

# The Differences in Perceptions of Organisational Values in the Hospitality Sector: What Do They Tell Us?

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Organisational values have been in the focus of management for several years. Knowing that strong values can help organisations stay on the right course in the fast-changing working environment has proven to be a solid basis for their prosperity. However, organisations are nothing without their employees; this led as to the question of what the differences in the perception of organisational values between employees of different ages and genders are. We have conducted research in the hospitality sector; based on a paper-pencil survey among a representative sample of 388 employees, we have determined that there are six predominant organisational values within the sector. In the second part, we have identified that two out of six identified organisational values are statistically significantly more highly evaluated in terms of importance by women in comparison to men. There were no statistically significant differences found regarding the age of employees.

*Keywords:* values, organisational values, hospitality, demographics, perception  
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## Introduction

In our rapidly changing world, the importance of understanding organisational values is becoming increasingly critical for every organisation. In the service sector, including hospitality, this is even more critical since this is a sector with steady economic growth (Prevolšek, Rozman, Pažek, Maksimović, & Potočnik Topler, 2017; Rangus & Brumen, 2016). The hospitality sector, known for its high turnover of employees (Brown, Bosselman, & Thomas, 2016), due to the high-paced and very demanding working environment (Hsieh, Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, & Lemke, 2017) that is continually changing with the arrival of new phenomena, such as the sharing economy (Turnšek & Ladkin, 2017), will need to pay particular attention to its organisational values and how employees perceive them. Researchers (Hofstede, 1998; Rokeach, 1968) have been researching the field of val-

ues, both on the individual and organisational levels, for decades. There is a rather common consensus that organisational values evolve from individual values (Collins & Porras, 2005), while at first organisational values are very much related to the individual values of founding members of the organisation, later they are influenced by all the members of the organisation. Organisational values are an inseparable part of the organisational culture (Schein, 1985) and represent relatively (Rokeach, 1973) permanent, motivational, emotionally positive categories, for which people believe that they are worth aspiring to (love, peace, friendship, health, etc.). The answer to the question of why values are so important has been provided by Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach (1989), who have identified values as 'one of the very few social psychological concepts that have been successfully employed across all social science disciplines.'

There is no question that organisational values serve many purposes. Hassan (2007) sees these purposes in the way the organisational values set the tone of the environment within the organisation, bind people together, facilitate work behaviour, and help achieve shared goals of the organisation. There is also a theory about managing by values (Dolan & Garcia, 2002; Dolan, Garcia, & Richley, 2006) that promotes the use of values and organisational values in management of the organisation with the concept of reducing formal control through trust gained through shared values. Some research (Dearlove & Coomber, 1999) published before the work of Dolan, Garcia, and Richley indicates that value-led companies outperform others in both growth and revenue being up to four times faster, creation of new jobs up to seven times higher, growth in stock price up to twelve times higher and profit performance up to seven and a half times higher. Dearlove and Coomber (1999) also found that those same organisations experienced significantly lower employee turnover when they valued respect and teamwork. Kač, Gorenak, and Potočan (2016) determined that shared values influence trust within the organisation in a meaningful way. With the evidence that there is a significant influence of organisational values on company performance, we were interested in seeing how some general demographic differences influence the perception of organisational values and subsequently the performance of the individual within the organisation. For this reason, we have set ourselves the main research question; What are the differences in the perception of organisational values between (a) gender and (b) age group?

### **Theoretical Background**

#### **Values**

Values are most commonly perceived as beliefs upon which individuals perform their tasks (Allport, 1961) in accordance with their personal preferences. Influenced by the upbringing the individual had, the society in which they grew up, and people with whom they have interacted values are relatively permanent (England, 1967). Unknown to the person, values present their perception frames that shape and influence the very core of individuals' behaviour. Rokeach (1968)

sees this as representing an individual's attitudes towards how someone should or should not behave. In his opinion, values are types of beliefs that are centrally located in individuals' system of beliefs and influence individuals' behaviour (Rokeach, 1968). In the field of social psychology, extensive research has also been conducted regarding human values (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), in which values are seen as beliefs or conceptualisations about desired end states or behaviours that exceed specific situations. In this sense, values direct the evaluation of behaviour based on the rate of relative importance to the individual.

