



The physical appearance of hotel guests: The impact on service providers' communication and quality of service



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experimental study was to establish whether there is any correlation between guests' physical appearance and the quality of service provided to them by front desk hotel staff. The two experimental groups used in this study consisted of hotel receptionists in Portorož, which is the largest hotel industry sector in the Slovenian part of the Adriatic Sea, and a comparative group made up of social workers from Slovenia's social work centres. The research results suggest that there is a positive correlation between the physical appearance of hotel guests and their satisfaction with the quality of service received. In contrast, within the group of social workers and their clients, there was no correlation between the physical appearance of clients and customer service satisfaction. In the study, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for testing the normality of the distribution, *t*-test for independent samples, Pearson's correlation test and descriptive statistics were used.

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1. Introduction

Slovenia, located in the south of central Europe, is one of Europe's smallest countries. The tourism industry is a very important segment of Slovenia's economy. In 2012, slightly more than 2 million inhabitants generated almost US\$ 3.0 billion of income from tourism. Tourism represents more than 12% of the national GDP, with almost 3.3 million arrivals and more than nine million overnight stays (STURS, 2013). The total number of beds in the hotel and lodging industry is 122,000 (STURS, 2013). Some data (Sirše et al., 2004) estimate the workforce in the tourism sector at 40,000 employees.

Within the tourism industry, as a whole, the hotel sector has contributed its share to the economy. Therefore, the need for hotel employees to provide hotel guests with an excellent experience is essential. Numerous studies, including Akbaba (2006), Albacete-Sáez et al. (2007), Briggs et al. (2007), Johnson and Vanetti

(2005) and Papageorgiou (2008) have emphasized the importance of human resources in the hotel industry and in tourism in general.

When a guest and the receptionist first meet, the first thing they both perceive is each other's physical appearance (Leung and Law, 2010, 439). From the guests' point of view, the physical appearance of the hotel staff is one of the factors that undoubtedly affects their satisfaction with the accommodation. Furthermore, as Briggs et al. (2007) state, hotel customers expect helpful, friendly and caring service. Such expectations include not only the knowledge of tourism workers, but also the very personal relationships the workers develop with tourists. The quality of these relationships can be seen in the efforts of professionals to adapt their appearance to the expectations of their guests. In order to encourage these relationships, many companies in the field of tourism instil very clear standards of physical appearance that they expect their employees adhere to.

As such, jobs in the hospitality and tourism industry, which require direct contact with customers, can become very demanding in terms of the emotional load and requirements for aesthetic labour. The concept of aesthetic labour includes physical appearance and engaging in pleasant speech. Hotel and travel managers have become very aware of this and, therefore, educating staff on aesthetic labour has become a vital part of human resource management. Moreover, the employees' pleasant appearance and their

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ability to maintain and improve their appearance is an important commercial advantage for the hospitality and tourism industry (Nickson et al., 2003).

One cannot speak of this as a new concept, as there are historically plenty of examples where physical appearance has been deemed an important aspect of communication. Probably one of the oldest examples of appearance and behaviour determining the social group one belonged to was the Jesuit Order in the 16th century. In order to belong to the order, candidates had to speak in a pleasant way and have a good appearance (Nickson et al., 2003). It was clear, even then, that physical appearance on the part of the communicators was important for successful communication. It is no wonder that this knowledge stemmed from the bosom of the Catholic Church, which for centuries consciously developed the communication skills of its clergy.

But only recently have authors, such as Warhurst et al. (2000), developed this concept into a theory, called *aesthetic labour*, and formally entered it into academic literature. By aesthetic labour, it is understood that a company requires that an employee is skilled and cares about maintaining an attractive physical appearance and engaging in pleasant speech (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007; Tsaor and Tang, 2013). Some authors point out that employees in the hospitality industry in fact act as “walking billboards” for their companies and, therefore, the importance of an aesthetically pleasing physical appearance is essential to the industry (Tsaor and Tang, 2013, 19). Studies in the field of aesthetic labour strongly suggest that employees in the hotel industry should receive training in personal aesthetic skills, as well as technical and social skills training (Nickson et al., 2003). To that end, to enhance the physical appearance of their staff, many organizations organize different forms of education for their personnel aimed at boosting the physical appearance of their employees.

