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## HOW DO JOB-RELATED CONSTRUCTS DETERMINE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER? SERBIAN HOTELS EXAMPLE

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**Abstract:** In the hospitality industry, employee turnover is extremely high. It is often caused by minimal growth opportunities, intensive work, lack of flexibility, limited opportunities for promotion, lack of recognition, etc. Investment in human resources, strategies that maintain an adequate workforce and improve employee engagement is quite justified cost with multiple returns. The specific issue is that hospitality leaders often do not know the relationships between employee satisfaction, employee motivation and employee engagement, which may be the basis for understanding their intention to leave the job. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the three job-related constructs: motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement, as well as to examine their impact on employee turnover. The results confirmed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, satisfaction and work engagement, as well as the relationship between motivation and engagement. On the other side, the results showed that job satisfaction, dedication, and vigor negatively predict employee turnover. The findings may provide hotel managers with a foundation to understand this issue and assume where to direct their research and how to improve job conditions.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction; motivation; work engagement; employee turnover; hotel employees

### Introduction

There are several studies that explore the causes and consequences of employee turnover (Kuria, Alice, & Wanderi, 2012; Mobley, 1977; Ortín-Ángel & Cannella, 2004; Seta, Paulus, & Baron, 2000). Mobley (1977) stated that employee satisfaction has a significant and direct impact on reducing employee turnover. Dealing with factors and determinants that influence job satisfaction and the role of organizations in order to encourage employee engagement, Seta et al. (2000) suggested that adequate training, compensation, and work prosperity can enhance employee satisfaction. Motivation is also one of the determinants linked with satisfaction. Therefore, hotel manager is

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expected to be aware of what motivates their employees, what the factors that influence their satisfaction are, in order to retain employees. Motivation could be seen as an ability to change behavior. According to Luthan (1998), motivation is a process that begins with a physiological deficiency or need that causes behavior focused on goals achievement. So, motivation is a process that encourages people to take action and achieve the desired goal. One of the ways to encourage people is to use effective motivation that will lead to the employee satisfaction, as well as higher engagement. It can be said that motivation encourages people to do their job more vigorously, with higher commitment and engagement.

Work engagement as a motivational construct was considered in this study because the affective and emotional aspects of this concept are relevant for employees who are engaged in the service industry. Some researchers (Seijts & Crim, 2006; Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014) stated that the term engagement refers to employees who are dedicated, enthusiastic, and satisfied when it comes to business. Some authors dealing with this concept (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002) pointed out that the work engagement concerns the positive work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. These three constructs of engagement were used in the study. Absorption involves complete work concentration when employee time goes fast, and it is hard for them to leave the work. The vigor is characterized by a high energy level and mental alertness, as well as perseverance in work. Dedication refers to a strong involvement in business, with a sense of importance, enthusiasm, pride, inspiration, and challenges.

In the hotel industry, the relationship between employees and customers, either directly or indirectly, is an important component that determines the service quality and affects both customers' impressions about the quality and their decision to visit the hotel again. Many studies dealt with the research of individual impact and the relationship between motivation and employee turnover (Bertelli, 2007; Roe, Zinovieva, Dienes, & Ten Horn, 2000; Sajjad, Ghazanfar, & Ramzan, 2013), satisfaction and employee turnover (Brashear, Lepkowska-White, & Chelariu, 2003; Kim, Murrmann, & Lee, 2009; Mudori, 2011), as well as the relationship between work engagement and employee turnover (du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Gubman, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). However, as the concept of work engagement emerged fairly recently in the literature, there is a lack of information about the relationship between engagement, job satisfaction, and employee turnover and therefore less attention is devoted to analyzing the relationship between these variables, especially in the hotel industry. On the other side, there are studies focused on the relationship between motivation, satisfaction, and employee turnover (Martin, 2011), that have shown that the motivation and satisfaction are explaining more than 50% of the variation in the employees' intention to leave their job. For this reason, any change in employee satisfaction and engagement at work, as well as achieving high performance is a priority task that every manager has to pay attention to. In the competitive environment of Serbia, when it comes to hotel offer of individual destinations and cities, employee satisfaction and desire to commit themselves to the organization is very important along with the intention to remain there. If managers want their organization to be competitive, then the focus must be on human motives (Cimbaljević, Stankov, & Pavluković, 2019; Mijatov, Pantelić, Dragin, Perić, & Marković, 2018), including spiritual and physical development of their abilities. Blešić, Popov-Raljić, and Romelić (2007) reported that employees in the hotel industry should have adequate knowledge and skills that will provide both expected and additional quality services. With the above facts, the objective of this study was twofold: first, to analyze the correlation between the three constructs of job characteristics: job satisfaction,

