revealed that the development of new services commenced in an unstructured manner. Participant observation revealed that no new services were launched in the period when the top decision makers sidestepped the implementation phase. Delta's lack of structured NSD process and decision making explain in part the reasons for the lack of successful development of new services.

Subsequently, a number of service projects were undertaken. By following these projects, we mapped out the activities and the stages of the process. The next hurdle presented was related to the decision-making. Most of the projects initially considered were put on hold; not one “go/no go” decision was made. There were no specific criteria to be used in making the decisions, nor was there clarity as to who had authority to make decisions, and therefore decisions were delayed, or projects were not well enough resourced to be moved forward appropriately. After the initial failures in developing new services, top management came to understand that they were not realizing the potential benefits of innovation. They had to change their actions and behaviours, to increase their commitment to improving execution in order to yield positive results from the innovation process. One of the directors expressed the need of an innovation process in the following terms: “We have an innovation system for the public sector...Structured way of doing but reactive. It is like a mid-range family saloon which works for our roads but we cannot go far away... [but] ... We don’t have an innovation system for the private sector ...We need a new vehicle for change that is fit for purpose”.

Once the activities and stages were recognized, major challenges were related to the front-end of the “stage-gate” process and the key decision points i.e. the “gates” themselves.

Challenges associated with the factor “The NSD Process Itself” can be summarized as:

- Decisions to enable project progress were made slowly or not at all
- Idea proposals were not selected on the basis of open and transparent selection procedures and criteria
- Ideas were screened “ad hoc” without alignment to business strategy.

There was a disconnect between the execution of innovation projects and other existing operational ventures, which ventures also required effort by more or less the same people. As a result, too many ideas/projects were approved informally and then put forward through the new process. It became clear that prioritization of the projects was required through a rigorous and explicit analysis, given the limited number of people who could get involved in the innovation activities. The innovation projects did not enjoy dedicated resources, and no formal responsibilities and/or project leadership were allocated.

Decisions typically were made informally without rigorous and explicit evidence-based analysis or constructive debate and, rarely, definitive outcomes. In our view, some important questions were not discussed, and innovation ideas were not evaluated based on open and transparent selection procedures and specific criteria (e.g. strategy alignment, cost/price/margin, service design and ways of delivery, market size etc). Additionally, ideas for new services were sought from the employees. When many ideas were generated (100+ in few hours), it became clear that these were not linked to Delta’s current business strategy. Without a clear service innovation strategy, it was difficult to evaluate these new service proposals. Moreover, considering that the top team had different views and would continuously come with different suggestions without linking them to

the agreed way of action, consensus on approach was rarely agreed; as a result, definitive outcomes were seldom generated.

Organizing a novel NSD process

Initially, Delta put off making project decisions; projects were put on hold and “go/no go” decisions were not made at all. The subsequent use of decision “gates” with clear decision criteria added structure and facilitated NSD decision making. This helped Delta accelerate the initiation, development, and launch of new services. The involvement of the top team in the development of specific decision criteria for idea evaluation and selection, and in-house training for how “gatekeepers” should behave at “gates”, were seen positively. Addressing the expected behaviours at gate meetings and assuring the discipline of decision making at each gate was finally achieved when the university partner acted as a facilitator to guide the decision making. This clearly was a challenge for the development team members, who expected the gatekeepers to be: “Realistic in their expectations, Reasonable assessment of the proposal such as risks and opportunities, Outright agreement – clear yes and/or clear no, Consistency across the panel”.

Another important was to establish who the members of the “screening committee” or “gatekeepers” were for each gate. In this way, the development teams would know before the gate review who the decision makers were and what was expected from the team. Interestingly, top management suggested a range of people to act as “gatekeepers” at decision checkpoint meetings. This allowed for different perspectives to be considered and to counter-balance the views of top management. Questions for the business cases included: “What is the service, and to whom will the service be sold? Why invest in this project? How will it be undertaken, when, and by whom? and How much will it cost?”. In this way, Delta emphasized financial analysis when making decisions.

Using a document template with pre-selected criteria to score projects at gate meetings seemed a viable approach, as it provided a means for making “go/no go” decisions at each gates when moving a project through the innovation pipeline. These actions contributed to obtaining common agreement amongst the top leadership team. The scoring model allowed for building consensus amongst the most senior team on business objectives while evaluating the fit of new service proposals with the firm's business plan. This formalized approach to decision making also provided more clarity to the development team who were expecting from the senior decision makers: “Guidance on where my priorities are – effective use of our time plus priorities...We also need more guidance from the screening committee”.

The two projects that were piloted through the new innovation system were both scored at the gate meetings, and the total project scores were used to rank the projects. This project selection method demonstrated that a small service firm can make efficient and effective decisions on spending priorities and the allocation of scarce resources.

A range of problems with the organizational form and structure emerged. For instance, there was a lack of teamwork and communication between

departments; activities were executed within silos. As a consequence, different people were working on the same or similar activities. There was even at times a cross-current of suspicion between staff in these different silos.

IV Resources and Structure

Challenges associated with the “resources and structure” factor included:

- Lack of dedicated resources to carry out new service development work
- Lack of teamwork and communication between departments
- Unclear responsibilities and lack of project leadership

Initially, the lack of resources (human and financial) dedicated to the new process implementation was a major problem as often resources were promised by the top management and then withdrawn. It seemed to us that the decision makers did not know how to distribute the limited resources across the operational and innovation projects. This did not help in advancing the development and implementation of new services. Additionally, dedicated people were not allocated to the innovation projects carry out service development work, and no formal responsibilities and/or project leadership was allocated. In this regard, Cooper and Edgett (1999) suggest the use of cross-functional project teams for the development of new services. However, in case settings the lack of teamwork and communication between departments hindered the service innovation efforts.

Managing organizational resources and structure

The establishment of roles of “development team”, “gatekeepers”, “innovation champion”, and “project managers” overcame the challenges and barriers associated with the bureaucratic organizational structure. In particular, the roles and responsibilities of the “project managers” and “development team” were agreed and signed off at the “gate” meetings by the decision makers. This is particularly valuable for organizations where these roles do not exist. In particular, not having a formal function dedicated to service innovation required one to be created “virtually”. This was achieved through the use of “creative challenges” and the use of “competing teams” working on different ideas proposed by the member(s) of the newly created teams.

Other actions included extensive involvement of individual contributors at different levels within the organization and from different departments, in order to get buy-in at all levels and engage in collaborative work. Teamwork, created by deliberately involving people from different silos within Delta, Gama and Omega contributed to development work on key aspects of the new process. This included the design of tools to support development work, such as a “criteria for idea evaluation”, a “concept development” template, and a “business case” template.

The introduction of a “business case” tool offered to the service development team a structure to carry out research and present their proposal to the decision makers based on facts, information and research instead of gut feeling. The “concept development” tool addressed issues of service intangibility. Initially, the

senior management focussed on “selling” the “new services” which were effectively ideas generated through the idea generation activity. Delta was unable to define what the existing services could deliver. For instance, during the brainstorming session, some of the “new service ideas” suggested by the employees included services that what the senior management considered as “existing services”. The “concept development” tool offered an opportunity to provide details of the new service and the service delivery process, including crib sheets for the sales team. In this way, issues related to service intangibility that led to different interpretations were reduced.

In Delta, structuring the innovation activities allowed for the better deployment of the limited resources by prioritizing projects and using staff time more effectively. Implementation of the NSD process was seen as an organization-wide change initiative; in particular, collaboration from the staff at all levels was sought, in terms of generation of ideas for new services and involvement in the new service development activities. In this study, the firm's service innovation activities saw improvement by tapping into workforce creativity, innovative potential, and initiative. The success of the new NSD system in the firm was due to people's commitment, passion, and enthusiasm. This came from diverse departments, such as human resources, finance, marketing, operations, business development, IT and administration.