But the role that physical appearance plays in the hotel industry is not just a one-way stream to be analysed in terms of the guest-employee experience. Hotel guests' physical appearance also affects employees in certain ways and, by extension, the service the employees render to their guests. However, an extensive literature research in the field of service quality conceptualization and operationalization in tourism, and especially in the hospitality industry, indicates that there have been no studies done on the influence of the physical appearance of guests on perceived service quality. This is surprising since hotel employees' perceptions of a guest's physical appearance may be considered a part of the service delivery process as a whole. Researchers have developed several applicable service quality dimensions, such as communication (Coyle and Dale, 1993; Knutson et al., 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1985), assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1988), professionalism and skills (Gronroos, 1988) and personnel response (Albacete-Sáez et al., 2007). Certainly, physical appearance should be taken into consideration as a valid sub-dimension.

2. Physical appearance

There has been continuous research in the field of personality, behaviour, human relationships and interracial relationships, to name a few areas, with a focus on the influence of human physical appearance on human perceptions and attitudes. What has been discovered is that social representations of attractiveness are heavily influenced by appearance, facial appearance in particular, which may affect the beholder's opinion of other individuals (Welsh and Guy, 2009, 194). While Perrett et al. (1999) and Zaidel et al. (1995a,b) have researched the correlation of asymmetric human faces with attractiveness, other authors, for instance Baudouin and Tiberghien (2004), Jones et al. (2004) and Pound et al. (2007), have been involved in the research of face symmetry and its influence on facial attractiveness. As such, attractiveness has been found to be

an attribute that may shape human affiliative behaviour (Winston et al., 2007).

Welsh and Guy (2009) have explored the influence of hair loss or baldness on possible social and psychological implications of appearance disturbance, while van Leeuwen et al. (2009) have examined the influence of attractiveness on imitation intentions. Moreover, Little et al. (2007) and Todorov et al. (2005) have shown that inferences of competence are based solely on facial appearance and, in the case of politics, can often predict election outcomes. According to Todorov et al. (2008), we reliably and automatically make personality inferences from facial appearance, despite little evidence of accuracy. Furthermore, visual adaptation to masculine and feminine faces may influence preferences and perceptions of trustworthiness (Buckingham et al., 2006). Important facial social cues might factor into assessing how to interact with a partner in strategic decision making (van't Wout and Sanfey, 2008).

Wade et al. (2004) have explored how racial characteristics and individual differences in women's evaluations of men's facial attractiveness and personality affect their behaviour, while Hume and Montgomerie (2001) have researched the relationship between facial attractiveness and several variables thought to be related to genotypic and phenotypic quality in humans, for instance, body mass index, health and age. Research into the correlation between masculinity and femininity and attractiveness of faces related to socio-sexual orientation has been conducted by Boothroyd et al. (2008). The question of whether facial attractiveness may predict longevity has been explored by Henderson and Anglin (2003). If it is possible to assume longevity, then it may also be possible to predict physical health, according to the limited empirical evidence provided by Shackelford and Larsen (1999).

The appearance of hotel guests and the impact of their appearance on quality of service is a neglected topic in the field of hospitality literature, although such research in terms of development is very important. Research of this kind has been more often undertaken in other business areas. Yip et al. (2011) found that self-concept and self-image of customers have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Customers' orientation towards their own physical appearance is strongly associated with expectations of quality service. What presents a particularly difficult situation is an obese tourist. Some research has shown that tourism is an activity for ideal or normal bodies (Veijola and Valtonen, 2007, 16). Small and Harris (2012) performed a qualitative study using the technique of Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate the airline experiences of obese and non-obese passengers. They concluded that obese tourists are openly discriminated on in airline travel, pointing out that the “fat” stigma is clearly apparent (Small and Harris, 2012, 686). Kök and Kibar (2015, 24) have shown that typically the way in which service personnel address their guests is directly affected by their guests' appearance. Service personnel change their verbal communication in accordance to their perception of the guests' physical appearance.

All these dimensions of physical appearance or personal attractiveness in relationships between people are part of everyday communication between professionals in the tourism industry and their customers and employees in the hospitality industry and the users of their services.