motivation, and work engagement; second, to predict the impact of these three variables on employee turnover and to extend previous research about the causes and determinants that may cause the resignation of employees.

These three constructs are well known for disharmony and conflict between employees and employers, which often lead to resignation. Regarding this, previous studies confirmed that the company's obligation is to pay attention so managers do not abuse their power over employees and should always treat them with respect (Josephson, Lindberg, Voss, Afredsoon, & Vingård, 2008). Results and conclusions from this study will contribute to the understanding of the relationship between employee turnover (as one of the typical problems of human resources management) and job characteristics (that may be linked to the moral obligations of employees in the company they work for). Also, the results can be useful for the creation of greater awareness among managers in order to establish quality and sustainable relationships with employees, as organizations tend to be more efficient when their employees are satisfied (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Therefore, it is very important to understand their needs and motives to achieve job satisfaction (Masri, 2009), but also higher engagement.

## Literature review

### *Motivation and employee satisfaction*

One of the important tasks of organization management is to motivate its employees to work more efficiently in order to achieve the set goals. People are often motivated by their goals, which turned out to be positively correlated with job satisfaction (Coster, 1992). Simons and Enz (1995) pointed out that employees have different expectations of work and motivation. Therefore, those employees who are more satisfied and happier tend to be more motivated and therefore loyal to the company (Beck, 1983). There are several studies dealing with the link between employee motivation and their job satisfaction (Chuang, Yin, & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2008; Oraman, 2011; Spector, 2003; Tolbert & Moen, 1998). Saleem, Mahmood, and Mahmood (2010) indicated that job satisfaction influenced employees as a motivation to work. On the other side, the efficiency of work motivation was the result of both internal and external factors. Those factors were forcing employees to work more vigorously and in a more dedicated way which results in job satisfaction (Locke & Latham, 2004). Satisfied employees indicated a higher level of motivation and less absence from the workplace (Hwang & Chi, 2005). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), as well as social relations, the extent to which individuals are successful in their job, etc. Motivation and job satisfaction achievement are equally dependent on the employee and employer. Employers should be aware that positive working conditions lead to an increase in performance, while in return, employees will show more satisfaction and will do their job more efficiently. Between job satisfaction and internal and external job characteristics, there is a high correlation (Gerhart, 1987). According to the aforementioned, it is assumed that:

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between motivation and job satisfaction.*

### *Employee motivation and work engagement*

The role of human resources management is becoming increasingly important in terms of motivation and work engagement. The research conducted by Kosi, Sulemana, Boateng, and

Mensah (2015), has shown that managers, who engaged employees by setting performance and reward criteria through incentive programs, will more efficiently achieve employees' involvement and their motivation than others. Similarly, Maslach and Leiter (2008) identified several factors that were used to motivate employees and thereby may affect the engagement (e.g., prizes and awards). In their study, Masvaure, Ruggunan, and Maharaj (2014) analyzed the link between work engagement, job satisfaction, and internal motivation among miners in Zimbabwe. The results showed that there was a positive correlation between motivation and work engagement, with a medium-intensity connection. On the other side, the external motivational factors also have a positive correlation with work engagement. Silvera (2013, Jun 4th) pointed out that motivational factors could be a fertile ground for employee engagement. Kahn (1990) connected motivation and engagement, noting that together they lead to a higher level of performance. Also, Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) underlined that there was a relationship between work engagement and motivational factors in the work-related context. It is a fact that motivated staff works productively, work is done efficiently and with a higher level of cooperation, creativity, and commitment which further implies a positive outcome in the company. So, one thing causes another. Although a lot of previous studies examined this relationship separately, with different variables, it is assumed that there is a positive link between motivation and work engagement. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between employee motivation and work engagement.*

