

**THE ROLE OF FAMILY HOTEL AND RESTAURANT BUSINESS IN ENCOURAGING
THE POSITIVE GROWTH OF THE EMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA**

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to analyze the current economic state and the possibilities for improvement of the same on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, considering the role of family hotel and restaurant industry. It is about a specific social situation, not enough empirically explored nor supported by direct literature correlated with the possibilities of objective scientific research methodology. However, science cannot be based solely on that kind of evidence. The aim of the theoretical and empirical research is to derive specific conclusions relevant to explanation of the essence regarding the cause and effect relations associated with the role of hotel and restaurant industry in encouraging the economic growth, higher employment rate and better standard of living. Therefore, considering the necessary time distance as well as the clarity of the causal link, the focus will be set on assessing the opinion of the population regarding the importance of the hotel and restaurant industry respectively, on the territory of Republic of Macedonia.

The research made regarding the importance of family hotel and restaurant business for boosting the positive growth in the employment rate in RM inspires further positive modelling of this relation within the frames of multi ethnic Macedonia. Furthermore, the results will be obtained from the application of primary and secondary data gained through conducted closed type survey and analyzes of researches relevant to the topic. These will serve as a basis for setting an appropriate approach in creating essential strategic policies in the social-economic context within the society of the Republic of Macedonia.

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Key words: *Catering, hotel industry, restaurant industry, economic development, employment rate, investments*

Introduction

The main subject of the theoretical and empirical analysis of this paper is the current situation in the country, in terms of opportunities for employment rate improvement through hotel and restaurant industry. In that context, firstly, the opinions, beliefs, attitudes and discussions regarding the definition of the importance of small and medium enterprises will be given, that is the investment opportunities in private businesses in this country, in order to give a modest contribution to the issue: Do hotel and restaurant industries contribute to the increase in the employment level in the Republic of Macedonia? Moreover, a brief overview will be presented of tourism status in this country, i.e. the strategic framework on a state level for increasing the tourist attractiveness internationally.

In the context of the issues raised in this paper work, the trend of the employment rate in Macedonia is explained also by the economic and legal analyses of positive legislation and strategies regulating this area, as well as by the country's effort and aims to face opportunities and risks in this aspect, and finally by development of country's own business in the area of hotel and restaurant line of business. The systematic conceptual solutions regarding the current and long lasting economic crisis which has its own influence on the employment rate will be exposed in this paper, as a cumulative conclusion, together with the views and claims obtained through conducted survey questionnaires aimed for the employees in the hotel industry as well as those employed in the restaurant industry. In addition, analytical approach will be applied over their obtained responses.

The purpose of this paper work is to prove that Macedonia promotes positive strategy for hotel and restaurant family business. Consequently, we can expect a reduction of the unemployment rate in the Republic of Macedonia, i.e. boosting positive conditions for integrating the unemployed in private businesses in this area. Simultaneously, the restaurant industry becomes instigator in successful reduction of unemployment rate in Republic of Macedonia, that is, unlikely the hotel industry, the restaurant industry offers greater prospect for business integration and an increase in the number of employees and profitability over a shorter period of time.

The empirical research conducted for the aims of this paper work are based upon the application of independent variables (domestic business- hotel and restaurants, promoting services), sex, ethnicity, education level and working experience; and dependent variables (level of motivation, the impact of different motivating factors; number of employees). The sample of this research are the employees in hotel and restaurant industry in the area of Tetovo, Republic of Macedonia. This town has been selected as a result of its multiethnic dimension which is of utmost importance in conditions of conducting research in this country. In this way, obtained results will be relevant for interpretation since they will guide the setting of a strategic approach towards promotion of the hotel and restaurant industry, throughout the whole territory of Republic of Macedonia. Only in this way can we expect fostering the positive growth of the

employment rate and simultaneously better living standard as well as economic growth in the country.

