Marlena Bednarska

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Marlena Bednarska*

Poznań University of Economics and Business

MODERATORS OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS – JOB SATISFACTION RELATIONSHIP IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Abstract

Human capital is generally recognised as the foundation of competitive advantage in the modern economy. Hence methods of work environment development have attracted more attention to recruit and retain high-quality job candidates. The purpose of the paper is to identify factors that moderate the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction in the tourism industry. Individual, organizational, and national components have been put under investigation. The paper analyses results of the 5th European Working Condition Survey run by Eurofound. The investigation reveals that the overall satisfaction with work in tourism is associated primarily with social value, followed by economic value, job content, and development value. Job characteristics – job satisfaction relationship is moderated by employment status of respondents, company size, type of activity, and T&T contribution to employment.

Keywords: job satisfaction, job characteristics, tourism industry, European Union

Introduction

It is generally recognised that human capital is the foundation of competitive advantage in the modern economy. The ultimate source of value creation are operant resources – the employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities uti-

^{*} E-mail address: m.bednarska@ue.poznan.pl

lised to create a differentiated and valued offering in the marketplace.¹ With the growing recognition of the critical role of the customer-employee interaction in the service delivery both practitioners and researchers have paid close attention to the methods of attracting and retaining employees who are committed to the set of values and organisational goals of the company.² Developing strategies to foster job satisfaction helps recruit workers who will maintain a positive, long-term employer-employee relationship and who will contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services, thus to the market success of the service organisation.

Due to the engagement in transmitting the brand's values and creating an emotional bond with customers, the role of the service provider in the consumer's perception of the service organisation is fundamental. This is particularly so in tourism companies where the visitor experience is based, to an enormous extent, on the interaction with employees. By adapting to the individual customer requirements and enabling the co-creation of a personalised service experience, staff has the potential to influence the perceived value³ and, subsequently, visitor satisfaction. This is why tourism companies must take measures to effectively manage their service providers to ensure that their attitudes and behaviours are commensurate with customer relationship objectives.⁴

The purpose of the paper is to identify factors that moderate the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction in the tourism industry. Individual, organisational, and national components were put under investigation. In the paper, the results of the 5th European Working Condition Survey run by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2010 is analysed. Special attention is paid to the self-reported satisfaction with work, intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics, and the links between them. The paper opens by

¹ T.W. Andreassen, E.J. Lanseng, Service Differentiation: A Self-Image Congruency Perspective on Brand Building in the Labor Market, "Journal of Service Management" 2010, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 213.

² C. King, 'One Size Doesn't Fit All': Tourism and Hospitality Employees' Response to Internal Brand Management, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 2010, Vol. 22, No. 4, p. 517.

³ R.F. Lusch, S.L. Vargo, M. O'Brien, *Competing Through Service: Insights from Service – Dominant Logic*, "Journal of Retailing" 2007, Vol. 83, No. 1, p. 11.

⁴ S.P. Brown, S.K. Lam, *A Meta-Analysis of Relationships Linking Employee Satisfaction to Customer Responses*, "Journal of Retailing" 2008, Vol. 84, No. 3, p. 244.

reviewing the literature on job satisfaction in tourism. Then the findings of the study on the differences in the nature and the strength of the relationship between tourism employee satisfaction and its drivers are presented. Finally, implications and recommendations for future research are proposed and the main conclusions summarised.

1. Job satisfaction in the tourism industry – literature review

Job satisfaction is commonly interpreted as an emotional response to a value judgement by an individual worker and it results from the perceived fulfilment of one's important job values. If job values are fulfilled, the pleasurable emotion of satisfaction is experienced; if they are neglected – the unpleasurable emotion of dissatisfaction is experienced. Thus the level of dis/satisfaction with work life is a function of the importance of the value and the degree of fulfilment of the value.⁵

The considerations on the employee satisfaction in service environment and its work-related consequences are conceptually supported by two models – service-profit chain and service climate.⁶ The service-profit chain framework proposes that employees' satisfaction positively influence their loyalty and productivity. Workforce productivity raises value delivered which in turn enhances customer perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is a prerequisite for customer loyalty, while an increase in loyalty leads to sales growth and profitability.⁷ The service climate framework postulates that organisation can promote attitudes and behaviours which give rise to desirable customer reactions by facilitating service delivery and by rewarding service excellence. To reach this goal companies should provide their employees with sufficient resources and establish practices and procedures that enhance the quality of the service received internally.⁸

⁵ E.A. Locke, G.P. Latham, *Work Motivation and Satisfaction: Light at the End of the Tunnel*, "Psychological Science" 1990, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 243.