Conclusions and implications

This study explored the implementation of systematic NSD process in a B2B SME setting and it serves to build knowledge and understanding based on practice. The study confirmed existing theory that innovation models developed initially for goods are relevant in business services innovation. The study unearthed the challenges from participants' perspectives in (the early stages of) implementation of a new NSD process. The four critical factors identified were: leadership; strategy and strategic capabilities; the NSD process itself, and organizational resources and structure. These require attention if the challenges are to be overcome and the service firms to succeed in continuously launch new service. In this way, an important contribution to theory is offered by providing understanding and learning of the critical factors affecting the implementation of a systematic NSD process in terms of the challenges experienced and how business services firm can overcome these.

There is limited literature focusing on the NSD process and its implementation in business services settings. The study provided guidance on to how to implement an NSD process, what works in practice, and what did not work was discovered. Service practitioners with similar challenges can develop similar action plans to address their specific innovation issues and opportunities. The outcomes clarified for service managers, as to which practices are more successful than others and, importantly, why, so that they can improve their innovation processes or implement new ones. Service practitioners can understand how to organize effectively and manage well organizational innovation behaviour. Other small service firms should adopt similar systematic processes, as it helps formalize the decision-making process. This improved understanding of systematic NSD process should equip them better to improve performance and continuously deliver innovation in their own organizations.

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Responsible parenting as a way of establishing family-school partnership

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Abstract

Parenting is not only a biological role and responsibility but a need for an active care and activity in raising and educating one's offspring. Parenting is an element of active involvement of parents in the work of school aimed at building family-school partnership.

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the effect of an experimental model on building family-school partnership in general and with a view to the parents' sex and professional qualifications.

The experimental model consisted of workshops organized for parents, which were related to building family-school partnership through responsible parenting. The research sample consisted of thirty parents in one high school in the territory of the Municipality of Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The results established the efficiency of the experimental model in improving the family-school partnership. Additionally, the results also indicate that the experimental model has an effect on the improvement of partnership for both sexes and all educational groups.

Key words: family, parenting, school, partnership.

Introduction

Family is the essential social group founded by marriage of two people, and its functions are raising the offspring and fulfilment of emotional, upbringing and social needs (Čatić, 2005). It represents a social group and that is one of its basic features (Tomić, 2008). Numerous authors have emphasized the influence of parents on children and the importance of the function of upbringing in the family (Mandić, 1988; Vukasović, 1998; Čatić, 2005; Tomić, 2008). It is in the family that the process of shaping a person begins (Vukasović, 1998). In their early age, children are most sensitive to the upbringing effects (Vukasović, 1998). In that period when it is the most susceptible to external influences, a child is in the family and learns from parents (Tomić, 2008). The first conceptions about life, the establishing of relationships and appreciation of values begin in the family (Vukasović, 1998). In the family, a child acquires the first knowledge about upbringing; it develops its initial working and moral habits which represent the foundations of any success (Čatić, 2005). A child establishes its first social contacts, conceptions of life and human relationships in the family. That is what makes a family the most important factor of upbringing and education of children (Mandić, 1988). Family upbringing sets the foundations for a child's the entire personality and provides the child with the foundations on which the school and other social institutions shall build their influence in youth (Dervišbegović, 1997). Socio-economic circumstances in a family, the parents' level of education, the family cultural context, family structure, the

behaviour of parents towards their children, the parents' aspiration levels and their attitudes towards education are all variables affecting the development of the child's personality and its relationship towards education (Grandić, 2001). All of these factors directly or indirectly create conditions for a proper development of children and parents in general get the most credit for that.

The educational and upbringing function of the family raising and parenting has no substitute and, due to its significance, it has always been a subject of considerations, study, and examination by different theoreticians (Tomić, 2008).

Parenting is often viewed as the role and responsibility parents accept once they get their own children (Čudina-Obradović and Obradović, 2006). Thus, parenting is considered from the biological aspect. The need for parenting is firmly embedded in the needs of every human being Kenrick et al. (2010) places this need on the top of an individual's needs pyramid. Following parenting in the hierarchy are the needs that enable a human being to become a parent and achieve parenthood. Maintaining relationships, finding a partner, affiliations, self-protection and physiological needs are the needs in the function of parenting (Kenrick et al., 2010). Parenting is one of the primary human obligations towards a child (Vukasović, 1984). When they get children, parents have a need but also an obligation actively to take care of the child. Parents' obligations are related to the responsibility of insuring education for children, providing the means and professional assistance for them, if needed (Epstein, 2010). It is the obligation of parents to supervise their offspring through all the stages of their education and to contribute to their better results with their active involvement.

Parenting and developing responsible parenting is an important element of a parent's active involvement in the work of school (Epstein, 2010). By developing parenting as an element of parental involvement one can observe several advantages for students, teachers and parents. Students have more respect to parents. The benefit for the students is reflected in their awareness of the parents' supervision and the development of positive values, attributes and habits acquired at home. Parents better understand parenting and its challenges, as well as the development of a child or an adolescent. Through parenting, teachers understand more the family cultural background, the diversity of students, and the parents' involvement and effort (Zuković, 2013). Schools can use various mechanisms to assist the development of responsible parenting or positive parenting experience. Positive, responsible parenting is fulfilled through five levels of developing parent's competencies and potentials: encouraging parents to develop an interest in the knowledge they need and to rely on their own potentials; by developing self-efficiency parents more easily face the challenges involved in parenting; the development of skills is encouraged which are necessary for the decision-making, goal setting and result valuation; parents are encouraged to be actively involved; parents learn new skills, ways to improve skills and apply those skills in respect to themselves or their children (Bandura, 1997). Parents have the right to educate their child, but also an obligation to be involved in the education; they have the right to be informed, but also an obligation to inform the school; they have the right to influence the activities at school, but also an obligation to get involved; they have the right to a quality education, but also an obligation to help one another (Grandić, 2001). Such a way of thinking establishes a framework for an eco-system approach which advocates a common goal of the family and school so that the students may develop their full potential, and

a change in the family-school relationship from the lineal and cause-and-effect views to holistic understanding (Elias, Bryan, Patrikakou, Weissberg, 2003).

Methodology

The purpose of the paper was to examine the effect of the experimental model on building family-school partnership. We started from the assumption that the experimental model has a positive effect on parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting.

Two auxiliary hypotheses have been defined: 1) it is assumed that the experimental model has a positive effect on the parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting in general; 2) It is assumed that the experimental model affects the parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting in respect to sex; 3) It is assumed that the experimental model has a positive effect on the parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting in respect to the level of education.

Procedure

The research on responsible parenting was conducted in the school year of 2016-2017 in one high school at the territory of the Municipality of Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Prior to conducting the research, consent of the relevant Ministry and the school management was obtained. The subjects were first explained the scientific and practical relevance of the research. The parents were initially surveyed, after which they were involved in the workshops.

Workshops for parents about responsible parenting were designed with the aim of educating the parents about the following: the free time, how to properly use the free time and the conditions that will stimulate the development of children and which the parents can create at their homes; about the importance of having teachers regularly inform the parents verbally and in writing about the characteristics of the development of children; about the need for the form-teachers and other teachers regularly to seek information from the parents about the development of children, their interests, needs and potentials; about the importance for the school to organize home visits to student families in order to build a more quality relationship with the family; about the school need to provide books on parenting for the parents (school library, notice board, web site). Having educated the subjects in the workshops, we did a final survey of their opinions.

Instrument

For the purpose of this research, the questionnaire was modified entitled the Questionnaire for Building Partnership between Parents, Teachers and School Management, proposed within the CES programme of cooperation in the education sector between Finland and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period between 2003 and 2006 (the inventory on cooperation between family and school is referred to in the Application of Quality Measurement Instruments in Slovenia, Modro oko, 2006, pp. 353-355). The questionnaire was based on the Joice Epstein model of partnership between family and school. The assumptions of the Joice Epstein model of family-school partnership refer to the operationalization of several types of parental involvement and the framework is implemented through six dimensions: parenting,

parent communication, volunteering, instructions for studying at home, decision-making, and cooperation with the local community. The same questionnaire was used in the initial and final survey. The questionnaire is comprised of the questions related to socio-demographic variables, the professional qualification level and sex, and the questions related to parenting as an important element of active parental involvement. The questionnaire is constructed in the form of a five-level Likert scale, to which respondents had an opportunity to respond as follows: 1-never, 2-sometimes, 3-seldom, 4-often and 5-always.