3. Aims of the study

According to researchers, communication in its broader sense is the basic content of tourism as a human activity (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Jafari, 2000). In that context, our proposition is that the physical appearance of a hotel guest has an influence on the communication process between the guest and, for instance, the hotel receptionist. In other words, the personal appearance of a guest affects the way a receptionist does his/her job, which in

turn affects customer satisfaction. To demonstrate how this problem can be addressed through professional training, we examined how the physical appearance of hotel guests can affect the quality of service they receive from hotel staff in contrast to how social workers, who are trained not to allow their clients' appearance to affect them, provide service. On a conscious level, hotel staff is not aware of their response to the physical appearance of guests. Nor are they aware of the impact that their response has on the quality of their service. The greater majority of employees want to do their job in the best way they can and more often they are convinced that they do so. If a guest seems to be dissatisfied with the service he/she is rendered, the employee often does not understand what went wrong. In that context, the employee is unaware of any conflict and feels no guilt. They may have simply reacted to the appearance of the guest and the reaction is one that they could not or did not know how to control. Therefore, there is a need for educational programmes for employees in the tourism and hospitality industry to ensure that their reaction to guests' appearance is adequately controlled. How the education of employees can be improved in this respect is an important practical goal of our study.

4. Methods

In the study, the experimental method was used. By its nature, this is a so-called field experiment, because it is performed under conditions where the work of hotel receptionists and social workers is normally performed (Shaughnessy et al., 2011). These are also the usual conditions for hotel guests, as well as clients of social workers who participated in the experiment. We used a two-group post-test only randomized experimental design. The receptionist group consisted of hotel receptionists in Portorož, which is the most important Slovenian tourist destination on the Slovenian coast of the Adriatic Sea.

For the second group, social workers who work in social care in Slovenia were chosen. Social workers as part of their education are trained to notice the physical appearance of their clients, to be aware of it, but to establish control over their reactions.

As experimenters, students from a Master's course in tourism were invited to be a part of the study. They participated in a seminar on the subject of research methodology in tourism. Students were told the goal and purpose of the project and shown the detailed methodology for research. The research instrument was explained to them in detail. The application of the instrument was practiced through simulation research situations. Each pair of students was trained to take on both the role of receptionists, as well as hotel guests.

The procedure of the experiment was as follows: two students acted as experimenters. They sat in the lobby of a hotel and watched guests who approached the reception desk. After a random guest had left, one student approached the receptionist. The receptionist was asked to assess the physical appearance of the guest. The other student approached the hotel guest. Guests were asked to assess how pleased he or she was with the service that he or she had been provided by the receptionist. Receptionists were informed beforehand of the experiment and invited to voluntarily participate in it. They were motivated by the thought that they could take a part in the improvement of hotel staff education.

It was explained to the guests that research was taking place in the hotel and they were also invited to be participants in the experiment. The guests, on the whole, agreed to participate; not one guest refused.

The procedure with the social workers was the same. Two students were placed outside a room in which a social worker spoke with a client. It was clearly stated that a student could not attend the interview between the social worker and the client. When the

client came out, one of the students went into the room and asked the social worker to assess the physical appearance of the client using our instrument. Another student approached the client and asked him/her to assess how pleased he or she was with the way the social workers did their job.

Social workers were asked to volunteer for the experiment, as well as the clients. The students introduced themselves to the clients and informed them that they were running this scientific experiment. The students asked them to participate in the experiment and to answer questions from the instrument. Only a few of the social workers' clients refused to participate in the experiment.

5. Instruments

There were two different instruments used in the experiment. The instrument for the receptionists and social workers was a simple 100-mm line representing a continuum from 'unattractive physical appearance' on the left side, to 'very attractive' on the right. They were asked to note at what point on the line the appearance of the guest they provided a service to should be placed, in their opinion. Some basic demographic data about receptionists and social workers were collected (their age, sex, education and the length of their professional experience).

A different instrument was used for the hotel guests and social workers' clients, respectively. Guests and clients were asked for basic demographic data (e.g., age, sex, education). Hotel guests and the social workers' clients evaluated their satisfaction with the receptionists' or the social workers' responses using a scale from one to five (from very bad to excellent). The instrument was a single item scale. This form of scale has proven to be very practical and a sufficiently reliable measuring instrument in situations that measure emotional responses to a situation (Russell et al., 1989), as is the case here. A number of authors in research of this type have confirmed the usability, reliability and cost-effectiveness of this type of scale (Figueiredo et al., 2012; Burkhalter et al., 2013; Leong and Xsu, 2013).