This work prefers application of the triangulation approach- application of qualitative and quantitative methods. By means of applying the qualitative method which means analyzing the content of theoretical aspects, making a review on prepared reports regarding the issue as well as making a comparative analysis of opportunities rather than contemporary challenges, efforts will be made to gain a solid basis for establishment of an appropriate approach for scanning the positive aspects of the impact of hotel and restaurant industry on the territory of RM. The quantitative analysis will be enclosed through a questionnaire of combined questions (statements) in closed type, taking the Likert's grading scale. Reasonable estimation will be derived by using the inductive method of logical contemplation.

Theoretical aspects of the role of hotel and restaurant industry: the case of Republic of Macedonia

Modern conditions of work characterized by dynamic and structural changes, modern technology development, business internationalization, growing global competition, market segmentation and increase of insecurity have imposed the necessity of expanding a dynamic sector such as small and medium enterprises. In fact, globalization processes themselves indicate a radically changing setting thus making the world one big market where the national, regional and the local markets lose their traditional meaning (Drucke,2007:113). Until recently there has been an opinion that the big companies have a tendency to become great systems that will follow the technological growth, since they expose high efficiency and productivity and a big chance to win over the world markets. Namely, they were challenging global economies and offering opportunities for economic growth and prosperity. However, with the changes in working conditions as well as the expansion of crises of big world companies, starting from the end of the eighties in the past century, economic policies of the developed countries commenced to seriously consider the issue of small businesses, industrial competition, restructuring and privatization (Deakins, Freel, 2005:76).

As a result of increasing promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit, economically speaking, the role of the small businesses is increasingly stressed especially those that have great part in the economic growth in a certain society. These are considered to be generators of new recruits and boosters of a positive growth regarding the standard of living. For this purpose, it is of extreme significance that a correlation is made between the role of small and medium businesses and the economic development concept. Indeed, the economic theory and the empirical studies point certain priorities considering the improvement of living conditions in one society. Among these is the one for boosting innovations in every day working activities. Having this in mind, it is important to stress the idea of promoting business activities, further on, the possibilities for financing through own or borrowed capital. The financing process is a crucial determinant for the business subject since it initiates opportunities for long term stability and successful operation (Armstrong, Taylor, 200:24)

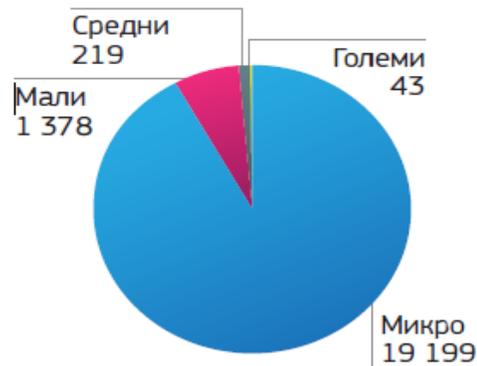
Promoting family business to great extent stimulates the effects upon recruitment, the product/services offer, competition enforcement, the social as well as societal development in the full sense.

The economic development, especially achieving a higher rate of employment is a process determined by an array of economic and social factors. However, their real impact depends on the current conditions prevailing in the society, that is, these factors have relative importance of variable nature.

The aid given to small and medium-sized enterprises, the latter largely initiating and promoting family business and entrepreneurship support, are the key to economic recovery and growth. The 23 million small and medium enterprises in Europe cover 98% of the companies, provide 67% jobs positions and create 85% of new hires.

In Europe, many small businesses are macro-enterprises employing less than 10 persons whose total annual turnover and / or annual balance sheet is not more than 2 million euros.

The level of employment is evenly distributed among enterprises. However small and medium enterprises cover two-thirds of all jobs positions in the European Union.