### *Job satisfaction and work engagement*

Job satisfaction implies a positive or pleasant emotional state that emerges from a person's own work experience. It is very unlikely that engaged employees have a positive perception about their work experience, which will further result in positive attitudes just like satisfaction is (Saks, 2006). In contrast, more satisfied employees will be more engaged, because of a sense they belong to the organization. Moreover, as a result, guest satisfaction and profitability may increase and can have a positive impact on the success and sustainability of organizational changes in the hotel industry (Nedeljković, Hadžić, & Čerović, 2012). It can be concluded that highly engaged employees have energy, will, commitment, and connection to the organization which in return may result in increasing productivity. In such a work environment, employee satisfaction may be conditioned by their proper relationship with the superiors. Uhl-Bien, Graen, and Scandura (2000) found that increased freedom could lead to better business effects which make employees happier and more satisfied. Previous studies have shown that there is a positive link between job satisfaction and work engagement (Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). Based on the aforementioned it is assumed that:

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement.*

### *Employee turnover and its relation to motivation, job satisfaction and work engagement*

For many years, employee turnover is one of the most serious problems many industries, including the hotel industry have been facing. Therefore, researchers have dedicated great attention to identifying and understanding the possible causes of employee turnover from different perspectives (McLaughlin, 1991). In several psychological models of employee turnover, factors affecting job satisfaction (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006), motivation (Sajjad et al., 2013), and work engagement

(Gubman, 2004), can be considered as determinants of employee turnover. The degree of satisfaction can be determined by various factors, such as payment system in the organization, the relationship with the employer, relationship with colleagues, work environment, motivation, job security, feedback, etc. It is believed that satisfied employees are an effective workforce that contributes to the organization effectiveness (Masri, 2009) and reduces the chances that an individual can quit the job. On the other side, Mobley (1982) pointed out that employee dissatisfaction encourages thoughts about leaving, assessment of alternatives, intention to give up, and finally intention to resign. In their study that analyzes the link between job satisfaction and employee turnover, Mudori (2011) stated that satisfaction, as a predictor, was significantly associated with turnover, and there was a negative correlation between these two variables. The same results were represented by Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic, and Baddar (2006), whose study demonstrated that there was a negative link between employee satisfaction and turnover intentions. In the hotel industry, there is also a strong correlation between job satisfaction and employee turnover (Kim et al., 2009).

Individuals who identify themselves with their organizations reveal a higher degree of job satisfaction, higher motivation to work, better performance, while their intentions for other jobs are significantly reduced (van Dick, 2001). In fact, the employees' intention to leave the job is an indicator of the job dissatisfaction in the organization affected by motivation (Mbah & Ikemefuna, 2012). Martin (2011) concluded that the motivation and satisfaction represent the factors that have the greatest influence on employees' intention to leave the organization. In their study, dealing with the influence of employee motivation to their turnover in the banking sector in Pakistan, Sajjad et al. (2013) revealed that motivation significantly affects employee turnover with the negative ratio between these two variables. The suggestion is that primarily motivation increase can reduce turnover among the employees in the organization. According to Cohen (2006), if employees perceive positive experiences in the organization, there is a tendency to be more engaged and motivated, and therefore motivation and engagement will be negatively related to turnover.

One of the ways to enlarge employee productivity and repress their intentions to leave the organization is just through the increasing level of engagement (Leiter & Bakker, 2010). This indicated that highly engaged employees are more committed to the organization, so it is less likely to look for a new job (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In addition, since the work engagement is linked with the behavior, attitudes and individual intentions (Saks, 2006), it is expected that more engaged employees will not be interested in leaving, considering the invested energy and a high level of identification with the job (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). On the other side, non-engaged employees have poor performances, they have negative feedback on the organization, and actively looking for a new job (Gubman, 2004). Some studies indicate that work engagement is in negative relation with turnover (du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Saks, 2006). Due to the fact that between constructs that affect employee turnover, motivation, satisfaction (Martin, 2011), as well as work engagement (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007), can be distinguished, the following hypothesis was defined:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Job satisfaction, work engagement and motivation significantly predict employee turnover in the negative direction.*