Ginns and Barrie (2005) have explored student satisfaction with teaching. They analysed a huge sample of 59,815 students and came to the conclusion that the reliability of a single-item instrument in this case is very high (0.94 or 0.92, depending on the technique). Our research is of a very similar character, so the use of a single-item scale is methodologically justified. Furthermore, in studies of quality of service in hotels (Nadiri and Hussain, 2005), there are methodological claims about the rationality of the use of a single-item instrument.

6. Sample

In total, 25 hotel receptionists participated; 15 were female and 10 male. The youngest was 20 and the oldest 45. The average age was 32.14 years. The most common age (mode) was 28 years. The average length of working experience was 9.5 years; the minimum was one year and the maximum 26 years. The receptionists all had high school or college education.

A total of 398 hotel guests participated in the experiment. Among the guests, 172 or 43.2% were females and 226 or 56.8% were males. Their average age was 44.2 years. The youngest guest was 14 years of age, the oldest was 88. The most common age of the guests (mode) was 42 (20 guests).

Part of the hotel study was conducted in 11 hotels in the Riviera Portorož. These are medium-sized hotels, mostly full service and leisure dominant. In the city of Portorož, there are no other industries but hotels, hospitality and related trades oriented towards tourists' shopping.

The group of social workers consisted of 27 professionals (25 females and 2 males). Their average age was 36.31 years and the dominant age was 26 years, meaning that most of the social workers were of this age. There were two older social workers, one of who was 57 and the other 60 years of age. The average length of the participating social workers' work experience was 11.14 years; most of them had two years' work experience. In total, they had a minimum experience of one year and a maximum of 38 years. According to Slovenian legislation, social workers need to be educated at the university level.

The group of clients consisted of 331 persons who visited their social workers. Of these, 292 were women and 39 men. The average age of clients was 39.81 years; the youngest was 18 years old and the oldest 80 years. The most common age of the clients (mode) was 28 years.

Part of the study done with social workers and their clients was carried out in five centres for social work in different parts of Slovenia.

7. Data and discussion

Many studies show that satisfaction with a service provided is based primarily on the quality of service provision (Hunt and Ivergard, 2015, 47). A quality of service depends on many factors, among which one of the most important is education of the staff that provides services. This study analysed only one dimension of that education, e.g., relationship to the physical appearance of a client and the possible impact on the quality of the service provided. This is why we used a group of social workers who, during the course of their studies, are taught about how their clients' physical appearance can impact their relationship with their clients and, consequently, the assessment of the quality of services provided by the clients.

The groups consisting of receptionists and social workers were equal by gender ($p=0.000$), as found by the analysis of the chi square test. Between them, there were no statistically significant differences in age. We measured that difference with t -test for independent samples (t -test = 6.498 with $p=0.000$). We also tested the difference in age between the social workers' clients and hotel guests (t -test = -4.207, with $p=0.000$) and found that among the clients there were no statistical differences in age. The variable age in both groups was normally distributed (significance of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is 0.000).

It is interesting to note that between the hotel guests and social workers' clients there were no statistically significant differences in education, according to the results of the performed chi square test ($p=0.000$). Although it would be expected that the education level of hotel guests would be varied, this was not the case.

The instrument used to measure the perception of the hotel guests' and social workers' clients' physical appearance was a line of 100 mm in length. This variable, in the research design, was treated as an independent variable. The lowest value assigned by the participating receptionists was 1 mm, while the highest was 100 mm. The mean value was 60.68 mm with a standard deviation of 22.69 mm. This indicates that the average value was somewhat above the centre of the line. The dominant value was 64 mm. The average evaluation of the clients' physical appearance assigned by social workers was 65.15 mm; standard deviation was 24.74 mm. The lowest value assigned by the participating social workers was 2 mm, while the highest was 100 mm.

Between social workers and the receptionists, there were statistically significant differences in the assessment of the physical appearance of clients (t -test = 2.541; $p=0.01$). As can be seen from the data, social workers assess their clients' physical appearance statistically significantly higher than receptionists do. Such a difference in the evaluation of physical appearance is probably

Table 1

The correlation between physical appearance and ratings of quality of service – the receptionists and hotel guests.

