Doctoral (PhD) Thesis Assessment

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Title: Service Delivery Standardisation and Customisation in the Hungarian Hotels

Institute: UNIVERSITY OF PANNONIA

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1. Topic evaluation

The goal of the research is to analyse the role and significance of standardisation and customisation in services in this case in the Hungarian hotel sector. The student has not defined an authorial hypothesis in this chapter. The hypothesis of the author generally shows the correlation between two or more economical factors and the objectives which could be based on them. Furthermore the student has not given any objectives and this affects the general structure and perspicuity of the thesis.

The student defined five hypotheses. The first one is that there is a relationship between the different hotel characteristics and the level of standardisation in the Hungarian hotel industry. Actually it is true not only in the Hungarian but in the global hotel industry. Of course there is a relationship between hotel brand, chain membership and the level of standardisation, because the brand organic development is based on the level of standardisation. Every hotel company that developed from family-hotel or property-hotel to chain uses the capitalised knowledge of market-management. Hypothesis one "b" is interesting because the Hotelstars Union is the second level of the quality assurance and it is based on quality standardisation. The assessor thinks the third sub-hypothesis was useless to arise; there is no significant direct impact between capacity and standardisation. All other hypothesis has correlation to the hotel operation.

However the student has noticed that the personal customisation of the facilities is an emphasized part of hotel management. The topic is novel and has a significant impact on guest satisfaction which is the basic mission of hotels. The use of the outcome of scientific research helps the hotels and hotel companies to understand and apply the customisation and standardisation process.

2. Literature review

The literature review is defining in length and quantity. The student compares literature properly. The given key words are service, standardisation, customisation, performance indicators, hotels and they are visible in the literature review due to importance. The student did not take into account the national professional definition of hotel service; „service is transaction and interaction between guest and staff".

The literary references are broad in both space and time and include scientific antecedents. On page 32 the author refers to the interpretation of two emphasised concepts by 28 different authors but does not go into detail about the differences between them. The student demonstrates the advantages and disadvantages of customisation but does not define the conceptual definition and interpretation. Advantages of and Disadvantage of customisation (42 page) is where the student mentions a higher price as an advantage but greater cost as a disadvantage. The student does not define a personal opinion. For example special needs of only a few people or special needs of special prior segment guests that can be hundreds of people.

The student processes the connecting literature with criticism. Proper quality and quantity of literature is used to prove the proficiency of the student in the candidate topic.

3. Primary research method and results

The student defines six objectives, five questions and five elaborate hypotheses. The first aim of the research is to prove the relationship between standardisation and customisation which should be simple, because every standardisation is developed from customisation. The second aim at the same time is that it is important to identify those hotel characteristics that have an influence on the level of standardisation, the question is what kind of characteristics were used by the author. The objectives, questions and hypotheses of the candidate are deliberate and are in high relation with hotel industry. The third and fourth chapter together give a complex view of research and the result of research. The assessor thinks it is always better to separate the research process and result of research.

The next chapter has the title "Empirical Research" in which the author deducts the research process and results. The student is eager to determine the group of standards and customised processes which have a strong, moderate and weak relationship with the hotel performance indicators. The other purpose of the research is to examine the effect of the membership of a hotel chain to the standardisation of the hotel or independent hotels can be

standardised as well. Finally the aims have a strong relationship with the thesis. Among the third research question there is one indicator "foreign guest percentage". The assessor thinks this indicator is better related to the hotel location than standardisation or customisation.