The most commonly recognised classification divides values into two groups (Rokeach, 1973). The first group presents so-called instrumental values; these are values linked to the way people work. The second group are the so-called terminal values; these are related to the desired end state in contrast to the operational performance that is seen in instrumental values. Within each of the two basic types of values (instrumental and terminal), we find two sub-categories: the first sub-category of terminal values is personal terminal values; the second sub-category is social terminal values. This division is linked to the importance of a value, whether it is important to the individual (salvation, peace) or society (world peace, fraternity). In the set of instrumental values, we divide these into moral values and competence-based values. This division is linked to the individual's feelings, so moral values are linked to self-perception (sense of guilt), while competence values are linked to self-actualisation (logical reasoning). Both of them can come into conflict with themselves or between groups. Thus, an example of a conflict of two moral values is loving behaviour and sincere behaviour, an example of the conflict of two competence values is imaginative and logical thinking, and the example of the conflict between moral and competence values is polite behaviour and well-founded criticism. Meglino and Ravlin (1998) have indicated that, from an organisational perspective, a greater focus on instrumental values as modes of behaviour is seen opposed to end-states of existence (terminal values).

Values are also changing due to changes in the environment; in many cases, we can see changes based

on the changes in the economic sphere, as well as in the social and technical spheres (Freeman, Herriges, & Kling, 2014). Values are also highly linked to generational differences, although as Parry and Urwin (2011) point out, the results of research focusing on differences in values based on generation are at best mixed: some studies show obvious differences, while others find none. We believe that, in this case, differences are more related to the intensity of the values than the values themselves.

Personal values are the basis upon which concepts of organisational values are presented, individuals are the founding blocks of any organisation, and without their personal values, there is no means of organisational values to evolve.

#### Organisational Values

Many authors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Chatman & Cha, 2003; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kenny, 1994) have been exploring the field of organisational values in attempts to reach a consensus about the definition of such values. The most common view of organisational values is that they evolve from organisational culture; this is generally the philosophy that an organisation follows (Pfeiffer, Goodstein, & Nolan, 1985). Kenny (1994) claims that just as any person or community has his/her/its set of values the same is true for every organisation. Given the fact that organisational culture defines expectations regarding behaviour, modes of conduct, modes of decision-making, and styles of communication, we can perceive organisational values through this (Simerly, 1987).

Organisational values emerge at the beginning of the existence of any organisation; although at the beginning they may seem a bit unclear, it can be said that they are very closely related to the personal values of the founding members of the organisation (Pfeiffer et al., 1985). It is not uncommon that further in the life of an organisation, members (usually management) decide to define organisational values. We have to understand that organisational values may be related to the founding members at first, but later, several things influence their evolution, such as dynamic of growth of the company, new employees, business success of the company, etc. Musek Lešnik (2008) explains

the need for wide-ranging and open discussion about what the organisational values within the company really are so that they can be identified and that the 'trap' of management-defined organisational values be avoided. This was also emphasised by Cha and Edmondson (2006) warning about the potential hazards young organisations face, especially regarding organisational values: when an organisation is young and growing, ill-defined organisational values can hinder its growth and potentially endanger its development.

Organisational values and the long-term performance of organisations has been studied and established by many authors (Chatman & Cha, 2003; Collins, 2001; Collins & Porras, 2005; Peters, Waterman, & Jones, 1982). More precisely, Collins and Porras (2005) have determined that organisations with clearly stated organisational values, which are internalised by employees, reach significantly higher performance results in comparison to organisations with values that are less clearly stated or not stated at all.

