

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
THESES

Botond Sikó

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**The Interconnections Between
Human Resources and Quality
Management in the Domestic Hotel
Industry**

Botond Sikó

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The Doctoral School

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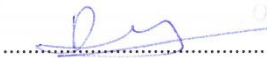
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1. BACKGROUND OF THE WORK, RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC, OBJECTIVES

Due to its dynamic and people-oriented nature, the fields of tourism and the hotel industry offer exciting opportunities from the perspectives of employees, managers, and researchers alike. This dissertation focuses on two of the most important management areas in the hotel industry: quality management and human resource management, exploring their interconnections, points of overlap, and shared opportunities. One of the most pressing contemporary issues is the labor market challenge facing both international and domestic tourism industries in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, particularly in the hotel sector. This highlights the interdependence of the two fields under study, emphasizing the need to rethink human resource management and to enforce quality aspects.

Based on these considerations, the professional and scientific objectives of the dissertation are as follows:

- To examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry.
- To analyze the altered relationship between employees and managers.
- To present the relationship between quality management and human resource management, exploring the points of connection and shared opportunities between the two fields through practical examples.

- To investigate the role of digital technologies and data-driven personalization in improving guest experience and enhancing operational efficiency in hotels, with special focus on the integration of new technologies and their impact on employee satisfaction and loyalty.
- To define strategies and practices through which hotels can optimize their digital technology solutions, thereby improving employee satisfaction and loyalty, supporting sustainable growth in the hotel industry, and achieving excellence in an increasingly competitive global environment.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To conduct a thorough scientific examination of the topic, it was essential to review both international and domestic literature extensively. During the review of 25 Hungarian and over 40 international sources, I aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the relevant theoretical knowledge in the fields of human resource management and quality management, the impacts of the pandemic, and the observable market trends in the studied areas. The most relevant and up-to-date sources were identified using databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and ProQuest. Initially, a broad search was conducted based on keywords, and then the results were narrowed down considering relevance, publication date, and source credibility. The synthesis and critical analysis of the selected sources provided the theoretical foundation for the associated original research. It is evident that as the fields of quality

management and human resources evolve, the investigation of their intersection points is increasingly emerging in the literature, significantly influenced by the changes in the global market environment, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both academic researchers and industry professionals are actively exploring new trends in quality management and the transformed tasks of human resources management. The convergence of these two fields has uncovered, and will continue to uncover, new areas of exploration that open new horizons in the management and success of hotel industry companies. The literature review also clearly highlighted that the hotel industry is in a constant state of flux due to the ever-changing global market environment, making it crucial for industry players to understand, adapt to, and apply these trends flexibly and innovatively for future success.

In addition to the literature review — acknowledging the complexity of the topic — a hybrid method was deemed necessary to ensure the depth and breadth of the findings. Following the methodologies of recent researchers in the field — such as Patel (2019), Thompson and Jenkins (2020), Portela Maquieira et al. (2020), Garcia and Lopez (2021), Kim and Park (2021), Smith and Johnson (2022), and Molina-Castillo et al. (2023) — it became clear that both qualitative and quantitative approaches offer valuable insights, but their separate application comes with limitations. The hybrid methodology combines these approaches, leveraging the strengths of both while minimizing their disadvantages.

The questionnaire survey enabled extensive data collection and statistical analysis, contributing to the reliability of the research. The questionnaire was created using the Google Forms platform and was distributed via email using addresses obtained from various sources, including professional contacts, industry conference participants, and public hotel websites. The target group consisted of employees working at different levels within the hotel industry, in various roles, ensuring diversity and broad insight.

A non-representative survey was conducted with 228 hotel employees between July and October 2021. The aim of the survey was to assess employee satisfaction, priorities, and plans in the new situation following the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the completion of data collection, the analysis was carried out in the following steps:

1. Data preparation and cleaning: This involved removing invalid or incomplete responses.
2. Descriptive statistical analysis: Basic statistical measures (mean, median, standard deviation, etc.) were used to provide an overview of the data.
3. Calculation of correlation coefficients: Using SPSS software, correlation coefficients were calculated.
4. Hypothesis testing: Statistical methods were employed to test the hypotheses.
5. Examination of results: The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two quantitative variables.

The interviews and case studies provide deep insights and contextual understanding. These methods help identify the specific challenges and opportunities within the hotel industry in the areas of human resource management and quality management, and they also contribute to a deeper comprehension and interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire.