⁶ S.P. Brown, S.K. Lam, *A Meta...*, p. 245.

⁷ J.L. Heskett, T.O. Jones, G.W. Loveman, W.E. Sasser, L.A. Schlesinger, *Putting the Service-Profit Chain to Work*, "Harvard Business Review" July–August 1999, pp. 167–169.

⁸ B. Schneider, S.S. White, M.C. Paul, *Linking Service Climate and Customer Perceptions of Service Quality: Test of a Causal Model*, "Journal of Applied Psychology" 1998, Vol. 83, No. 2, p. 151.

Empirical studies carried out in the tourism industry suggest that employee satisfaction leads directly or indirectly to desirable workplace attitudes, intentions, behaviours, and performance outcomes both at the individual and the unit levels. Investigations among employees in casinos revealed that well-being at work is a strong determinant of organisational commitment.⁹ Job satisfaction is evidenced to predict withdrawal behaviours. Zopiatis, Constanti and Theocharous have found it to display negative relationship with intention to quit of personnel in hotels. 10 Mount, Ilies and Johnson have diagnosed linkages between job satisfaction and interpersonal and organisational counterproductive work behaviours in fast food stores.¹¹ Yoon and Suh, in their research in travel agencies, have confirmed hypothesis that the more employees derive satisfaction from their job, the more actively they engage in organisational citizenship behaviours.¹² Positive attitudes lead to augmented job performance¹³ and contribute to customer satisfaction¹⁴, as satisfied staff tend to provide tourism services that exceeds visitors' expectations. Finally, empirical studies provide evidence that satisfaction in the workplace positively influences profitability of tourism enterprises.15

⁹ K.-J. Back, C.-K. Lee, J. Abbott, *Internal Relationship Marketing: Korean Casino Employees' Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment*, "Cornell Hospitality Quarterly" 2011, Vol. 52, No. 2, p. 120.

¹⁰ A. Zopiatis, P. Constanti, A.L. Theocharous, *Job Involvement, Commitment, Satisfaction and Turnover: Evidence from Hotel Employees in Cyprus*, "Tourism Management" 2014, Vol. 41, pp. 135–136.

¹¹ M. Mount, R. Ilies, E. Johnson, *Relationship of Personality Traits and Counterproductive Work Behaviors: The Mediating Effects of Job Satisfaction*, "Personnel Psychology" 2006, Vol. 59, No. 3, p. 608.

¹² M.H. Yoon, J. Suh, *Organizational Citizenship Behaviors and Service Quality as External Effectiveness of Contact Employees*, "Journal of Business Research" 2003, Vol. 56, No. 8, pp. 604–605.

¹³ S.I. Ng, M. Sambasivan, S. Zubaidah, *Antecedents and Outcomes of Flight Attendants' Job Satisfaction*, "Journal of Air Transport Management" 2011, Vol. 17, No. 5, p. 312.

¹⁴ O.M. Karatepe, T. Avci, H. Arasli, *Effects of Job Standardization and Job Satisfaction on Service Quality: A Study of Frontline Employees in Northern Cyprus*, "Services Marketing Quarterly" 2004, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 11–12.

¹⁵ R.W.Y. Yee, A.C.L. Yeung, T.C.E. Cheng, *The Service-Profit Chain: An Empirical Analysis in High-Contact Service Industries*, "International Journal of Production Economics" 2011, Vol. 130, No. 2, p. 242.