To understand the positive influence of organisational values on organisational performance, it is essential to understand how the fit of values is achieved. Five different theories predominate. The first is the so-called personality-environment fit theory that evolved from interactional theory (Lewin, 1951), in which the fit between personal values and environmental values is sought. The second is the theory seeking fit between person and job (personality-job fit theory) (Holland, 1985), while the third theory focuses on the fit between the person and the organisation (personality-organisation fit theory) (Judge & Cable, 1997); the remaining two theories are the theory that examines the fit between a person and his or her vocation (personality-vocational fit theory) (Hoerr, 1989) and the theory that examines the fit between a person and a group (personality-group fit theory) (Guzzo & Salas, 1995).

The most critical finding in this sense came from Posner, Kouzes, and Schmidt (1985), who have empirically proven that the higher level of fit between organisational and personal values is clearly shown in individuals' positive approach to work as employees are more satisfied when they are performing their tasks.

However, the modern working environment is rais-

ing yet another issue when it comes to organisational values: although we are creating working environments that are more and more flexible, and allow people to work from home or while travelling, we are creating work that is increasingly complex and requires greater cooperation, as indicated by Lee, Olson, and Trimi (2012). Globalisation itself, carried over from the 20th century, along with new technological advantages, and changing demographics, is leading to changes in the industry, thus opening paths to new innovation paradigms that can help organisations create value through convergence, collaboration, and co-creation. However, as indicated by Ye (2012), organisational values can still be seen as the core of organisational culture, thus affecting a number of key or pivotal values concerning organisation-related behaviours and states-of-affairs, which are shared by members of an organisation. This is why organisational values define the acceptable that which govern the behaviour of individuals within the organisation.

Knowledge about values and specifically organisational values has led us to the question of how various demographical difference influence the perception of the importance of organisational values; this is presented in the next part of this article.

#### Values, Organisational Values and Demographics

The question about differences in perception of values between men and women as well as the question about differences between older and younger people has been a subject of discussion in the research community for quite some time. Prince-Gibson and Schwartz (1998) have determined that theories of gender-based value differences provide ambiguous results. Dietz, Kalof, and Stern (2002) have done extensive research on values, determining that there are no substantial differences in value factor structures, although they did find differences in value priorities, with women ranking altruism as more important than men did. Therefore, we can say that women value responsibility towards others as being more important than men do. This is vital knowledge with regards to hospitality, in which the well-being of others is at the core of every operation. Beutel and Marini (1995) have similar findings in their research, determining that females

are more likely than males to express concern and responsibility for the well-being of others, less likely than males to accept materialism and competition, and more likely than males to indicate that finding purpose and meaning in life is extremely important.

This leads to the question of how individuals chose their occupation. The link between individual values and organisational values is very well established (Kenny, 1994; Pfeiffer et al., 1985; Simerly, 1987); based on this, Marini, Fan, Finley, and Beutel (1996) have determined that individuals choose occupations on the basis of internalised interests and work values. Marini et al. (1996) have further determined that choosing an occupation involves finding the maximum highly valued occupational characteristics while minimising the loss of other enjoyable or necessary ones. This further strengthens the relationship between individual and organisational values.

Regarding organisational values, various studies have produced highly diverse results. Rudman and Phelan (2008) have determined that research on gender stereotypes generally shows that women are perceived to be more communal (e.g., caring and interdependent) than men are. Kite, Deaux, and Haines (2008) determined that women, for example, are viewed as more emotional, gentle, understanding, and devoted, whereas men are seen as more active, competitive, independent, and self-confident. Kwun (2011) claims that women tend to evaluate the importance of quality higher than men are. Interestingly, Jin, Line, and Goh (2013) have determined that while service quality is important for both males and females, the impact of aesthetics on relationship quality is only important for males.

In contrast, Posner (2010) says that there are no differences that were found between men and women in his study, while previously significantly lower levels of values congruency had been reported by women. Parry and Urwin (2011) did extensive work on the question of generational differences and work values; their conclusion is that while many studies have found more areas of similarity between generations than differences, some that do find that differences have produced significant findings of only a small magnitude and have found differences in the opposite direction from that

predicted by the commonly held generational stereotypes. Thus, it can only be concluded that some studies have found differences in work values between generations, while others have not.