The variable of building partnership between parents and teachers for the purpose of this research was operationalized into the following variables: communication between parents and school, volunteering, home instructions, decision-making, and cooperation with the local community. Chronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire for parents is 0.910, which indicates high internal consistency (the initial survey).

Sample

The research included 30 parents, 14 females and 16 males. Out of the thirty parents surveyed in the initial and final survey, 9 have elementary school education, 12 parents have secondary school education, and 9 parents have university qualifications.

Research results

The efficiency of the experimental model was tested by one sub-test comprising five statements about responsible parenting. The research results in Table 1 related to the initial survey of parent attitudes about responsible parenting (Statements 1 through 5) indicate that parent assessment ranges from $M=2.60$ for the statement Home visits to families of students organized by the school create a more quality relationship between family and school up to $M=3.13$ for the statement Form-teachers/teachers regularly inform parents about the child's interests, needs, potentials, and development. The standard deviation values range from 0.62 to 1.24 and the coefficient of variability $CV=24.37\%$ suggests good homogenization of the results.

The final survey of parents about responsible parenting, Table 1, indicates that there has been a more positive self-assessment and the values range from $M=3.90$ for the statement The school informs me in writing/verbally about the characteristics in my child's development; I am actively involved in the upbringing and education to $M=4.40$ for the statement Parents to whom the school provides books on parenting have a better understanding of their role as parents. The standard deviation values from 0.61 to 0.76 and the coefficient of variability $CV=11.13$ indicate a lower dispersion of the results.

Table 1. Parents' self-assessment about responsible parenting as an element of family-school partnership (initially and finally)

No.	Statement (question)	No.	Initially	Finally	M	SD	t	Sign.
1	I have been educated about the conditions that will have a stimulating effect on the development of children as well as ways to use the free time	30	I	F	2.97 4.07	1.24 0.691	-4.309	0.00
2	The school informs me about the characteristics of my child's development; I am actively involved in upbringing and education	30	I	F	2.73 3.90	0.785 0.662	-6.484	0.00
3	Form-teachers/teachers regularly inform parents about the child's interests, needs, potentials, and development	30	I	F	3.13 3.97	1.00 0.765	-3.470	0.00
4	Home visits to families of students organized by the school create a more quality relationship between family and school	30	I	F	2.60 3.97	0.770 0.615	-9.256	0.00
5	Parents to whom the school provides books on parenting have a better understanding of their role as parents.	30	I	F	2.87 4.40	0.973 0.621	-7.023	0.00

The findings indicate that there is a statistically significant difference (at the level $p < 0.01$) in parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting initially and finally for all the statements. Parents have shown more positive views regarding all of the statements about responsible parenting in the final survey. The statement I have been educated about the conditions that will have a stimulating effect on the development of children as well as the ways to use the free time particularly stands

out, in reference to which the parents had significantly more positive views in the final survey $M=4.07$ compared to the initial $M=2.97$.

The experimental model had a positive impact on parents in reference to responsible parenting, as they showed more positive views after the workshops. A confirmation of the impact of the experimental model can also be found in the summary results of the family-school partnership, Table 2.

Table 2. Parents' self-assessment of the family-school partnership (initially and finally)

Parameter		No	M	SD	Sk	Ku	t	Sig n.
Family-school partnership	I F	30	2.86	0.697	0.591	-0.775	-8.615	0.00
		30	4.06	0.452	0.860	0.611		

By analysing the parents' views before and after the conducted experiment we can observe that in the initial survey $M=2.86$ $SD=0.697$, while in the final survey $M=4.06$ $SD=0.452$ and that their views statistically significantly differ (at the level $p<0.01$) $t=-8.516$

Parents have more positive views after the conducted experiment. The skewness values for the initial survey $Sk=0.591$ indicate slight asymmetry towards lower values, while in the final asymmetry towards higher values, which confirms that the subjects assessed that there had been greater involvement and more positive views about responsible parenting. The kurtosis results indicate that the distribution in the initial survey $Ku=-0.775$ has been flattened, that is, the results have an increased dispersion.

The second purpose of our research was to establish whether the experimental model had any impact on the subjects of the two sexes. The results obtained indicate that there is a statistically significant difference for the subjects of different sexes in the initial and the final survey Table 3.

Table 3. T-test independent samples, in relation to sex (initially and finally)

	Variable	Modality	No. of subjects	Average	t - test	Significance	
				initially	finally		
Family - school partnership	Sex	male	16	3.09	4.06	-4.98	0.00
		female	14	2.60	4.06	-8.05	0.00

In the case of male subjects, significant improvement can be observed in the self-assessment between the initial $M=3.09$ and final survey $F=4.06$. This difference is statistically significant ($t=-4.983$; $p=0.00$)

In the case of female subjects too, there is significant progress in the self-assessment between the initial $M=2.60$ and final survey $M=4.06$ ($t=-8.05$; $p=0.00$)

We can conclude that the experimental model has had an equally successful impact on self-assessment of parents of both sexes.

The third goal was to investigate the impact of experimental model on parent self-assessment of family-school partnership in relation to parent professional qualifications, Table 4.

The analysis of the results indicates a statistically significant difference between the subjects in the initial and final survey in respect to the subjects' professional qualifications.

Table 4. The differences between the subjects in relation to parents' professional qualifications when it comes to self-assessment of family-school partnership (initially and finally)

	Variable	Moda.	No.	Average	t - test	Sig.	
				initially	finally		
Family - school partnership	Subjects' professional qualifications	Elementary school	9	2.33	4.13	-8.538	0.00
		High school	12	2.75	3.92	-5.515	0.00
		University degree	9	3.53	4.18	-4.143	0.00

The differences exist between the subjects who have completed elementary school, as the value $M=2.33$ in the initial and $M=4.13$ in the final survey with the value $t=-8.538$ is statistically significant at the level $p=0.00$.

Statistically significant differences between the initial and the final survey can also be observed for parents who have completed high school $t=-5.515$; $p=0.00$.

Parents who have a university degree also show a statistically significant difference between the initial and the final survey $t=-4.143$; $p=0.00$.

The results indicate that the experimental model has had a significant impact on the self-assessment of the educational groups, as their self-assessment significantly improved in the final survey.

Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact of the experimental model on building family-school partnership. The initial assumption was that the experimental model has a positive effect on the parents' self-assessment of responsible parenting in general and in respect to sex and professional qualifications of the parents.

The results indicate that the experimental model has had a positive effect on the improvement of family-school partnership. After the experiment, the parents recognized the importance of responsible parenting. The findings in this research match those of other authors. Parents who have a developed positive parenting experience perceive themselves as more competent, more prepared and responsible in creating a stimulating environment for their children's upbringing and education (Lacković, Grgin, 1994). This is confirmed by this experimental model, too, since the

parents had a more positive opinion about responsible parenting having been educated in the workshops. The results of the research confirm that parenting qualities and skills are acquired, shaped and improved as those are not inborn qualities (Sunko, 2008). Contemporary, responsible parenting is something parents individually create, which is why it is important to build the quality of parenting (Hoghughi, 2004). Parenting and the care about parenting play an important role in building family-school partnership. Parents take care of creating a favourable environment for the child to grow up and develop and achieve good academic results (Zuković, 2013). The results of the research by Flouri and Buchanan, in which 17, 000 children were monitored by an adult age in Great Britain point to the relevance of the parental care at the child's early age and the effect of that care in the period of adolescence (Obradović, Čudina-Obradović, 2003). A research program "Parenting School" organized through pedagogical workshops has indicated that the parents who invested their effort in parenting were more willing to share and assume parental responsibility together with the school (Sunko, 2008). All of the aforementioned speaks in favour of developing responsible parenting.