In selecting the interviewees (Table 1), the primary criterion was to involve professionals with in-depth knowledge of the hotel industry, particularly in the areas of quality management and human resource management. Additionally, it was important that the interviewees represented various positions to offer a comprehensive view of the issues central to the research. The purpose of the interviews was to gain deeper insights into the quality management and human resource management practices implemented in hotels, as well as to understand how these practices address the new challenges posed by the post-COVID-19 environment.

name and position of interviewee	name and location of represented organization	date of the interview	method and location of the interview
Tamás Flesch, President	Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Budapest	03.04.2023	in-person interview, Hotel Moments Budapest
Csaba Baldauf, General Manager	Kolping Hotel, Alsópáhok	13.05.2024	telephone interview

József Márics, General Manager	Hotel Divinus, Debrecen	25.06.2024	email interview
János Parti, Sales Director	Marriott International, Budapest cluster	06.08.2024	telephone interview
Csaba Varga, Director of Central Operations and HR	Danubius Hotels, Budapest and Hungary	07.08.2024	in-person interview, Danubius Hotels Group Headquarters, Budapest

Table 1: Summary data of in-depth interviews

(based on own research, own compilation, 2024)

The case study focused on Hotel Moments Budapest, showcasing how quality management and human resource management are integrated into a successful, exemplary practice. The hotel was selected for its prominent role in the industry and its ability to provide rich insights into the research topic. Additionally, the author's personal involvement, serving as the hotel's Front Office Manager, allowed for an in-depth, first-hand analysis of the hotel's practices. Through this example, various procedures are illustrated, with particular emphasis on post-pandemic recovery and the adaptation of new technologies.

3. RESULTS

The results of the dissertation highlight the critical need for retaining a workforce that is dedicated to the profession through integrated quality management and HR systems. Employees who

genuinely regard the profession as a family and see themselves as integral members of the organization appreciate well-designed and effectively functioning management systems. However, as shown in Figure 1, only 31% of employees believe that their direct supervisor is both a good HR manager and a skilled professional. This finding underscores the necessity of further developing leadership competencies to enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover.

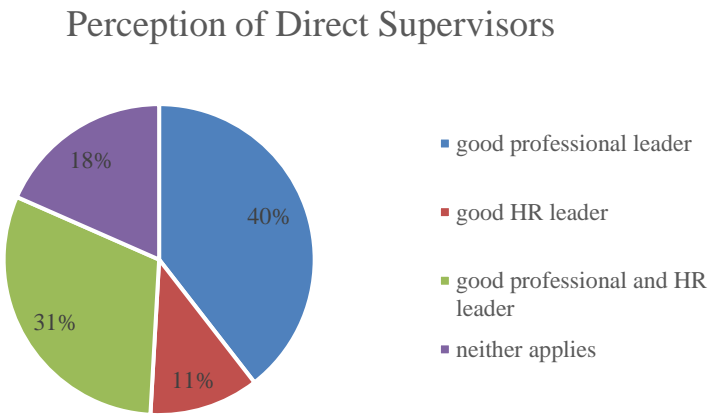


Figure 1: Perception of Direct Supervisors
(based on own research, own compilation, 2023)

Furthermore, the research results indicate that the positive attitude and deliberate efforts of management can alleviate the profession-specific challenges faced by employees. A key conclusion from the study is that it is a priority for workplace leaders to effectively apply both their professional and HR skills. However, beyond this, there are several other measures necessary to improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover. These include, primarily, continuous leadership training aimed at developing both

professional and HR skills, as well as improving communication among employees. Additionally, it is essential to regularly collect employee feedback and act upon it to enable management to address arising issues more effectively. Furthermore, enhancing employee satisfaction requires ensuring proper working conditions, including competitive benefits, flexible working hours, and programs that support the mental well-being of employees.

The introduction of digital technologies, such as automated HR systems and the expansion of remote work opportunities, can also play a crucial role in improving employee satisfaction and reducing turnover. The use of modern technologies not only enhances employee comfort and satisfaction but also contributes to increased corporate efficiency and competitiveness.

Implementing data-driven decision-making in human resource management, such as regularly measuring employee performance and satisfaction, enables leaders to respond to employee needs and expectations promptly and effectively, thus reducing turnover and increasing loyalty.

Finally, developing organizational culture, which includes open communication, fostering collaboration, and involving employees in decision-making processes, can contribute to maintaining employee satisfaction and minimizing turnover in the long term. To increase employee engagement, it is important for companies to continuously innovate and adapt to the changing demands of the labor market as well as global trends.

The findings also revealed that digital technologies, particularly data-driven personalization, significantly contribute to enhancing the guest experience and increasing the competitiveness of hotel services. The new technologies adopted by hotel management have had a positive impact on employee satisfaction, especially in the post-COVID-19 era, when employees increasingly demanded flexible and personalized solutions. The integrated management solutions at Hotel Moments Budapest (Figure 2) successfully demonstrate how the application of modern technologies can enhance service quality and improve employee satisfaction.