		Physical appearance	Guests' satisfaction
Physical appearance	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.259**
Guests' satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	.259**	1.000
Number of hotel guests		398	398

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

attributed to the difference in education between social workers and receptionists. The education of social workers puts emphasis on communication and careful monitoring of changes in the appearance of the people they are talking to. They follow the verbal and non-verbal responses of the persons being interviewed. Therefore, social workers, when assessing the physical appearance rating, respond less to the usual stereotypes because they have learned to observe more objectively the person with whom they are talking. On the other hand, the receptionists lack education on patterns of communication, so their communication with guests often relies on stereotypes (Čivre et al., 2013) and, in this area, to the physical appearance of their guests.

Hotels guests were asked to rate the quality of services obtained from hotel receptionists. The mean value was relatively high: 4.27 with a standard deviation of 1.002 on the five-point scale. The average client's evaluation of perceived service quality received from the social workers was 4.29 on a five-point scale with a standard deviation of 0.89, indicating a rather leptokurtic distribution that skewed leftwards. Hotel guests and clients of social workers did not differ from each other in expressing satisfaction with the services they received (t -test = -0.321; $p=0.749$). Overall distribution was normally distributed, according to the results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (significance, $p=0.000$). In addition to the overall distribution that was normally distributed, the social workers and the receptionists, respectively, were normally distributed, which means that the results of this study can be projected correctly from our sample to the population of social workers and receptionists.

Finally, the basic research question was explored, which was whether there is a correlation between the rated physical appearance of hotel guests by receptionists and how guests assess the quality of service that they are immediately given. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for both groups.

As can be seen from Table 1, there is a positive and statistically significant correlation. This means that those guests whose perceived physical appearance was rated as better or more attractive received better service from the receptionists than those guests whose physical appearance was not rated as highly. In other words, a more attractive hotel guest has a chance to be better served. It should be noted that in this research we are not studying the physical appearance of people. Nor is it a study of the quality of services. It is a study of how these two phenomena interact, independently of whether people are aware of their reactions and whether they can or cannot manage them.

The phenomenon service encounter (person to person encounter between customer and service worker) has been investigated, especially in the field of marketing. In this research, physical attractiveness was also examined, but mainly customers' satisfaction with some of the services in the context of the physical appearance of the service workers. Söderlund and Julander (2009), in their experimental research, found that with clients in bookstores and airline carriers there is a positive correlation between physical appearance of the service workers and clients' satisfaction with the service. Söderlund and Rosengren (2008) examined a similar phenomenon and concluded that the satisfaction of

Table 2

The correlation between the ratings of physical appearance and quality of service – the group of social workers and their clients.

		Physical appearance	Client's satisfaction
Physical appearance	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.074
Client's satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	.074	1.000
Number of clients		331	331

customer service is significantly greater when a client sees a smile on the face of the service worker. The general conclusion from many studies in service encounters is that customers use physical attractiveness when assessing frontline employees (Keh et al., 2013, 213) and, of course, it is not clear if the opposite is also a phenomenon, as it has not been investigated. However, we can establish that the assessment of physical attractiveness is common in the service encounter, so if this is a common occurrence on the customers' side, then it is expected that it is common among service workers, as well.

As our research shows, there is a connection between the physical attractiveness of the customer and quality of service provided. We believe that this situation can be resolved with proper education of frontline personnel.

We performed the same experiment with social workers and their clients. Whether there is a correlation between how social workers rate the physical attractiveness of clients and how clients rate their satisfaction with the service they are provided by social workers was examined.

As can be seen from Table 2, there is practically no correlation between the perception of the physical appearance of the clients and the clients' satisfaction with the social workers' service. In other words, the physical appearance of a client does not affect the way in which the social worker performs her/his work and thus does not affect the client's satisfaction with the service received by the social worker. This, as previously seen, is not so with hotel receptionists.

Social workers have highly developed observation skills, as well as control of their own impulses during the communication process. Educational programmes for social workers, almost everywhere in the world, offer numerous topics (within different courses) associated with the appearance of clients, so differences between how the two groups react to people were and should have been expected. That is exactly our point. Hotel staff, and particularly hotel front staff, also needs to learn and develop the ability to control their reactions to the physical appearance of hotel guests.