The results of our research indicate that the experimental model has had an impact on the subjects in respect to sex, as a statistically significant difference in the self-assessment between the initial and the final survey was observed for both mothers and fathers. The sex of parents is seen as an important determinant of behaviour and the relationship of parents towards parenting and the perception of parenting. The roles of mothers and fathers are different in different societies (Obradović and Obradović, 2003). A contribution to that is the traditional understanding in which parenting is identified with motherhood. The results of the research indicate that the parents are not different in respect to sex when it comes to their perception of parenting, which is encouraging as it suggests that there has been a shift from the traditional thinking that the care about the offspring is predominantly intended for mothers (Reić Ercegovac, 2011). On the other hand, there is research which indicates that the parenting experience still depends on the sex of parents (Lacković-Grgin, 2001). The difference in the understanding is probably a result of the different perceptions of parenting, and the traditional or contemporary orientation. A modern approach to responsible parenting implies equal relationship and participation of both parents (Sočo and Keresteš, 2010). This actually coincides with the results we have obtained, given that in the final survey both mothers and fathers showed significant improvement, which leads to the conclusion that fathers perceive parenting in an equally positive manner.

The results of our research indicate that the experimental model has had an impact on the parents in respect to professional qualifications. Parents' education correlates with parenting and motivation for a responsible parenting (Lacković-Grgin, 1994). The parents' education level is significantly related to the behaviour and relationship of parents towards upbringing and education of their children, and a positive correlation has been established between the parents' education level and the interaction of parents with their children (Sunko, 2008). Parents with a higher level of education have more awareness of this issue. Parents with lower and higher level of education differ in terms of priorities. Research has shown that there is a correlation between the parents' education level and their value orientation transferred to their children, and they are directly correlated with the education of children (Ljubetić, Reić Ercegovac 2010). Education is related to the relationship the parents have or their behaviour towards upbringing and education (Lacković-Grgin, 2011). Parents who

invest more in their education are more willing additionally to build their knowledge, skills, and abilities for a responsible parenting.

Several authors (Deslandes 2006, Epstein 2010, Hoover-Dempsey and Walker 2002, Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins and Closson 2005, Radu 2011) maintain in their research that high level of parent involvement in the work of school has a positive correlation with the students' improved academic success, more quality student performances, higher level of aspirations, positive attitude towards the school and better social skills.

The results obtained in this research have practical implications. The elements of active involvement: parenting, communication, parent volunteering, home learning instructions, participation in the decision-making and cooperation with the local community jointly make a quality concept for the implementation of family-school partnership. Considering the efficacy of the experimental treatment in the improvement of parents' relationship with the school, this model is recommended in high schools. The research conducted has several deficiencies and limitations. The limitations are a relatively small number of participants in the sample. The sample is a suitable one, which makes the generalizations of the results reached limited. Future research should examine whether there are any differences in the opinions of parents from urban and rural areas and whether the social status of parents affects the efficiency.

Conclusion

Both family and school have equal responsibility for the upbringing and education of each child. Parenting does not have only the biological aspect. It implies an active role in the upbringing and education of the offspring.

A care for a quality and responsible parenting is an important segment in building family-school partnership. By encouraging responsible parenting, a school gets a quality partner in joint efforts. Through different mechanisms the managements and teachers can help the parents of their students to develop responsible parenting. A fulfilled family-school partnership brings benefit to all the participants in the upbringing and education process.

The results obtained in this research reveal the efficiency of the experimental model. The school staff needs constantly to invest effort in building a responsible partnership among the parents of their students. On the other hand, parents need to understand the importance of active participation. Such considerations set quality foundations for the development of partnership, and the final goal is the benefit of the child.

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Analysis of service quality and customer satisfaction in hospitality. Case study: MICE Hotels in Kosovo

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Abstract

Within the tourism and its divisions for segmenting hotel clients, there is also MICE Industry. Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions nowadays are taking places in hotels, because they find everything in one place; accommodation, venue, parking lots, food and beverage, and technical equipment. The aim of this study is to analyze service quality and customer satisfaction in Hospitality, respectfully MICE hotels in Prishtina, Kosovo. This research embraces both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative data collection comprises interviews with key managers of 3 hotels in Prishtina and officials from Ministry of trade and Industry, Department of Tourism while qualitative research comprises on sampling technique. Questionnaire was prepared and delivered through emails, Facebook and in person and we had 60 replies from clients participating in MICE activities during April to June 2016. The results of the findings shows that the main aim of this study “the role of service quality has a positive impact in customer perception, customer satisfaction, gaining trust, and building relationship with customers” resulted correct. The service quality and customer satisfaction are very important and plays a significant role in B2B in hospitality and especially in MICE Hotels. The role of service quality has a positive impact in customer perception, customer satisfaction, gaining trust, and building relationship with customers. This study helps theorists to emphasize more upon the criticality and correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction in building a good case for future framework in order to overcome ideas that only hotel managers should be involved in service quality to obtain customer satisfaction leaving aside other stakeholders like theorists and especially customer needs. From the practical point of view, this study aims helping managers, employees and wider practitioners in hotel industry to understand the role and importance of mutual task responsibilities, developing an integrated cooperation between them to provide as better as they can service quality which indirectly will bring new customers and retention customers.

Key words: MICE Hotels, quality service, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

Literature review

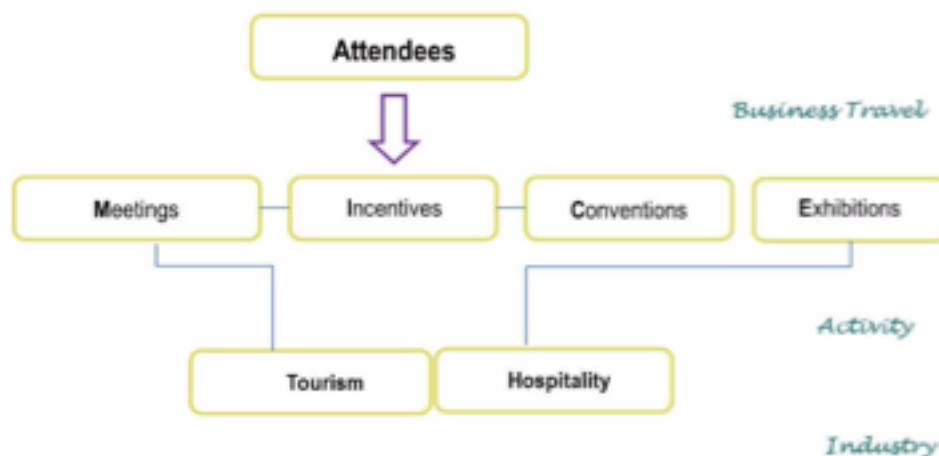
Theories that are to be used in this study work are marketing concepts of defining customer behavior and customer segmentation and also customer loyalty toward the good hotel industry hospitality. MICE – Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions, defined as the happenings that include meetings, conventions, trade shows, conferences, seminars, events, that are planned in advance and budgeted to bring people together with a certain purpose (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1996). The theory of the dimension of buyer behavior (Jobber, 2010), which make an understanding of customers, who are they, what are their choice criteria, how do they buy, where and

when. The consumer decision making process framework will be used in order to understand the customer needs, search for information of alternative offers, evaluation of alternatives, the decision for purchasing, and evaluation after purchase. The types of organizational customers mean that there are three main types of organizational customers: Commercial, Institutional and Governmental. The framework of Decision making unit members is to show us who initiates the purchase, who influences, who will use the service, who will buy it, who will make the decision. B2C and B2B segmenting theory is applicable for segmenting its customers. A logistical theory for service definition, marketing perspective in logistics, thus marketing is linked with logistic because everything needed to produce / make the service is logistic. As for the marketing philosophy the only source for profit and security are satisfied end customers. Piercy (2002), Johnstone and Clark (2005), After Parasuraman et.al [(2000), (1991)] theories will be used to support customer loyalty and building relationship.

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) Tourism

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions are considered important segment in hotel and tourism industry, for attracting and filling the hotels in all seasons. MICE according to Dwyer and Forsyth (1996), is defined as the activities that includes meetings, conventions, trade shows, seminars, conferences, events, exhibitions, and incentive travel, that are usually planned in advance and bring a large number of people together with a certain purpose.