## Methodology

### Research Question and Hypothesis

The research aimed to test how various groups of employees perceive the importance of organisational values in the hospitality sector. For that purpose, we have set the following research question: What are the differences in the perception of organisational values between (a) genders and (b) age groups?

In order to answer this research question, the following research hypotheses were set up:

- H1 *There is no statistically significant difference in the perception of organisational values between male and female employees.*
- H2 *Older employees evaluate the importance of organisational values statistically significantly higher than younger employees do.*

### Sample

The population of the selected sector (travel and leisure industry) was based on the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia regarding a total of 9,117 people (see <http://pxweb.stat.si>). In order to obtain a relevant representation of this sample, we asked random organisations within the sector for permission to survey their employees; we were granted the consent of several organisations, which employ a total of 2,762 people. We distributed 1100 paper-pencil questionnaires among randomly selected employees; for this purpose, we used the simple random sampling method. Within the 60-day period set for the survey, 388 out of 1100 questionnaires were returned, representing 35.27% of all questionnaires sent out, which is 4.26% of the population. The questionnaire comprised several parts, but only a part of the results are used for this study: 25 questions relating to organisational values and 5 questions regarding respondents' details (age, gender, number of working years, level of education, etc.).

To be able to generalise the results to the entire population, we first performed tests to establish the

validity of the sample. For this step, we performed the chi-square test of significance on the demographic information for the population as well as the sample (gender, education, and age). For the variable *gender*, chi-square was calculated at 0.598 and significance level at  $p = 0.434$  for the variable *education*, the chi-square test value was calculated at 9.296 with significance level at  $p = 0.054$  the final variable *age* provided a value of 13.971, and the level of significance was at  $p = 0.052$ .

The values of chi-square distribution at significance 0.05 or 5% are 3.8415 for variables with a single degree of freedom (variable gender), 9.4877 for variables with four degrees of freedom (variable education), and 14.0671 for variables with seven degrees of freedom (variable age). Based on these findings, we can conclude that the research sample could be generalised to the whole population (Hannan & Freeman, 1977).

The sample that has been used for this paper contained 133 (38.4%) male respondents and 213 (61.6%) female respondents. The average age of respondents was calculated at 38.17 years. The sample contained 34 (9.6%) respondents with elementary school level of education or less, 83 (23.5%) respondents with vocational high school, 121 (34.3%) respondents with high school, 80 (22.9%) respondents with college degrees, and 35 (9.9%) respondents with university degree or more.

## Results

First, we tested the validity of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha test, calculating the coefficients for the set of variables. We performed this test on variables that measured values and obtained the value of 0.859, which indicates the high reliability of measurement (Cronbach, 1951) and, with regard to the composition and characteristics of the sample, we believe that it is representative.

### Factor Analysis

With a larger number of variables in the survey, we have decided to conduct the factor analysis in order to create a smaller number of more manageable factors. When creating a survey, we intentionally formed some

Table 1 Factor analysis of variables that measured organizational values

Variable	Factor					
	OVQ	OVI	OVE	OVEM	OVC	OVR
Quality of work is important in our organization.	0.942					
Within our org. we are focused on successfully completing our tasks.	0.754					
Encouragement of positive examples is rare in our organization.		0.726				
Inhibition of innovative ideas is frequent in our organization.		0.710				
Adaptation to different business situations presents a problem for our org.			0.659			
Immoral behaviour at work is acceptable in our organization.			0.620			
In our organization we respect each other.				0.902		
Employees in our organization interact.				0.622		
In our organization we try to satisfy the needs of our customers.					0.869	
Practices in our organization are focused on our costumers/guests.					-0.533	
At work in our organization we behave responsibly towards others around us.						0.723
To achieve the objectives within our organization we are working persistently.						0.210

variables with a negative statement; these were re-coded before the factor analysis was performed. However, we left the statements in their original form with regard to the text. Once we performed the factor analysis, we calculated six different factors with suitable weights. Factor analysis was performed with the extraction method principal axis factoring.