## Methodology

### *Study area*

In 2018, 9.3 million overnight stays were registered in Serbia, of which 5.7 million were realized by domestic tourists and 3.7 million by foreign tourists. Expressed in the number of overnight stays, the most visited tourist destinations in 2018 were spa resorts with around 2.5 million overnight stays. This is followed by urban and mountainous places, with 2.2 million in Belgrade and just over 400,000 in Novi Sad—the two largest urban centers in Serbia (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2019). According to the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2016–2025 (Vlada Republike Srbije, Ministarstvo trgovine, turizma i telekomunikacija, 2016), there are eight key tourism products in Serbia. According to the aforementioned strategy, one of the priority tourism products in the next five years will be urban tourism. Visits to city centers are heavily influenced by business trips to Belgrade and Novi Sad and were reported to be the most prevalent among younger and middle-aged generations, due to limited retention and business obligations. This caused the development of the so-called city-breaks, especially in Belgrade and Novi Sad. In addition, the development of urban tourism has been greatly contributed by the improvement of air travel and low-cost lines, as well as the emergence of new global hotel brands such as the Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Radisson Blu, Marriott, Falkensteiner, Luxury Collection-Starwood in Belgrade and Sheraton in Novi Sad. Dynamic development is especially emphasized in the offer of different accommodation facilities, primarily four-star hotels, as well as the reconstruction and adaptation of a number of hotel facilities owned by local companies (Mijatov et al., 2018).

### *The sample and measuring instruments*

The data were collected from the hotel employees in the top five tourist destinations in Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kopaonik, Zlatibor, and Vrnjačka banja). The survey was conducted during September and October 2019. A total of 450 questionnaires were sent to the hotels' e-mail addresses which were randomly contacted, and 312 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. Employees from five segments of the organizational structure in the hotel (accounting/finance, reception, food and beverage, administration, sales, and marketing) were included in the study. The responses were anonymous and confidential. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was based on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, education level, job position, etc.). The second part of the structural questionnaire included statements relating to the motivation, job satisfaction, work engagement, and employee turnover. The socio-demographic data are given in Table 1. The study included more women (57.1%) than men (42.9%). Most of the respondents are between 26–35 years old (58%), while the least were those who are over 55 (2.8%). Even 60.8% of respondents work in the reception area, and the vast majority of them have higher education, such as Bachelor's (33%) and Master's degree (26.4%). As for the work experience, most employees in the hotel have between 1 and 5 years of work experience.

For the measurement of engagement, the adapted Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This scale has three dimensions (vigor, dedication, and absorption) comprising 17 variables. In this study, the authors used a five-point scale for measuring the feelings in relation to work from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always, every day*), and it is widely applied in many studies (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Three variables of employee turnover were measured according to Boshoff and Allen's study (2000) using a five-point scale from

1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*). Employee satisfaction was measured according to Karatepe et al.'s study (2006) using a five-point scale from 1 (*dissatisfied*) to 5 (*I am fully satisfied*).

This measurement scale evaluates total job satisfaction, colleagues, superiors, the support provided by the hotel, the hotel policy, wages, advancement in this hotel, as well as the customers of the hotel. Since this scale was multiple and measured the key aspects related to job satisfaction in this study, it was decided to measure work motivation globally. The measurement is quick and efficient with satisfactory reliability (Kristensen & Westergaard-Nielsen, 2007). It is important to mention that all human motives derived from satisfaction and motivation process usually begin by identifying unsatisfied needs. Work motivation was measured based on three variables according to Deresky's study (2006). The variables were ranked on a five-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*).

### Data analysis

SPSS 20.0 statistical software was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, and independent *t*-test were used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics was used when displaying the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. To measure the direction and intensity of the observed variables Pearson correlation coefficient was used. Regression was used to predict the effects of independent variables: motivation, engagement, and satisfaction on employee turnover. *T*-test was used to analyze potential differences between independent and dependent variables based on demographic characteristics. For the evaluation of the consistency of each measuring instrument, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used.