Researchers have attempted not only to explore the outcomes of job satisfaction, but also to examine the diverse job-specific and organisation-specific components that are likely to influence employees' well-being at work. Factors contributing to workers' satisfaction have been often identified as intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic job characteristics refer to the job content, i.e. tasks that are done, while extrinsic job characteristics refer to the job context, i.e. the environment in which tasks are done. The strength of the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics and job satisfaction depends on the value employees attach to those rewards in the workplace.¹⁶

A considerable stream of research on job satisfaction drivers in the tourism industry indicated the key role of extrinsic facets in shaping well-being at work. In the investigation of restaurant managers run by Lam, Baum and Pine "rewards" (salary, fringe benefits, job security, and status) emerge as the focal factor contributing to the overall satisfaction with work.¹⁷ Similar conclusions have been reached by Gu and Siu who surveyed casino employees and reported that salaries and benefits were ranked as the most important drivers of satisfaction with work life.¹⁸ Yang's investigation conducted at lodging properties identified leading position of relationships with co-workers in determining employee satisfaction.¹⁹ McPhail and Fisher in their study of employees of a multinational hotel chain found that training and promotion opportunities were the strongest predictors of job satisfaction.²⁰

Despite the strategic importance of work quality in sustaining competitive advantage of service organisations, the issue of moderators of job characteristics

¹⁶ X. Huang, E. van de Vliert, *Where Intrinsic Job Satisfaction Fails to Work: National Moderators of Intrinsic Motivation*, "Journal of Organizational Behavior" 2003, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 160.

¹⁷ T. Lam, T. Baum, R. Pine, *Study of Managerial Job Satisfaction in Hong Kong's Chinese Restaurants*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 2001, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 39–40.

¹⁸ Z. Gu, R.C.S. Siu, *Drivers of Job Satisfaction as Related to Work Performance in Macao Casino Hotels: An Investigation Based on Employee Survey*, "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management" 2009, Vol. 21, No. 5, p. 572.

¹⁹ J.-T. Yang, *Antecedents and Consequences of Job Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry*, "International Journal of Hospitality Management" 2010, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 615–616.

²⁰ R. McPhail, R. Fisher, *It's More Than Wages: Analysis of the Impact of Internal Labour Markets on the Quality of Jobs*, "International Journal of Human Resource Management" 2008, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 467–469.

– job satisfaction relationship in the tourism industry has received relatively little attention from researchers. Several studies have aimed to test differences in reported job satisfaction level.²¹ However, questions about variation in the relationships between job characteristics and job satisfaction have remained unaddressed. The value of such exploration is substantial given the critical role that tourism employees provide to visitors' overall experience and subsequent evaluation of the market offerings' quality. It is argued in the paper that three levels of moderators should be taken into consideration when exploring factors which influence job characteristics – job satisfaction linkages: individual, organisational, and national (Fig. 1).

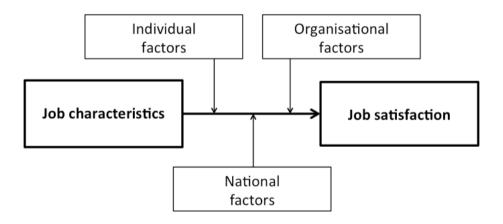


Fig. 1. Conceptual model Source: own elaboration.

2. Data and method

To complete the objective of the study desk, research has been conducted and the secondary data have been were utilised. The analysis is based largely on the fifth edition of the European Working Condition Survey (EWCS) run

²¹ M.A. Bednarska, *Tourism Jobs and Subjective Well-Being at Work: A Cross-National Analysis*, "European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation" 2014, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 16–18.

in 2010 by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The EWCS is a comparative multi-national survey, which provides information on various aspects of the quality of work life. The main topics covered in the questionnaire are: satisfaction with working conditions, job content, working time, work organisation, physical and psychosocial factors, economic benefits, career prospects, health and well–being, and work–life balance. Nearly 44000 respondents from 34 countries have participated in the research. For the purpose of this study, the analysis has been limited to residents of EU-28 Member States.