Figure 1. Nature of MICE



For better understanding each activity will be explained below, based on the Lau, Ch. (2016). Meetings Incentives Conventions and Exhibitions (1st Ed.)

Meetings: refer to board or management meetings, from 10 to thousand people. During the meeting time, according to the agreed agenda, there will be food and beverage served as per request. Meetings purposes are to discuss a topic about the company statement, potential investment, growth or expander, seminars about a new product.

Incentives: are type of traveling where companies send their staff for team building. Incentives contain tour packages what include; tickets, hotel accommodation, lunch,

dinner, also team building activities and parties. So, the aim of the incentives is relaxing, motivating, inspiring staff and are not related to business.

Conventions: are gatherings comparable like meetings, usually organized by organizations once in a year with different topics. The distinction of conventions from meetings is that conventions surround large number of participants (specialists of a field, and interested individuals for the topics. The organization is led by an Association, Charity institution, or Political party.

Exhibitions: are aimed to expose/ launch new products and services. Exhibitions are set in a larger space, where exhibitors rent a place with a booth, to present their products or brochures, and inform the interested people about their offers. It is a marketing tool with the purpose to get new customers and lead sales.

Service delivery – Logistics

In this section the objectives to be presented are:

- customer segmentation and to highlight its importance to logistics;
- the connection between quality of service and customer loyalty

Services are crucial for any business even for those in production, but mostly for service based companies. Johnston and Clark (2005) stated that *“a service is the combination of outcomes and experiences delivered to and received by the customer”*.

Marketing perspective in logistics is important and as a philosophy that can be theoretical applicable to the whole network. To support this Doley's (1994) added that: *Marketing is the philosophy that integrates the disparate activities and functions that take place within the network. Satisfied [end] customers are seen as the only source of profit and security.*

Services are made for customers. If there are no customers, services would not exist. Service delivery and its quality can be measured. There are several methods of measuring the Service quality.

Figure 2. The Quality Service Satisfaction



Fig. 2 shows the customer point of view in regards of service delivery. The aim of every organization is to have satisfied and committed customers. Customer service means the care of the company to its own customers, by offering them excellent standardized and customized services. Standardized services signify the behavior of the company staff and their hospitality to the customers. An effective customer service is the approach

how business support and look after their customers, by meeting or exceeding their needs. It can be monitored through different methods depending on the organizations size.

Relationship building with customers

Relationship Management is a term used by Berry (1983, p.25) (as cited in Egan, 2011, Relationship Marketing, p.35), as a modern definition of marketing and defined it as: *"Attracting, maintaining, and ...enhancing customer relationships"*.

Moreover, Sheth and Parvatiyar (2000, p.121) (cited in Egan, p.17) claimed the wideness of relationship marketing scope that cover all spectrum of marketing sub-disciplines as 'b2b channel marketing, service marketing, marketing research, customer behavior, marketing communication, marketing strategy, international marketing and direct marketing'. According to Richard Boardman (2008), Customer Relationship Management framework helps companies to be effective during analysis gathering by combining CRM technology capabilities, the understanding of business work and the best experience of applying CRM technology in the beneficial way.

In the consulting sector only few are tangible assets that could be numerically valued. As consulting is service based, almost 100% of the business value is based at its Goodwill; and it consists of:

- Any ongoing business Hotels maintain with guests & clients
- The client Hotels have developed which makes them inclined to do business with the company again
- The client list & Testimonials received from clients
- The established reputation among prospects in the marketplace which makes Hotels "to-go" direction in their eyes when they have a need for venue for their organization and event.
- The engendered trust among former coworkers and colleagues who understand and value your work.
- The trust consulting firms have developed within their personal and professional network which makes them disposed to recommend their services to others. (Katcher & Snyder, 2010)

To maintain successful CRM strategy, it is significant to focus on customer acquisition and customer retention:

Customer Acquisition, - is the strategy tool to attract to new customers in case a number of customer is lost or gave up on purchasing certain good or service. The process of replacing the lost customers involves activities of identification of prospects, contacting and communication channels, and choice of the adequate supply for the targeted potential customers. Moving up from relationship to the "loyalty ladder" is an emphasis of the early stages of this strategy. ((Egan, 2008).

Customer Retention strategy aims to maintain the existing relationships with actual clients to reduce their migration intentions. It is a continuous tool to customer acquisition plans. Such relationship development involves extra efforts to increase the level of profitability of current customers. In the process of development retention strategy involves the answers of the following questions: Which are the target customers or customer segments? What retention objectives shall be established? What kind of

strategies shall be applied to achieve them? How will the plan performance be measured? ((Buttle, 2004).

Hotel Industry in Kosovo

Hotel industry in Kosovo is facing a slight positive trend in tourism businesses.

Based on the Ministry of Trade report 2014, Kosovo is divided in 5 main tourism regions: Prishtina Central Region, Albanian Alps, Sharr Region, and Mitrovica Region. Because of the main institutions location in the capital city, most of the Meetings, Congresses, Conferences, of all fields are taking place in Prishtina. Based on the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) data of the 3rd Quarter Month 2015, Prishtina region has the largest number of Hotels registered. Prishtina has 35 Hotels with the capacity of the Hotels are: 931 accommodation rooms and 1368 beds. Followed by Ferizaj, 17 Hotels, 256 accommodation rooms and 304 beds. Next, are Peja in Dukagjin region and Prizren in Sharr region, that are located in the West of Kosovo, composed with beautiful natural mountain landscape for Mountain and Rural Tourism.

The table 1. Presents the findings from surveyed Hotels in Kosovo and its capacities.

Table 1 Capacity of surveyed Hotels in Kosovo

ID	Region	Nr of Hotels	N r o f rooms	Nr of beds
1	Gjakove	10	177	299
2	Gjilan	11	162	206
3	Mitrovica	6	124	145
4	Peje	16	357	609
5	Prizren	12	331	752
6	Prishtine	35	931	1368
7	Ferizaj	17	256	304
Total		107	2338	3683

Source: Hotel Statistics Q3-2015, KAS pg.5

Lately, the number of visitors has been increased also. Based in the KAS statistical reports the number of visitors increased up to 2.42%, from 2013 to 2014. The table below, describes the number of visitors, per each region.

Table 2. Number of visitors (local and foreign) from 2008-2014

Period	Number of visitors		Nights of stay	
	Local	Foreign	Local	Foreign
2008	19.678	24.616	22.602	46.910
2009	52.631	36.318	54.876	76.042
2010	44.662	34.382	45.123	76.394
2011	42.044	30.349	44.757	65.584
2012	49.973	48.790	52.008	90.968
2013	45.380	50.074	54.867	83.883
2014	46.477	61.313	55.274	102.066

Source: Hotel Statistics Q3-2015, KAS, pg.7

Congress tourism is considered a new segment for tourism for business meetings in Balkans as well. Nowadays, business meetings, are being held in Hotels, rather than in public places (universities, cultural center).

A comparative case, is Croatia, where the MICE are contributing well in Congress sector by exchanging knowledge and experiences. Based on a research paper by Mariana Kozul, *Tourism Congress as a special type of Tourism*, a survey conducted on 2012 from Croatian Bureau of Statistics, in Croatia there are 122 Hotel entities that offer 448 conference halls for MICE.

Table 3 Business Entities where MICE where held Jan- June 2012 Croatia

	Business meetings								
	Total			One-day			Multi-day		
	Business meetings	Number of days at meeting	Participants	Business meetings	Number of days at meeting	Participants	Business meetings	Number of days at meeting	Participants
<i>Hotels and similar accommodation facilities</i>	3 182	6 926	206 305	1 674	1 674	102 334	1 508	5 252	103 971
<i>Universities, fair, cultural institutions and convention centres</i>	285	416	46 845	221	221	23 586	64	195	23 259
<i>Total</i>	3 467	7 342	253 150	1 895	1 895	125 920	1 572	5 447	127 230

As presented in the table 3. In total 3182 meeting were held on 2012, number of days at meetings 6926, that means approximately 75.5% of the business meetings were multi-days.