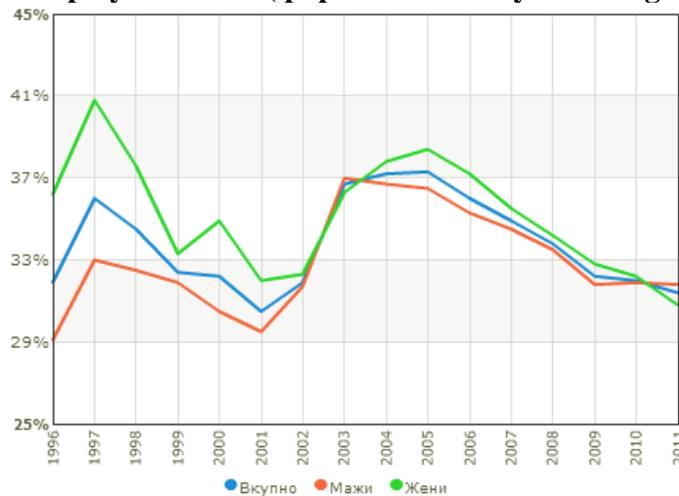
Image no.1: Number of enterprises in Europe

Source: European Commission, Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/index_en.htm reviewed on 16.08.2015.

Image no. 2 Employed (millions)

Source: European Commission, Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/index_en.htm reviewed on 16.08.2015

Republic of Macedonia, a country that follows the directives set by the European Union in order to become integrated into the European family, is committed to promoting entrepreneurship and the family business in order to improve the current economic state. In Macedonia, from the period of transition (90s) to the period of achieving economic stability of the county (time frame of fifteen years) there was a decline in the unemployment rate.

Image no. 3: Unemployment rate (population of 15 years of age and more)

Source: State Statistics Office of Republic of Macedonia, "Labour Market" www.stat.gov.mk reviewed on 20.08.2015

According to the data supplied by the State Statistics Office, in the last quarter of 2014, the unemployment rate in Macedonia was 28.6%. These data show a decrease in the percentage of unemployed compared to the previous quarter, when it was 28.7%. Considering the age, still the highest is the percentage of unemployed young people from 15 to 24 years reaching 50.3%, for people from 25 to 49 years it is 27.4%, while the rate in the group from 50 to 64 years is 22,7%. During this period, the active population in Macedonia counts 960,704 persons, out of which 685 479 were employed, and 275 225 unemployed (Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

In the Republic of Macedonia, the sector of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is 99% of the total number of existing enterprises. The number of SMEs has seen steady growth, with the exception of 2010, when as a result of the effects of the economic crisis, the number of enterprises decreased from 63,086 in 2009 to 57,832. SMEs absorb the bulk of the workforce, with the total number of employees (335 495), in 2010, 63.51% or 213 077 people are employed in micro and small enterprises, 18.81% or 63 114 persons in medium, while 17,68% or 59 304 persons are employed in large enterprises. Based on the above, the "National Employment Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia in 2015" anticipates improvement of the real situation in the country by promoting family business (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2011: 16).

Hospitality+, as an economic activity that provides accommodation services, preparation of food and drinks etc., is a concept that contributes to the employment of people, thus acquiring means of existence. Due to the nature of the work, catering is among the tertiary or service industries that can employ an extensive number of people. However, it also offers a concept of production (preparing food and drink) on the basis of what is called an economic activity (Bizoeva, Bizoev, 2010: 6).

Table no.1: Catering services

Accommodation services	Hotel services provide accommodation services in a room or a hotel apartment
Food and drink	Restaurant services depending on the premises category, offer services in a restaurant, breakfast room, banquet hall, pub, aperitif-bar and room service

Source: Bizoeva, Belika, Bizoev, Branko, " Hotel operations", Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Macedonia, 2010, page 6

Within the "National Strategy for Rural Tourism 2012-2017" the Government of Republic of Macedonia highlights and further elaborates in detail the guiding objectives for tourism development, among them the development of authentic accommodation capacities. In this context it is necessary to point the fact that catering provides the material basis for tourism development, but also tourism greatly affects economic growth and reduces unemployment.