Additional secondary data sources have been the Eurostat statistics and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reports on the economic impact of travel and tourism. The major focus has been on macroeconomic indicators, especially those characterising relations on the labour market and showing the direct contribution of travel and tourism (T&T) to the employment in European Union countries.²³

Based on the internationally recommended methodology for tourism statistics provided by World Tourism Organization²⁴ and the level of available data aggregation (the EWCS applies the NACE Rev. 2 classification to carry out its sectoral analysis), the subsequent analysis relates to selected tourism characteristic activities, specifically accommodation, food and beverage serving activities, travel agencies and other reservation service activities, cultural activities, and sports and recreational activities. Persons employed (and self-employed) in the divisions under investigation account for 5,8% of the total sample – 2554 respondents. Females represent nearly 60% of the subsample and participants range in age from 15 to 89 years old, with the mean age of 39 years. The majority of them work in accommodation and food service activities, in micro entities. Respondents are mainly service and sales workers in paid employment; their work arrangements are primarily indefinite. Table 1 shows selected statistics for the interviewed workers.

²² Eurofound, *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2012, http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/ewcs/2010.

²³ Eurostat, *Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey) 2010*, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.; World Travel & Tourism Council, *Economic Data Search Tool 2010*, http://www.wttc.org/ research/economic-impact-research.

²⁴ World Tourism Organization, *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008*, "Studies in Methods", Series M, No. 83/ Rev. 1, United Nations, New York 2010, pp. 111–112.

Table 1

Variable	Category	Value
Gandar [0/]	Female	57.0
Gender [%]	Male	43.0
A == [=====]	Mean	38.6
Age [years]	Median	38.0
Level of education [%]	Primary	5.9
	Secondary	71.1
	Tertiary	23.0
Tenure [years]	Mean	7.2
	Median	4.0
Employment status	Self-employment	17.0
	Paid employment	79.5
[/0]	Other	3.5
	Indefinite contract	69.2
Employment	Temporary contract	18.1
contract [%]	No contract	11.5
	Other	1.1
	Managers and professionals	30.7
	Clerical support workers	10.2
Occupation [%]	Service and sales workers	42.8
	Machine operators and elementary occupations	13.9
	Other	2.5
Company size [%]	Micro	56.2
	Small	29.8
	Medium	10.8
	Large	3.2
Type of economic activity [%]	Accommodation and food service activities (I)	68.0
	Administrative and support service activities (N)	5.4
	Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)	26.6

Source: based on Eurofound, *European Working Conditions Survey 2010*, UK Data Archive, Colchester, http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData (19.06.2012).

Based on the review of literature relating to antecedents of employee wellbeing as well as data availability, four dimensions are chosen to picture intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics; these include: job content (work itself), economic value, development value, and social value.²⁵ Respondents used 5-point scales to measure their overall satisfaction with being employed by a given company and to assess job content and context (ranging from 1 – "very low" to 5 – "very high").

In order to identify factors modifying the relationships between job characteristics and job satisfaction, the following qualitative and quantitative variables were tested:

- individual: gender, occupation, employment status, employment contract,
- organisational: company size, type of activity,
- national: unemployment rate, T&T contribution to employment.

The data analysis techniques included general descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients. In an attempt to identify the moderators of main effects of the relationships under study, moderated hierarchical multiple regression models were estimated. The statistical processing of the survey data was conducted using the SPSS software package.

3. Results and discussion

The basic statistics for the study variables are reported in Table 2 presenting the descriptive statistics and the correlations between all the indicators used. Most tourism employees report themselves as satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, with a minority deriving dissatisfaction from working for a particular company. The best perceived satisfaction driver is the job content, the worst – the development value. The computed correlation coefficients indicate that there has been a significant association between the overall job satisfaction and all of the dimensions under investigation.

²⁵ M.A. Bednarska, *Tourism...*, p. 15.

Variable means, standard deviations, and correlations Correlations Standard Variable Mean deviation 1 2. 3. 4. 1. Job satisfaction 3.86 1.038 2. Job content .928 .359* 4.00 2.99 .420* .221* 3. Economic value 1.110 4. Development value 2.63 1.201 .332* .311* .340*

.490*

.410*

.381*

.301*

Table 2

3.79

.745

5. Social value

Source: based on Eurofound, European Working Conditions Survey 2010, UK Data Archive, Colchester, http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData (19.06.2012).