Table 1  
*Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents*

Demographic characteristics	%
Sex	
Male	42.9
Female	57.1
Age	
18–25	17.9
26–35	58.0
36–45	16.5
46–55	4.7
Over 55 years	2.8
Education level	
High school	13.2
High professional school	25.5
Bachelor's degree	33.0
Master's degree	26.4
PhD degree	1.9
Job position	
Accounting/Finance	3.8
Reception	60.8
Food and Beverage	5.2
Administration	7.1
Marketing and Sale	23.1
Work experience	
Up to a year	17.0
1–5 years	57.1
6–10 years	17.5
Over 10 years	8.5

## Research results

### Descriptive statistics

The research results showed that satisfaction ( $M = 4.10$ ) and engagement ( $M = 4.15$ ) were observed among employees but it cannot be fully certified for motivation ( $M = 2.14$ ). The results of employee turnover were much lower ( $M = 2.56$ ), but they showed that among the employees there were those who were thinking about quitting their jobs. It assumes the inverse relationship between wage rates and the probability of changing jobs, which is quite often considered in the literature (McLaughlin, 1991). Table 2 presents the data demonstrating some differences between the

dependent and independent variables according to the demographic characteristics, i.e., gender, age, education level, job position, and work experience. The analysis was performed using t-test.

Research data showed that female respondents had a higher degree of motivation, satisfaction, and work engagement. Also, the female population expressed their intention for leaving the workplace much more. The reason for this may be found in the fact that among females there are much more highly educated respondents than among males. Therefore, the desire for a better job position or work conditions can be one of the reasons why females intend to leave the current job. It can be concluded that between gender and education level there is an interaction in terms of the impact on employee turnover ( $F = 23.237$ ,  $sig = 0.000$ ). Older respondents (over 35 years) and those with higher education indicated a much higher level of motivation, satisfaction, and work engagement. As for employees with longer work experience, they also demonstrated apparent motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. On the other side, their intentions to quit the job were visible to a certain extent. The question is: what is the reason for such attitude if respondents previously stated that they were satisfied, engaged, and motivated to some extent? Huang-Wei (2014) stated that one of the five major factors concerning employee turnover in the hotel industry is the earning rate.

Table 2  
*Comparison of variables' mean values according to demographic characteristics*

Demographic characteristics	Motivation	Satisfaction	Engagement	Turnover
Gender				
Male	1.2	3.3	3.29	1.23
Female	2.62	4.51	4.67	3.39
Age				
18–35	1.43	3.67	3.85	2.10
Over 36 years	3.53	5.00	4.78	3.62
Education level				
High school or less	1.39	2.93	3.83	1.90
Bachelor's degree or higher	2.28	4.66	4.23	2.82
Job position				
Reception	1.43	3.35	3.84	2.19
Other job positions	2.72	4.98	4.44	2.90
Work experience				
Up to 5 years	1.41	3.63	3.85	2.09
Over 5 years	3.45	5.00	4.74	3.53
Total	2.14	4.10	4.15	2.56

Therefore, one of the acceptable explanations may be the fact that the business environment, colleagues, work tasks, the pace of work, etc. are convenient for them. However, the problem may be financial, given that according to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2019) the wages are much lower than in the neighboring countries. Therefore, income and prices, as two essential elements that determine the living standard, impose the need for employees to seek better-paid jobs, given that the hotel industry is still developing in Serbia. It is important to mention the increasing privatization in this industry, as well as a big percentage of hotels with lower categories. Job position also indicated noticeable differences for all variables.



### Reliability and correlation statistics

Reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha) was conducted in order to test internal variables reliability, wherein the minimum value of acceptable Cronbach alpha is  $\geq 0.70$  (Sekaran, 2003). Reliability of all variables has a value of over 0.95 confirming that the results have a very high level of reliability.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the link between motivation, satisfaction, work engagement and demographic characteristics of the respondents. In Table 3 a significant relationship between these variables ( $p < .001$ ) were observed. There was a significant positive relationship between motivation and absorption ( $r = .688^{**}$ ), commitment ( $r = .645^{**}$ ), energy ( $r = .674^{**}$ ), and job satisfaction ( $r = .560^{**}$ ). Singh and Tiwari (2011) also confirmed that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and motivation. Therefore, motivation increases with increasing job satisfaction and vice versa.