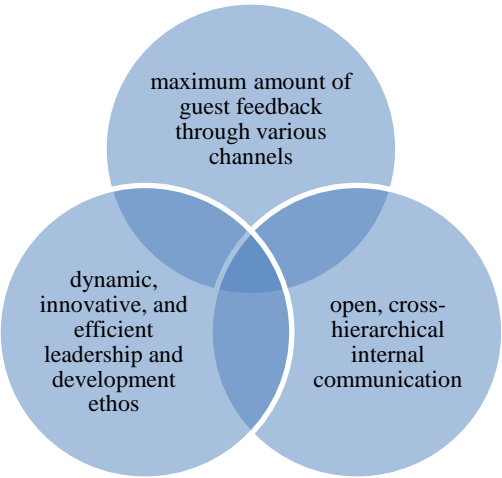


Figure 2: Integrated management solutions at Hotel Moments
Budapest
(based on own research, own compilation, 2023)

The above results clearly illustrate the findings related to the three hypotheses of the research. The Hypothesis-Results-Thesis Table (Table 2) provides a detailed summary of the key outcomes of the research and their practical implications.

hypothesis	results	thesis
H1: Integrated management systems and best practices increase the loyalty of professionals.	validated	Retaining dedicated professionals is crucial through integrated management and a familial workplace atmosphere.
H2: A favorable perception of quality management policies improves employee satisfaction.	validated	The positive relationship between quality management and employee satisfaction is fundamental to the competitiveness and sustainability of hotels.
H3: Leadership professional and HR competencies increase loyalty.	partially validated	While high-level leadership competencies are important, they are not sufficient on their own to increase loyalty; an organizational culture shift is also necessary.

Table 2: Hypothesis-Results-Thesis Table
(based on own research, own compilation, 2024)

4. NEW SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The role of dedicated workforce in the hotel industry

A dedicated workforce not only stabilizes the internal operations of a hotel but also enhances market positioning and competitiveness. The research demonstrated that increasing employee engagement requires involving employees in decision-making processes, providing regular feedback, and ensuring continuous training. Additionally, offering remote work options in the hotel industry can provide a significant competitive advantage, boosting employee satisfaction and loyalty.

Relationship between employee satisfaction and quality management policy

There is a strong relationship between employee satisfaction and quality management policy. However, the tension between workplace factors as perceived by employees and the realization of these factors requires further attention. To enhance the competitive edge of the hotel industry's HR policies, quality management must actively contribute to increasing employee satisfaction.

The role of direct supervisors in employee loyalty

The professional and HR competencies of direct supervisors alone are not sufficient to strengthen employee loyalty. The pandemic and emerging trends in the industry have altered employee attitudes. To improve employee satisfaction and loyalty, the hotel industry must introduce new perspectives and techniques.

The role of data-driven personalization in guest experience

The research revealed that data-driven personalization applied by hotels significantly contributes to enhancing guest experience and increasing the competitiveness of hotel services. The introduction of such technologies allows for more accurate identification of guests' unique needs and the provision of personalized services, which boosts guest loyalty and repeat booking rates.

Impact of digital technologies on hotel workforce management

The use of digital technologies, such as HR software and e-learning platforms, significantly increases the efficiency of human resource management and employee satisfaction. These technologies not only help reduce administrative burdens but also support managers in tracking employee development and career planning, thereby contributing to the maintenance and improvement of hotel competitiveness.

The Integrated HR-Quality-Competitiveness Model

The Integrated HR-Quality-Competitiveness Model (IHQC-Model, Figure 3) developed in the dissertation illustrates the interactions between human resource management, quality management, competitiveness, and employee satisfaction, as well as their impact on the success of the hotel industry. The model shows how these factors contribute to the long-term success of hotels, including the enhancement of guest satisfaction, which is positively influenced by all elements of the system.

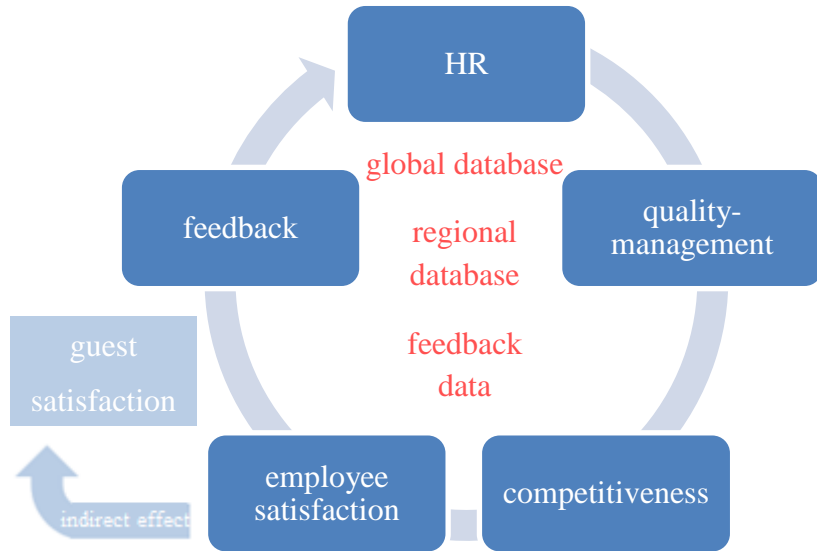


Figure 3: The IHQC-Model
(based on own research, own compilation, 2024)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A significance of integrated management in the hotel industry