To examine the nature of relationships between the satisfaction with work and its potential drivers, multiple regression analysis has been employed. Overall job satisfaction has been regressed against the job content, economic value, development value, and social value to determine the predictive power of each (Tab. 3). The model was statistically significant ($F_{4.2365} = 314.82$, p < .001) and it accounted for 35% of the variance in the job satisfaction ($R_{adj}^2 = .346$). Positive and significant beta coefficients were found for all independent variables, with social value yielding the most predictive power, followed by economic value, job content, and development value.

Table 3 Summary of multiple regression model of predictors of job satisfaction

Independent variable	В	SE-B	β	t
Job content	.150	.021	.133	7.11*
Economic value	.215	.018	.227	12.18*
Development value	.101	.016	.116	6.32*
Social value	.464	.028	.326	16.69*

^{*} Significant at p < 0.001

Source: based on Eurofound, European Working Conditions Survey 2010, UK Data Archive, Colchester, http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData (19.06.2012).

Next, eight moderated hierarchical multiple regression models have been estimated to test for hypothesised individual, organisational, and national

^{*} Significant at p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

moderators of main effects. Four of them turned out to be significant, i.e. they explained significantly higher proportion of the variance in job satisfaction than models without interactive effects and they included at least one interaction term that reached significance. As models 1–4 confirm (Tab. 4), the moderating effects of employment status, company size, type of activity, and T & T contribution to employment were found. The expectation of the moderating effects of gender, occupation, employment contract, and unemployment rate did not find support in the data.

Table 4 Summary of moderated multiple regression models of predictors of job satisfaction

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
1	2	3	4	5
Step 1 – main effects				
Job content	.193***	.142***	.168**	.140***
Economic value	.252***	.227***	.136**	.227***
Development value	.116***	.114***	.111**	.114***
Social value	.286***	.327***	.345***	.326***
Employment status	032			
Company size		.016		
Type of activity (N)			012	
Type of activity (R)			.066*	
T&T contribution to employment				086***
Step 2 – interactive effects				
Job content x status	.069#			
Economic value x status	.042#			
Development value x status	.001			
Social value x status	064*			
Job content x size		.012		
Economic value x size		.036#		
Development value x size		045*		
Social value x size		012		
Job content x type (N)			.026	
Economic value x type (N)			089*	
Development value x type (N)			.020	
Social value x type (N)			.048	
Job content x type (R)			.029	

1	2	3	4	5
Economic value x type (R)			024	
Development value x type (R)			040#	
Social value x type (R)			039#	
Job content x T&T employment				.039*
Economic value x T&T employment				.035#
Development value x T&T employment				001
Social value x T&T employment				.005
R ² _{adj}	.347***	.350***	.352***	.355***
ΔR^2	.003#	.002#	.005*	.004*

Significant at # p < 0.1; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Note: standardized coefficients are reported.

Source: based on Eurofound, *European Working Conditions Survey 2010*, UK Data Archive, Colchester, http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData (19.06.2012).

The interactions between employment status and job content, economic value and social value (Model 1) imply that work itself and financial rewards are more significant predictors of satisfaction with work for self-employed while social relations are more meaningful for salaried employees. As suggested by size-by-economic value and size-by-development value interaction terms (Model 2), those working in micro entities attach relatively high importance to remuneration and low importance to career advancement opportunities as overall job satisfaction drivers. The interactions between activity type and economic, development and social values (Model 3) denote that the link between job satisfaction and financial rewards is comparatively weak in the subsample of travel agencies employees, whereas the effect of development opportunities and interpersonal relations on job satisfaction is comparatively weak in the group of entertainment and recreation employees. As confirmed by Model 4, the higher direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in the economy, the greater predictive power of job content and economic value is in explaining job satisfaction variance.