Croatia has beautiful seaside and beaches, that attract visitors during Seasonality, but MICE seems a good way to fill pre-season Winter-Spring and post-season Autumn-Spring.

Customer behavior and customer segmentation

There is a market niche for service businesses, consulting companies to help SMEs', public and private companies in Kosovo to fulfill EU standards in order to gain competitive advantage. By being competitive SME's will develop the private sector and boost economic growth of Kosovo. As Hotel is both B2B and B2C, in business to business company (B2B) the customer segmentation differs from business to consumers (B2C). Based on the B2B market segmentation *"usually does not work properly with many service providers! Because some "minor" detail will accidentally fall outside the big process of segmentation, like:*

- *Your history on the market?*
- *What's your product/service roadmap?*
- *Are you competitive on the market segment or you just added it to have a larger market to address?"*

When companies try to build their USP (unique selling proposition) they should know who are they selling/ serving to, who are the segments. It is not wrong serving the same client, but it is also important to know the customers to expand and develop the business. Customer segmentation is a lead to the next step of strategically planning. It should be done in order to understand why are they our customer, how can we help them, what should we offer and how can we keep them.

So, when segmenting B2B businesses the followed questions should be considered:

- What's the business like? (meaning the client business)
- Who is the decision maker? (it could be the board of managers or the owner)
- Who can influence the purchase the decision (e.g. for an event; Seminar or Conference the influencers may be the Government together with European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo (external); For a wedding or a family event the influencer may be the private person, or an offer from the hotel for seasonal wedding (autumn/spring or winter) (internal)
- What are the criteria for acquiring your type of services for business, individual or decision making groups? (the criteria are usually set in tenders, quotation request while acquiring that particular type of service)

Methodology- data and sampling

Qualitative research was based on interviews and open discussion with Key Managers of the 3 Hotels that offers MICE activities. Time spent was 2 weeks in total in each Hotel: 1 week at Emerald Hotel, 1 week at Swiss Diamond Hotel, 1 Week at Sirius Hotel, and 1 week back again from the first Hotel. To understand better the legislative

side of MICE functioning and organizing, there was also discussion with Chief of Tourism Division at the Ministry of Trade and Industry- Sector of Tourism and Hotelier. The interview with above mentioned officials was informal, speaking broadly and generally about the issue directed. The researcher has taken practical notes during the interviews and observation. Quantitative research has been conducted through a survey. The survey was distributed through e-mail and Facebook, and in person contacts to clients that were part of MICE. The number of respondents was 60. Respondents were mainly clients, project managers, or participants of events held in Hotels. Questionnaire was designed to emphasize and through it to understand the customer satisfaction in three phases: the Pre- Event Phase, During the Event Phase and Post- Event Phase.

Hypothesis

In order to understand whether the event organizers clients were satisfied with the services offered three hypotheses have been raised, and tested based on the conducted survey responses.

•Hypothesis 1. During the Pre-Event phase the main reasons that lead to customer satisfaction are proper communication and problem solving and within the budget agreement offers, proposed by sales officers.

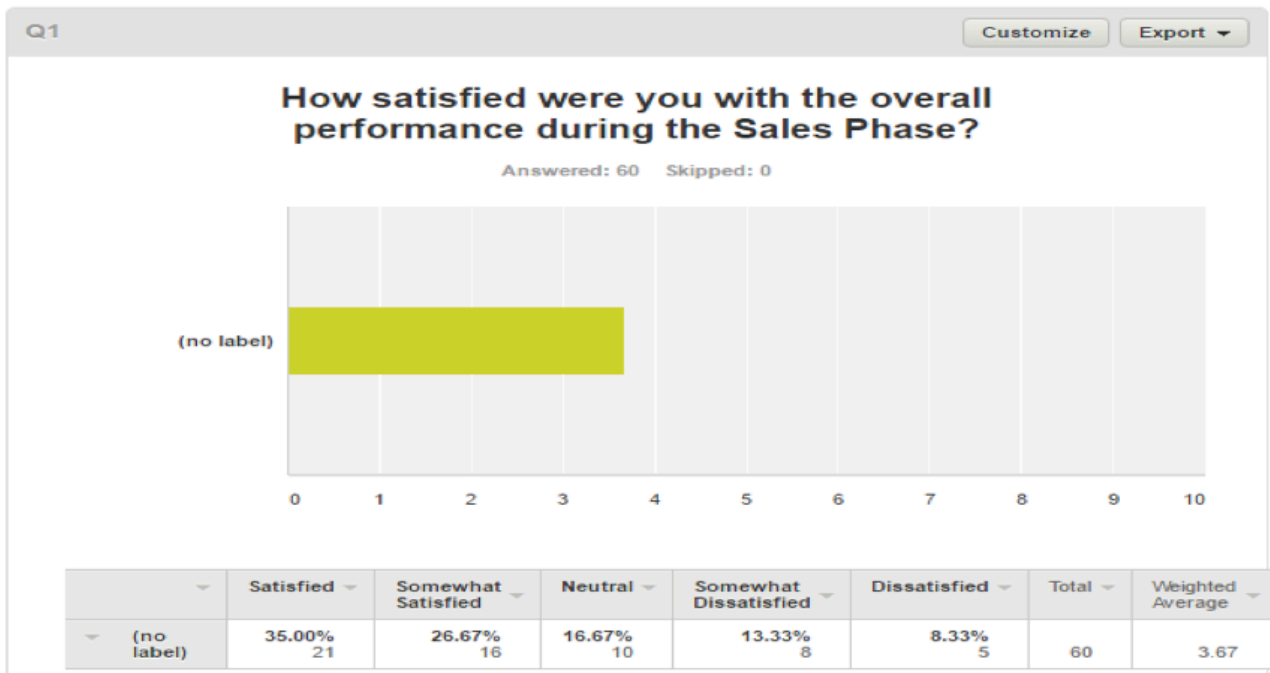
•Hypothesis 2. Comfortable meeting space and other infrastructure during the Event-Phase, are indicators that lead to MICE clients' satisfaction.

•Hypothesis 3. Clients that were contacted in the Post-Event Phase, were very satisfied and more likely to use Hotel services again.

Findings

The survey that has been conducted to gather information from the clients that have used Hotel premises for MICE, at least once. 10 Questions were compiled that concern Pre- During and Past Event experiences clients had, with the Hotel sales staff. Number of responders is 60.

Figure 3. Customer Satisfaction with the overall performance during the Sales Phase



As shown in the Fig.3, 21 respondents answered that are satisfied and 16 responded somewhat satisfied with the overall performance during the sales Phase. 10 from them answered neutral, that they were neither satisfied nor satisfied, 8 from the respondents answered that were somewhat dissatisfied and 5 from them were dissatisfied with the performance during the sales phase.