Integrated management is of paramount importance in the hotel industry to ensure long-term success and sustainability. The alignment of human resource management and quality management is crucial for enhancing the competitiveness of hotels, especially in today's rapidly changing market environment. Although the literature has begun exploring the overlap between these two areas, detailed exploration of their impacts and the development of practical applications are still pending. It is essential to identify the intersection points where these two fields can mutually reinforce each other and systematically develop new systems for hotel quality management and human resource policy.

Importance of integrated management

The results from the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews conducted during the research clearly support that the application of integrated management systems significantly contributes to the success of hotels. It is recommended that hotels introduce programs that enable continuous employee development and expand career opportunities. Additionally, modernizing HR management and introducing new recognition and incentive systems are crucial, particularly due to the specific challenges of the hotel industry, where employee motivation and commitment are closely linked to guest satisfaction and service quality.

Need for comprehensive and integrated data collection methods

The findings highlight the necessity of conducting comparative analyses of guest and employee satisfaction indicators in hotels and creating centralized databases to monitor trends and tendencies. Expanding feedback systems for hotel employees should be a priority, as the strong relationship between employee satisfaction and guest satisfaction creates new opportunities in human resource and quality management.

Modern technologies and artificial intelligence in data analysis

Hotel industry leaders must adapt to new technologies and integrate them into daily practices. Modern systems, such as artificial intelligence and automated data analysis tools, allow for faster and more accurate processing of guest feedback, enhancing hotels' ability to respond to changing guest needs. These technological advancements can also contribute to cost reduction and increased workforce efficiency.

Sharing of regional and global best practices

It is recommended that hotels regularly share their experiences and best practices with each other, making regional and global best practices widely accessible. Such knowledge sharing not only enhances the competitiveness of hotels but also contributes to the continuous improvement of service quality. Special attention should be paid to determining which practices can be applied globally and which are effective only in certain regions.

Open communication and HR marketing

Promoting the hotel industry as an attractive workplace requires purposeful and open marketing communication. Emphasizing employee motivation and dedication, as well as openly communicating the beauty and challenges of the profession, can increase employee satisfaction and loyalty, which directly impacts guest satisfaction and maintaining high service quality. Based on the dissertation's findings, hotel industry leaders should strive for continuous innovation and process improvement to ensure that hotels remain attractive workplaces, thereby enhancing guest satisfaction.

These recommendations will ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the hotel industry in the long term, contributing to the development of tourism and hospitality into a well-thought-out, goal-oriented, and sustainable sector where employees work with joy and guests leave satisfied.

6. RELATED PUBLICATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

1. Remenyik, B., Sikó, B. (2019): Környezeti nevelés, környezettudatosság, zöld szállodák, In: Marton, Zsuzsanna; Németh, Kornél; Pelesz, Pelbárt; Péter, Erzsébet (szerk.) IV. Turizmus és biztonság nemzetközi tudományos konferencia absztrakt kötete, Nagykanizsa, Pannon Egyetem Nagykanizsai Campus, 77 p. p. 39.
2. Sikó, B., Remenyik, B. (2018): Expectations, Motivation, Satisfaction - The Actualities of Human Management in Hungarian Hotels, Place and date of conference: Pannon Egyetem Georgikon Campus, 2018.10.04-05, 382-389 pp, ISBN 978-963-9639-92-8
3. Sikó, B., Remenyik, B. (2018): Expectations, Motivation, Satisfaction - The Actualities of Human Management in Hungarian Hotels, Place and date of conference: Pannon Egyetem Georgikon Kar, 2018.10.04-05, 382-389 pp, absztraktkötet: ISBN 978-963-9639-91-1
4. Sikó, B. (2018): Környezetvédelem és felelősségvállalás a szállodaiparban – egy lehetséges új fókusz a hotelek üzemeltetésében, Lépések 23. volume 4. issue (74), 9-11 pp, KÖVET Egyesület a Fenntartható Gazdaságért, Budapest, ISSN 1786-9536
5. Sikó, B. (2020): Overtourism and alternative accommodations – new trends in the accommodation market of Budapest, In: Prosperitas 7: 3 pp. 67-77., 11 p., ISSN 2064-759X (Print), ISSN 2786-4359 (Online)