The present study addresses the call for empirical research on differential effects of diverse variables on the link between job satisfaction and its drivers

in the tourism industry.²⁶ The main objective of the investigation has been to identify individual, organisational, and national factors that moderate the relationship between job characteristics and satisfaction of tourism employees. The study findings provide empirical validation for the proposed conceptual model, in particular the results show that the predictive power of job content and context in explaining variation in subjective well-being at work in tourism vary by employment status (individual factor), company size and the type of activity (organisational factors), and T&T contribution to employment (national factor).

There are theoretical and practical contributions of this research study. From a theoretical standpoint, it may contribute to the existing knowledge of the subjective well-being at work in the tourism industry and reasons for differences in reported job satisfaction. From a practical view, it would add to the understanding of the influence of job and organisation attributes on the perception of well-being at work. If tourism companies understand factors having differential effects on satisfaction with work and its drivers, they can modify their recruitment strategy and tailor human resource practices to attract and retain highly performing employees who are ready to create and deliver value to customers and can become a source of sustained competitive advantage.

Several weaknesses of this study should be addressed. First of all, it draws upon the secondary source of information and has a major disadvantage inherent in its nature – the analysis is limited to available data, thus it is possible that other factors (not covered in the EWCS questionnaire) impact employee satisfaction as well as job characteristics – job satisfaction relationship in tourism. Furthermore, variables have been categorized in a way which constrained the exploration to five divisions of economic activities. Therefore, the findings may not be wholly transferable to the tourism industry in general. Finally, all variables in the Eurofound survey have been measured with self-reports and based on the single-source data. In consequence, the research findings might be influenced by common method bias, in particular social desirability and response consistency effects. An enhanced understanding of the nature of associations between job characteristics and job satisfaction in the tourism industry is certainly the key contribution of this paper. Still, much of the variance in these linkages remains to be explained. Thus,

²⁶ M.A. Bednarska, *Quality of Work Life in Tourism – Implications for Competitive Advantage of the Tourism Industry*, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Research" Spring & Fall 2013, p. 14.

it would be worth to further identify and refine the antecedents of subjective well-being at work of tourism employees.

Conclusion

Tourism firms in general and high-contact firms in particular would benefit from attaching greater importance to work environment development – high job satisfaction experienced by an employee is the prerequisite for high satisfaction experienced by a customer. It contributes to staff commitment, loyalty, willingness to invest in firm-specific human capital, service effort, and customer orientation, hence adds to the human assets quality. Therefore, effectively measuring and improving job satisfaction is a critical function of contemporary management. It is essential for tourism organisations to monitor satisfaction among their workforce constantly, to identify the drivers of well-being at work, and to take measures to enhance employee satisfaction. Responding to personnel's needs, while balancing these needs with the firm's objectives, helps augment productivity of the enterprise.

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MODERATORY ZALEŻNOŚCI POMIĘDZY CECHAMI PRACY A SATYSFAKCJA Z PRACY W GOSPODARCE TURYSTYCZNEJ

Streszczenie

Postrzeganie kapitału ludzkiego jako podstawy tworzenia przewagi konkurencyjnej na współczesnym rynku skłania podmioty gospodarcze do kształtowania środowiska pracy sprzyjającego pozyskaniu i utrzymaniu pracowników o odpowiednich kompetencjach. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja kryteriów różnicujących zależność pomiędzy cechami pracy a satysfakcją z pracy w turystyce. Analizie poddano czynniki indywidualne, organizacyjne i krajowe. W rozważaniach wykorzystano wyniki piątej edycji European Working Condition Survey przeprowadzonej przez Eurofound. Badania pokazują, że satysfakcja z pracy w turystyce zależy przede wszystkim od relacji społecznych, a w dalszej kolejności od korzyści ekonomicznych, treści pracy i możliwości rozwoju. Na siłę zależności pomiędzy tymi kategoriami wpływa status zatrudnienia, wielkość przedsiębiorstwa, rodzaj prowadzonej działalności oraz udział turystyki w tworzeniu miejsc pracy w gospodarce.

Słowa kluczowe: satysfakcja z pracy, cechy pracy, gospodarka turystyczna, Unia Europejska