Work at a reception desk requires, besides good cognitive abilities, being able to have control of communication with hotel guests. Control of communication with guests means (among other things) expressing proper emotions, while suppressing those that are undesirable (Yang and Guy, 2015). Undesirable emotions appear to accompany negative evaluations of the physical appearance of hotel guests. How to learn to control these emotions has, so far, received little attention in the education of frontline workers in the hotel industry. In relation to the physical appearance of hotel guests, receptionists must learn how to assess their own emotions, decide how to respond and then, in the process of reacting, the corresponding body language and expression of voice will show a desirable and expected emotion (Yang and Guy, 2015). As hotel staff receives no education on resolving these dimensions, i.e., how to interact with guests, they are left to themselves.

8. Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations that should be taken into account. First is the fact that no research on this subject has been carried out in the field of hospitality and catering, so it was not

possible to find a strong starting point when conceptualizing the study. Second, although we used a two-group post-test only randomized design common experimental design methodology, the study should perhaps be repeated in the future using Solomon's design to avoid input bias of study participants. A sample of hotel guests and social workers' clients is satisfactory, but the sample of hotel receptionists and social workers is relatively small, so it would be good to repeat research with larger samples of these groups. The research was conducted in a central European country where tourism is relatively well developed with a long tradition of hotel activities. On the other hand, beauty stereotypes in Portorož are certainly not similar to those in other parts of the world and so it is possible that there is a cultural bias on the part of both the guests and the employees. Therefore, a study of this kind incorporating this aspect should be carried out in other cultural environments.

9. Further research

To further develop this idea, the following research should be conducted with two groups, i.e., two groups of hotel staff in the front line. The experimental group would be trained regarding the physical appearance of guests and guests' satisfaction with the service, and the control group would not have gone through the training so as to determine the differences in the areas to be tested.

Physical appearance is a very broad, general concept. There are many dimensions of people's external appearance that enter into the communication relationship between hotel guests and front staff. One can talk about weight, facial features, physical disability, obesity, ethnicity, clothing, etc. Front staff, if left to themselves and if not offered adequate training, can find it hard to recognize the difficulties in their communication patterns. Future research should be directed towards some of these dimensions, based on the results of this research, in order to create appropriate educational programmes.

10. Conclusion

Physical appearance generally plays a major role in how people communicate with each other in Western cultures. One of the areas where attractiveness is very important is in the tourism industry. We are all well aware of the efforts that we make before going on summer vacation when our bodies, with all their weaknesses and strengths, are put on display. The question in the industry where service encounters tend to be unavoidable is whether an attractive guest may receive better service. The answer is clearly in the affirmative. The results of our research show a statistically significant correlation between a guest's physical appearance and the quality of the service provided by the hotel staff.

We believe that the results of our study could be widely implemented outside the tourism industry. All service companies who place their employees in direct physical contact with customers may face similar problems. Whenever we physically face a customer, the perception of physical appearance is involved and this may influence service delivery. It is, therefore, crucial for management to understand this and act accordingly.

One possibility is to make a study of this problem part of students' study programmes. In the case of tourism, education institutions need to introduce additional topics or programmes to the study curricula that address the issue. If tourism students are educated and trained not to allow guest appearance to influence the service they give and this becomes part of their professional skills, higher service quality will be provided by hotels or other tourism companies in the future. As an example, Bizjak et al. (2010) demonstrated that certain relevant education programmes could change student attitudes to guests with disabilities.

The workforce presently employed in the tourism sector should be offered special sensibility training to learn how to overcome this issue. We should bear in mind that empirical proof indicates that for numerous employees tourism is a 'refuge' industry (Szivas and Riley, 1999; Vaugeois and Rollins, 2007). Due to the fact that a great number of employees come from other industries, they may have less experience and less knowledge about communicating with customers. Service quality is considered to be a tool in helping companies gain higher marketing competitiveness. Therefore, dealing with this problem should not remain solely in the hands of hotel industry staff but should also become a part of company policy aimed at providing better service quality.

Special education for all persons who work in communication with the "other side" – clients, patients, customers at counters, tourists, education and the like, has become a necessity. Such education would provide a better common understanding of diversity; not only tolerance but also acceptance of diversity as a normal phenomenon. The changes would not only be reflected in the quality of communication, but also in the provision of services.

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