Figure 4. Preparation and Planning Prior to the Event Phase

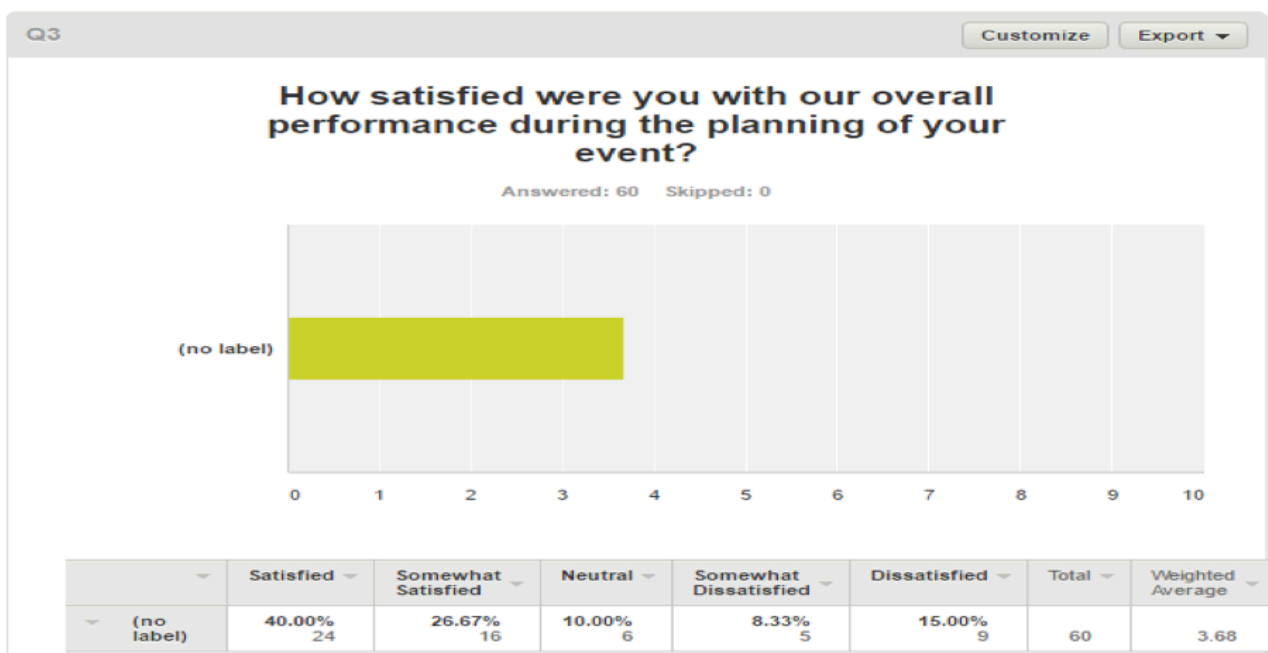
	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Total Respondents
contacted you at the appropriate time for your event planning	33.33% 20	31.67% 19	11.67% 7	15.00% 9	10.00% 6	60
understood your problems and offered creative solutions	28.33% 17	35.00% 21	18.33% 11	10.00% 6	8.33% 5	60
were flexible enough no matter how often plans changed	30.00% 18	26.67% 16	18.33% 11	15.00% 9	13.33% 8	60
offered choices which could be accommodated within your budget.	35.00% 21	30.00% 18	10.00% 6	16.67% 10	10.00% 6	60
I had a great pre-event/tasting meeting experience.	31.67% 19	30.00% 18	20.00% 12	13.33% 8	8.33% 5	60

The second question shown in Figure 4, contains 5 statements, where it was required to tick agreement or disagreement regarding the Planning and Preparation prior to the Event.

The statement whether the clients were contacted by sales staff at the appropriate time for the event planning: 33.33 % of the respondents answered positively (agreed), 31.67% were somewhat agreed, 11.67% were neutral, 15% somewhat agreed and 10% disagreed. The statement regarding the problem understanding and offering creative solution resulted: 28.33% of the responded agreed, 35% somewhat agreed, 18.33% neutral, 10% somewhat disagreed, and 8.33% disagreed.

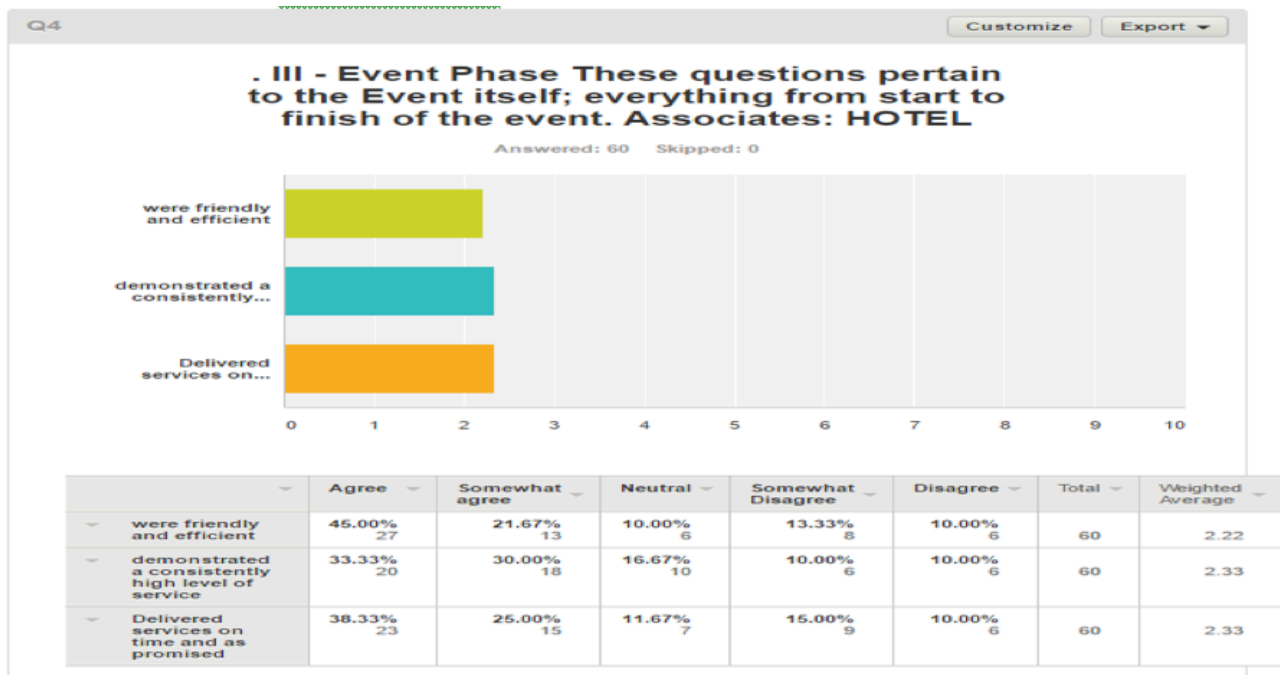
Hotel staff Flexibility and changing plan resulted 30% of respondents agree, 26.67 % somewhat agree, 18.33% neutral, 15% somewhat disagree and 13.33% disagree. Regarding the offers and choices within the budget, 35% of the respondents agreed, 30 % somewhat agreed, 10% were neutral, 16.67% somewhat disagreed, and 10% of the responders disagreed. Pre-event tasting resulted with 31.67 % of satisfied clients, 30% somewhat, 20% neutral, 13.33% somewhat dissatisfied and 8.33% dissatisfied.

Figure 5. Overall satisfaction during the planning of the event



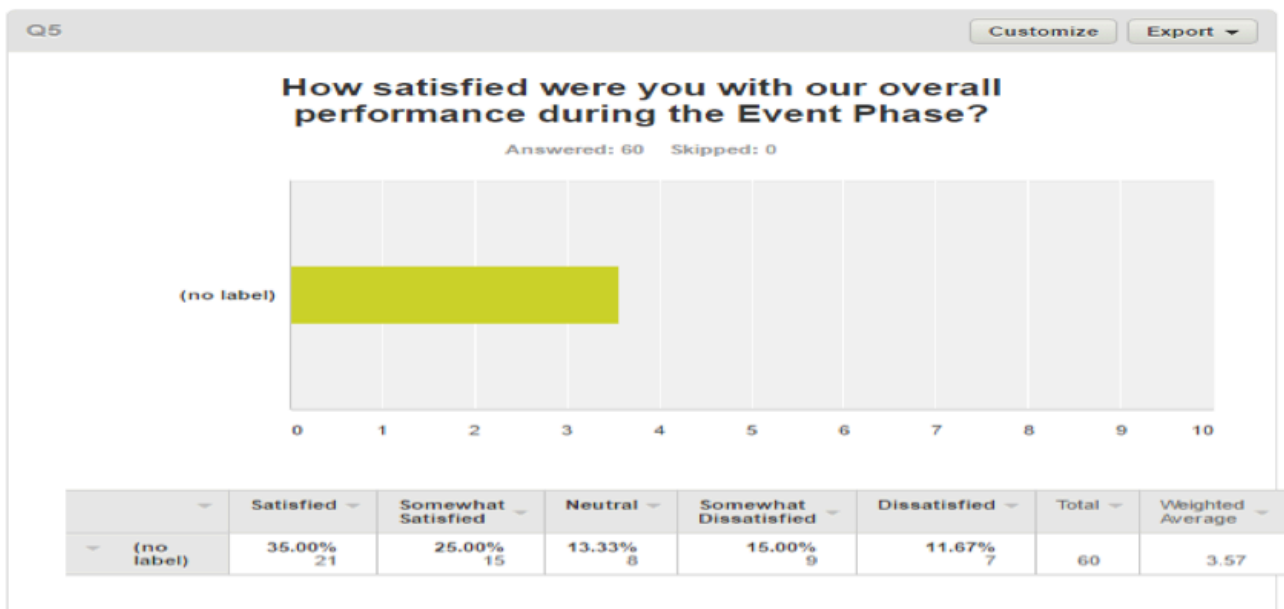
The third question summarizes the overall performance during the event planning. 40% of clients responded that they are satisfied and 26.67 % somewhat satisfied with the overall pre-event planning. 10% choose to answer neutral. 8% answered somewhat dissatisfied and 15 % dissatisfied.