Also, the results indicated that job satisfaction had a positive relationship with the three sub-categories of work engagement, and that was absorption ( $r = .534^{**}$ ), dedication ( $r = .555^{**}$ ), and vigor ( $r = .541^{**}$ ) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In addition, there was a high statistically significant correlation between the work engagement variables: vigor and absorption ( $r = .976^{**}$ ), vigor and dedication ( $r = .980^{**}$ ), as well as between dedication and absorption ( $r = .976^{**}$ ). Finally, Pearson's correlation also indicated that there was a positive correlation between all the demographic variables of the respondents, with the highest correlation between work experience and age, as expected ( $r = .956^{**}$ ). According to the results, the research hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ , and  $H_3$ , concerning the positive relationship between job satisfaction, motivation, and work engagement were supported.

Table 3

*Pearson's correlation coefficient: motivation, satisfaction, engagement and demographic characteristics*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender										
2. Age	.56**									
3. Education level	.83**	.83**								
4. Job position	.62**	.56**	.72**							
5. Work experience	.61**	.96**	.86**	.62**						
6. Absorption	.78**	.77**	.91**	.76**	.82**					
7. Dedication	.78**	.71**	.87**	.69**	.75**	.98**				
8. Vigor	.79**	.71**	.88**	.72**	.76**	.98**	.98**			
9. Job satisfaction	.55**	.41**	.53**	.34**	.43**	.53**	.55**	.54**		
10. Motivation	.72**	.63**	.73**	.54**	.66**	.69**	.64**	.67**	.56**	

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Since the correlation indicated that there was a relationship between two or more variables, the regression analysis was applied in order to test a relationship further. The regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the various effects of demographic characteristics, as well as to anticipate the possible impact of job satisfaction, engagement, and motivation on employee turnover (Table 4).

Table 4  
 Results of regression analysis

Demographic characteristics	Dependent variable		
	Employees turnover		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Gender	.32	8.725	.000
Age	.19	3.318	.001
Education level	.13	2.226	.027
Work experience	.16	2.255	.025
Job position	.06	1.982	.049
Independent variables	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Satisfaction	-.08	-3.502	.001
Vigor	-.35	-3.506	.001
Dedication	-.25	-2.116	.036
Absorption	.67	4.877	.000
Motivation	.17	5.969	.000

### Results of regression analysis

The results pointed out that the value of  $R_2$  was 0.941, which indicated that 94% of variability explained employee turnover. All variables from the category of demographic characteristics, with the exception of job position, had a statistically significant influence on employee turnover. More specifically, the gender had the highest beta value, and then single out age, work experience, and education level. All these variables statistically explained the variations in employee turnover. Employee satisfaction predicted employee turnover in a negative direction ( $\beta = -.08$ ). This means that if employees were less satisfied with their job, they would have a more prominent intention to leave

the hotel. Dedication ( $\beta = -.25$ ) and vigor ( $\beta = -.35$ ), as two sub-categories of work engagement, also negatively predicted employee turnover. On the other side, it turned out that the absorption as a third sub-category of engagement ( $\beta = .67$ ) and motivation ( $\beta = .17$ ) also significantly predicted employee turnover, but in a positive direction. Based on this, it can be concluded that the hypothesis 4 is partially confirmed.

### Discussion and conclusion

This research aimed to analyze the relationship among the three constructs of job characteristics (satisfaction, motivation, work engagement) and explore their influence on employee turnover in hotels in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kopaonik, Zlatibor, and Vrnjačka banja. According to the knowledge of the authors, this is the first study that combines these job characteristics and analyzes their relationship as well as mutual influence on the employee intention to leave the organization or stay in a hotel where they currently work. First of all, this study should be useful to managers and hotel owners, giving them insight into the general state of human resources. Also, it can give them an incentive to devote themselves to more detail research of the reasons affecting their employees to leave the organization.