Within these six factors, 12 variables positioned themselves, while eight variables did not position themselves clearly in any of the factors and had weights in two or more factors with values of the weight being below the suppress point which was set at 0.200. As a result, we decided to remove them entirely. Some might argue that the suppression point is low but, as indicated by Child (2006), this is acceptable for large enough samples. With the help of factor analysis, we were able to explain 67.76% of the variability of organisational values with these 12 variables in six factors; since all of the variables are latent variables, we decided to allow only two variables per factor based on the recommendation of Bollen (1989); the results are shown in Table 1. The six factors represent various values; we decided to name each of them in accordance to some common organisational values that are expressed in the sector (travel and leisure) in which conducted our research. Through the factor analysis, we

also merged the variables that have positioned themselves in individual factors into new variables, thus we have a new variable we have labelled OVQ – Organisational value quality for the first factor, OVI – Organisational value innovation for the second factor, OVE – Organisational value ethics for the third factor, OVEM – Organisational value employees for the fourth factor, OVC – Organisational value customers for the fifth factor and OVR – Organisational value responsibility for the final sixth factor. The second variable in the last factor has a relatively low weight, being just above the cut-off point, but since it is the second variable and it is in the very last sixth factor, we have decided to use it.

We have further tested the validity of newly formed factors with Cronbach's alpha test, calculating the coefficients for each of newly formed factors. OVQ – Organisational value quality showed the value of 0.891; OVI – Organisational value innovation showed the value of 0.647; OVE – Organisational value ethics showed the value of 0.591; OVEM – Organisational value employees showed the value of 0.792; OVC – Organisational value customers showed a value of 0.765; OVR – Organisational value responsibility showed a value of 0.769. Although the values were lower than the values for all variables together, as expected, they

Table 2 Independent Sample t-Test

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Mean	
			Male	Female
OVQ – Organizational value quality	–3.048	0.003	4.14	4.45
OVI – Organizational value innovation	–0.213	0.831	3.50	3.52
OVE – Organizational value ethics	–1.059	0.290	3.82	3.92
OVEM – Organizational value employees	–0.020	0.984	3.64	3.65
OVC – Organizational value customers	–1.668	0.097	3.82	3.99
OVR – Organizational value responsibility	–2.313	0.022	3.97	4.20

are still within the acceptable range based on (Cronbach, 1951). With factor analysis, we have also calculated the value of KMO at 0.870, which indicated that sampling was adequate; furthermore, the *p*-value with Bartlett's test showed a value of 0.000, which again confirms that factor analysis on the selected variables is appropriate for further use.

#### Gender Differences Analysis

Further, we have decided to see if there are any differences between male and female respondents regarding their perception of the importance of organisational values. For this stage, we decided to use an independent sample *t*-test; this text is based on the presumption that the two averages between groups are equal. For the sampled data, experimental value statistics are calculated, and, based on the result, the presumption is either confirmed or rejected; statistically significant or statistically insignificant differences between the two groups are thus obtained (Hodges & Lehmann, 1956). The results are shown in Table 2. For variable OVQ – Organisational value quality, there is a statistically significant difference ( $t = -3.048$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ). Male respondents evaluated this variable lower (mean value 4.14) than female respondents did (mean value 4.45). For the variable OVR – Organisational value responsibility, there is also a statistically significant difference ( $t = -2.313$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ); male respondents evaluated this variable lower (mean value 3.97) than female respondents did (mean value 4.40).

With all the other variables, it can be seen that there is no statistically significant difference, although with all variables it is apparent that female respondents

Table 3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Variable	Age
OVQ – Organizational value quality	–0.038
OVI – Organizational value innovation	–0.005
OVE – Organizational value ethics	–0.058
OVEM – Organizational value employees	–0.091
OVC – Organizational value customers	–0.011
OVR – Organizational value responsibility	–0.010

evaluated all the variables more highly than male respondents did.