Figure 6. Event Phase: friendly and efficient staff, high level of service, on time and as promised



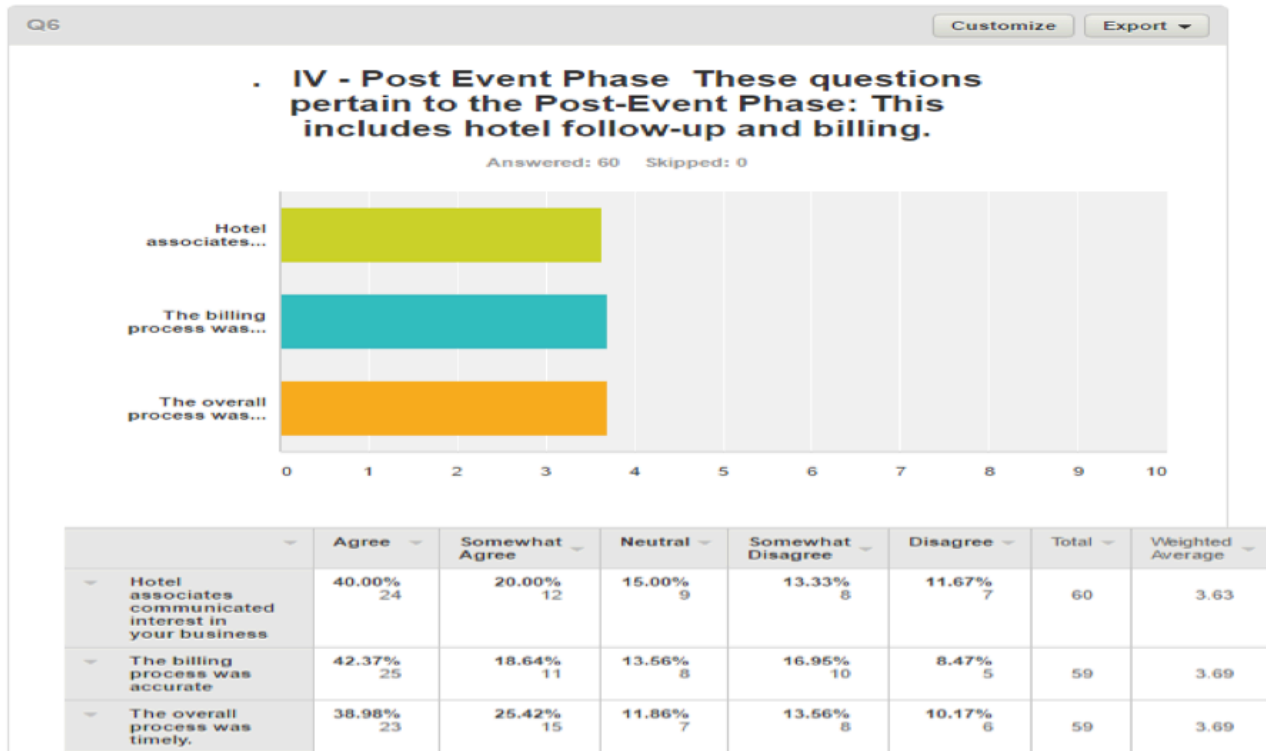
The fourth question regarding the Event Phase, contains 3 statements which the respondents had to respond each. 45 % of the respondents answered that the staff were friendly and efficient, 21.67 % somewhat, 10% neutral, 13.33% somewhat disagree and 10% disagree with the statement. Regarding the consistency and high level of service, 33.33% of the responders answered that they agree, 30 % somewhat agree, 16.67% neutral, 10% somewhat disagree, and 10% disagree. Followed by the next statement, regarding the service delivery on time and as promised 38.3 % answered that the expected services were delivered on time and as promised, 25% somewhat agreed, 11.67% were neutral, 15% somewhat disagreed and 10 % disagreed.

Figure 7. Overall Performance during Event Phase



The following question, got 35 % of respondents satisfied with the overall performance during the Event Phase. 15 % Somewhat Satisfied, 15% somewhat dissatisfied, and 7 respondents answered that were dissatisfied with the overall performance during the Event.

Figure 8. Post Event Phase: communication after the event, billing process, timely



The next questions concern the post-event feedback, billing and after-event communication.

Regarding the hotel staff communication in their best interest, up to 40 % of the respondents answered that they agreed, 20% somewhat agreed, 15% neutral, 13.33% somewhat disagreed, and 11.67% disagreed. As for the billing process accuracy, 42.37% answered that they agreed, 18.64% somewhat agreed, 13.56% neutral, 16.95% somewhat disagreed, 8.47% disagreed. 38% of the responders answered that the overall process was accurate and on time, 25.42% somewhat agreed, 11.86% were neutral, 13.56% somewhat disagreed and 10.17% disagreed.

Figure 9. Rating of Convention facilities, meeting space, hygiene, food and beverage.



Next question consists of the hygiene, meeting room arrangement, food and beverage. Up to 43.3% answered that the cleanliness was excellent, 20% good, 10% average, 20% below average and 6.67% poor. Regarding the meeting environment, up to 35 % responded that the meeting room was excellent with lighting, temperature, noise, 25% answered good, 16.67% average, 10% below average, and 13.33% poor. Concerning the presentation of food, 37.29 % responded excellent, 27.12% good, 13.56% average, 13.56% below average and 8.47% poor. Taste and food was excellent according to 36.7% of the respondents, 23.33% good, 18.33% average, 10% below average, and 11.67% poor.

Conclusions

The finding theories and definitions resulted that there is a connection between quality service delivered that matches customer expectations therefore they are satisfied. Services are dedicated for customers therefore they shall remain satisfied. However, it will take more time, resources and much more people involved. Being unique in service offering and delivering is really crucial for distinction in the market. There's a need to customize the customers and understand their buying behavior; what they need, when, where and how do they buy, what are their choice criteria. The quality of service and customer satisfaction is very important and plays a significant role in B2B in hospitality and especially in MICE Hotels. The role of quality service has a positive impact in customer perception, customer satisfaction, gaining trust, and building relationship with customers.

Main conclusions derived from findings and analyses are:

- HOTEL segmented customers are mainly Government; their buying behavior is based on the annual or seasonal niche pushed by international standards for change.
- Determining what customers want helps offering them the right service they are expecting for. The relationship building with customers is also significant. Customer loyalty can be gained through the quality service offered.
- In the pre event phase, more relevant reasons are proper communication, understanding the nature of the event and offering relevant solutions and services.
- During the pre-event phase, regarding to the satisfaction with hotel staff, 65% of clients that were satisfied with the proper communication on time, at 63.33% satisfied with the offered solutions from sales associates from the Hotel. However, 28.33 % dissatisfied clients concerning flexibility in changing plans prior to the event.
- During the event up to 63.33% of responders were satisfied with the level of cleanliness of the meeting space as excellent and good and comfortable meeting space concerning environment lighting temperature and noise. Though, 25% of the clients stated that the service was not delivered on time and as promised.
- During the post-event communication, 70 % of responders claimed that if there is an upcoming event to take place in this area they would be likely to come back again. Still 25 % responded that they're unlikely to come back.

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