The results confirmed the previous research of certain authors dealing with the positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation (Beck, 1983), satisfaction and work engagement (Saks, 2006), as well as the relationship between motivation of engagement (Christian et al., 2011). Based on the previously performed analysis and results, it provided enough data to support the hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ , and  $H_3$ . On the other side, a more detailed analysis has been devoted to the influence of these variables on employee turnover, and it has proved that the hypothesis  $H_4$  is partly confirmed. Specifically, job satisfaction, dedication, and vigor negatively predict employee turnover. Job satisfaction is a strong indicator of successful business and organization prosperity, which implies that satisfied employees rarely leave their companies (Clark, 2001). As confirmed in other studies (Karatepe et al., 2006; Mudori, 2011), in this study also turned out that satisfied employees do not often think about finding a new job. It is the same with

dedicated and vigorous employees (two constructs of engagement) because they engage more due to a sense of belonging to the hotel so that the productivity of the organization is noticeable. This does not necessarily mean that employees who are focused on their work (absorption) will always want to stay in that organization. Given that the absorption is not opposite to the professional efficiency (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), here we can find one of the reasons for the positive relationship of absorption and employee turnover. So, in terms of absorption, it is possible that professional factor is the most dominant factor, while the employees' intentions to leave proved to be quite different. The results of the study have shown that motivation does not stand in a negative relation with the employee turnover as confirmed in previous studies (Sajjad et al., 2013), but in this case, combined with the satisfaction and engagement. According to the abovementioned, it has been concluded that the hypothesis  $H_4$  is partly confirmed. After theoretical considerations in the previous part of the paper, it can be seen that frequent employee turnover is typical for the hotel industry, as well as intensive work, poor job security, low wages, limited opportunities for advancement, etc. The obtained results indicated that even the employees who are motivated think about finding another job. The answer can be found in the fact that in this study, motivation at work is measured globally, according to the scale proposed by Deresky (2006). Therefore, it is likely that employees generally referred to job motivation as a factor of existence more than their motivation in the current workplace. It confirms that employees are motivated to work, but the current work conditions do not motivate them enough to stay there. To find out the reasons that make employees be truly happy, managers need to find out in more detail the factors that motivate employees to work. Among others, it could be important to adopt the smart approach (Cimbaljević, Stankov, Demirović, & Pavluković, 2019) in managing employee activities that can stimulate their motivation, and above all their satisfaction.

The key outcome in business is to have satisfied customers, and satisfied employees contribute to it largely, because they are the prerequisite for long-term satisfied customers. The literature on employee turnover pointed out that the work conditions (e.g., employee promotion) represent important reasons for employee turnover (Iverson & Roy, 1994). In addition, hotel managers should devote themselves to find out what motivates their employees at work, with the aim to increase job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover. Results of this study may be valuable for the managers in the hotel industry, since, according to the employee behavior and attitudes, they can assume where to direct their research and how to improve working conditions. However, the situation in the hotel industry in terms of human resources is not overly weakened, and certainly, there is a chance to improve future perspectives.

### *Limitations and implications for future research*

There are several limitations that can be a very useful basis for future research. The survey was implemented among the hotels of all the categories in Serbia, but the distribution of the questionnaire was not balanced by categories. Therefore, for further research, it is advised to conduct a study among hotels of lower and higher categories in order to identify possible differences in terms of job characteristics and employees' intention to leave the organization. Second, managers' behavior greatly determines employee satisfaction and their commitment to the organization goals, respectively employee dissatisfaction with job or organization they belong to. Therefore, it would be important to implement a survey among hotel managers, and from their point of view to evaluate how much they are dedicated to motivating employees, building positive organizational spirit, improving working conditions, etc. Next limitation is connected with the

measurement scale for motivation. It is proposed that in the future research authors use a scale to measure internal and external motivational factors (Herzberg et al., 1959). A final limitation relates to the fact that the survey included only three constructs that affect the employee turnover (motivation, engagement and satisfaction). However, with the aim of gaining insight into the business of human resources, their behavior and attitudes, it would be important to include an element relating to the organizational culture, since research displayed that the attitudes toward work and attitudes towards the organization were relevant in predicting employee turnover.

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