#### Age Differences Analysis

In the next step, we decided to see if there is any correlation between organisational values and the age of the respondents. In this stage, we have calculated Pearson's correlation coefficient. This coefficient represents the size of linear correlations between variables X and Y. The coefficient is defined as the sum of all products of standard deviations of both values in relation to the degrees of freedom, or as the ratio of the covariance and the product of two standard deviations. The result obtained is one of the square roots (can be negative or positive); the correlation coefficient is the ratio of the explained variance and the total variance. The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient can be between values –1 and 1. The value –1 represents a perfect negative correlation between variables; conversely, the value of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation (Huck, 2015). The results for Pearson's correlation coefficient are shown in Table 3.

There is no statistically significant correlation between the variables representing organisational values and the age of the respondents. All the correlations are negative and very weak. Furthermore, these same variables were tested with the help of ANOVA based on a comparison to eight different age groups: up to 24 years of age, 25 to 29 years of age, 30 to 34 years of age, 35 to 39 years of age, 40 to 44 years of age, 45 to 49 years of age, 50 to 54 years of age, and 55 years of age or above. ANOVA did not discover any other statistically significant differences among age groups.

### Practical Implications of Findings

Today's working environment, especially in the hospitality sector, is very competitive and very demanding towards employees. For that reason, as much as possible about the relationship between organisational values and the demographics of employees must be understood in order to help managers organise work in a way that will simultaneously provide the maximum satisfaction of both guests and employees. Values of individuals, as well as organisational values, can be at the core of human resources management. This supports the idea of transforming the management style from Management By Objectives (MBO) (Drucker, 2012) to Management By Values (MBV). Although MBV was previously discussed by others (Blanchard, O'Connor, & Ballard, 1997), it was the contribution of (Dolan & Garcia, 2002) and their further work (Dolan et al., 2006) that developed the theory as it is known today. Putting values at the forefront of management style can be a variation of management style, but it is essential to know who different (by gender and age) people perceive these same values.

Through our research, we have determined that gender does influence the perception of selected organisational values. Women evaluated the organisational value quality statistically significantly higher than their male counterparts did, which is congruent with the finding of (Kwun, 2011) and is a significant finding for management since it can be directly applied to the training of employees (giving male employees more training focus on attention to details), as well as the regular working environment (e.g., letting women oversee the quality of work). This will also directly af-

fect the experience of customers, thus improving their satisfaction.

The second organisational value that showed statistically significant differences between men and women was that of responsibility; other researchers had similar findings (Kite et al., 2008; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). This is a significant finding for managers since quality assurance must always be one of their top priorities in the fast-paced and highly competitive hospitality sector.

Further, we have analysed whether there are any statistically significant differences between different age groups; our findings show that there is no statistically significant difference; we contribute this finding to the relevant congruent population regarding the age distribution of our sample; thus, this could be a specific solely to Slovenia.

Service industries, such as hospitality, need to emphasise the quality of their product (Augustyn & Ho, 1998) and responsibility towards customers (Holjevac, 2008) in order to achieve success. Knowing what we can do to help our employees achieve success is essential knowledge for managers that can be applied directly to working environments.

### Conclusion

Knowledge of how organisational values are perceived by men and women, or how they are perceived by younger or older employees, can be used to achieve better organisational effectiveness, thus also increasing the satisfaction of the end customer – tourists. There is no clear answer about whether there are differences between men and women or younger and older in all the cases; it seems increasingly apparent that it is a case-by-case scenario. However, for the hospitality sector, where our research was conducted, the results that we have found are of great significance. The importance of quality and responsibility as organisational values are statistically significantly more highly evaluated by women in comparison to men. Given the fact that women are perceived as more altruistic, this is relatively expected. Although women represent over 60% of the entire population working in hospitality, they still face the so-called glass ceiling, not being found in higher executive positions within



the industry, although this cannot be attributed to differences in education, hours worked, or occupational crowding (Sparrowe & Iverson, 1999). Hospitality is focused on the nurturing of guests, providing them with the best possible experience. With this in mind, we can say that women have a gender-based predisposition that is beneficial for achieving precisely that. Managers should increase the involvement of women in duties that are marked by the need for quality assurance and responsible behaviour.

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