The student states both primary research method interview and questionnaire. The author displays the 81 analysed hotels by location, specialisation, category, age of product, classification (Hotelstars Union). Among the hypothesis the student mentions that the size of the hotel has an influence on standardisation, finally there is no summary from capacity of the analysed hotels. The interview had two important goals (page 91), one was the validation of the standard groups and the other was to find out if the standard groups have different values or weights on customisation. The interviews were carried out personally and via telephone which made it possible to explain the aim of the research and mostly the concept of customisation because standardisation and standard groups were clear for the interviewee. The author stated 44 items to analyse the standardisation's weight, during the interview. These elements are in five groups. The first group is the cleanliness of the hotel. The student allocated 45% of the items in this group. She announced 20 different areas of the hotel from service elevator cleanness 4,5 point to guest room cleanness 6,5 point. The assessors think there is no standard for cleanness, what we have as a cleaning process standard, how and when to clean. Other seven items related to condition of the area. There is one item staff related, and 14 related to service, which of nine rooms division service (32% of total analysed items). Finally there are two standards to decide the standard weight. The student introduces on page 108 a table number 28th "Level of standardisation". The Pearson correlation calculation is correct, but she did not mention this is the (színvonal) level standardisation of the hotel.

The research method is introduced on the fourth chapter. The student shows over the researches systematically and uses modern methods of analysis. The candidate chose and used the methods of research properly. The methods are modern and reliable.

4. Research result

The student mentions five declarations to evince the new theoretical and practical applications for the topic mentioned above. She summarised the research and said that it can be stated that the topic is worth further research in both a theoretical and practical perspective and the results can be useful for hotels in optimising their processes.

The author presents five aspects of the research which can be considered as novel. The determination of the level of standardisation and customisation in hotels were not yet applied before. The relationship between standardisation and customisation from the theoretical category developed to a practice field. The novel method will help to analyse the relationship between the different hotel characteristics and the level of standardisation. Some earlier research focused on standardisation and centralisation. The hotel companies centralise different processes to get smooth service. The student denoted different categories according to their level of standardisation and customisation which could determine higher performance level of hotel operation.

The assessor agrees and accepts that the thesis has new application and is novel of the topic. The research results were based on mathematical, statistical evaluation evidence. The candidate did not feed back to the literature review statements to compare, discussion of results.

5. Conclusion

There is no specific chapter to present the summarised scientific result, to give recommendation (three-five concrete suggestion for practical using in academic and practice). The assessor misses the reflection and evaluation of primary research and its methodology. The student put only same suggestions for further research, inspirations. The candidate on page 140 declares "This thesis shows that those hotels which produce the highest performance indicators have a medium or high level of customisation and high level of standardisation." it is true but there is no reason explanation. The thesis has not got a well prepared closing method for example closing thoughts.

6. Structure of thesis

The length of thesis is 141 pages (235.800 characters), which fits to the requirement of the Pannon University. The author did not give enough attention to the core value of thesis. The review of research's result shorter (35%), than literature review (53%) part. The student does not use footnotes for explanation or interpretation. By the assessor the gray colouring of table, higher shadow than five percentages differ from academic writing requirements. It is readable as well that the student marks 283 literary sources which include a high number of sources that were written in English none of which feature the use of first person singular verb method.

The student used the references professionally. The reference number is quite high 275 plus there are only nine internet references. The thesis style is readable and well structured.

7. Closing thoughts and declaration

The assessor declares his judgment that he took into account all the circumstances and knowledge the thesis complies the requirements of the new academic and scientific results. The assessor suggests the committee to accept.

8. Questions

1. Explain; how do you think the customization or standardisation developed first in hotel industry and describe the formed chain reaction use your development model elements.

2. Explain the aim and advantages - disadvantages of standardisation and customisation, focus on customer satisfaction, quality assurance, profitability, cost reduction and innovation.

3. The fifth thesis is "The average value of the performance indicators is higher for medium or high level of customisation and high level of standardisation." Please explain why and what indicators are higher when the hotel has high standardisation (brand hotels) and high level of customisation (boutique hotels).

4. On thesis four "The cleanliness and condition processes are not only standardised but customised as well. The guest participation services are not only customised but standardised as well." Please describe how the hotel management can customise the "Cleanliness" if it is the cleaning process or the clean impression. Can we standardise the clean impression and finally please give some more examples to get clearer picture about these two concepts regarding the different hotel services.

Budapest, 20th November 2014.

Dr. Juhász lászló