Moreover, there was a consistency over the years regarding the visit of tourists to hotel facilities in the country, which means that in the future there must be a detailed strategy on a local level covering this area, in order to be able to precisely elaborate the process of exhilaration regarding the number of tourists, thus enabling better standard of living for the population once the rate of unemployment is reduced.

Tourism plays an important role in the economic development. It can attract new investments, create new jobs, promote cultural values and natural resources. To this end, the government of the Republic of Macedonia supports this sector through appropriate measures, policies, specific projects for the construction of modern tourist infrastructure and at the same time it also promotes the country as an attractive tourist destination abroad. Among these measures, the author considers those listed below to be of great importance (Government of the Republic of Macedonia, 2011):

- Giving loans for special purposes to unemployed people
- Reduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) onnight travel services, accommodation with breakfast, half board or full board, from 18% to 5% (September, 2011);
- Reorganization of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism into Macedonian National Tourism Organization (June 2012);
- Creation of an integrated tourist information system with web - portal (March 2013);
- Investments in improving the infrastructure in tourism and encourage transit tourism: identifying locations for construction of hotels, motels, modern petrol stations and various tourist attractions along the corridors 8 and 10 (2013);
- Continue to attract investors for the construction of hotels and other tourist facilities in Skopje, Ohrid, Struga, Prespa and Dojran for the lake tourism and Gevgelija, Bitola, Krusevo, Tetovo and Ponikva for the winter tourism, as well as in other places (December 2012).

- Opening offices for the promotion of tourism located in the centers of major cities in the countries traditionally providing the biggest influx of tourists;
- Business incentives and hotel industry - aimed at building capacity to accommodate tourists and improvement of services in the field of tourism, through application of following measures: development of SMEs operating in the tourism sector by subsidizing loans for construction, adaptation and regulation of small accommodation capacities (2013); further subsidizing the organized foreign tourism with a subsidy of 20 to 70 euros per person (2013).

The role of tourism in improving the economic standard of a country that has the potential for development in this area is of particular importance. The development of the family business in the area of catering businesses, can greatly contribute to increasing the productivity of the potential workforce, that is, it can be simultaneously referred to as an opportunity to reduce unemployment as one of the biggest problems facing countries in transition. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, based on the presented data, the government shows great support to the development of the catering business which in turn helps to improve the economic standard and also the employment rate at local, regional and hence national level.

DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Republic of Macedonia is a particularly interesting area for analysis of the impact of hotel and restaurant industry on the positive employment growth, in order to create a realistic image of the working environment, as well as the impact in general, on profitability of the country as a whole. The set of circumstances typical for this country, which distinguishes Macedonia from other countries in the region, is the pursuit of a multi-ethnic balance, which is reflected in the economic and political sphere, and the business lifestyle. Considering the above, knowing the specific trends in the business environment, especially the perception of the population, or more precisely the target group that is affected by this issue, is a particularly important and current topic that needs to be examined by insights in the real situation, i.e. by a conducted empirical research and analytical review of the data obtained.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the internal condition of enterprises of hotel and restaurant industry in order to set clear parameters that will be used in the future for setting up durable strategies when promoting the business in national and international frameworks.

The empirical research in this paper was conducted in the period 15.07.2015 – 30.07.2015 in Tetovo, Macedonia. Tetovo as a municipality is one of the cities with the largest number of unemployed, especially among young population. The research included a target group, covering at the same time both the hotel and restaurant industry, including the total of 200 respondents employed in the family service, i.e. catering business (hotel and restaurant industry) in the city of Tetovo. The data is summarized based on the answers of the research, and selected in favor of proving the specific and the major hypothesis.

In order not to burden the paper, the answers do not include testing of the variables, but the distribution is viewed in terms of total number of respondents.

In terms of demographic data of employees in the hotel industry, the obtained data is the following: Gender (81% male, 19% female); Age (18-29 years 39%, 30-49 years 44%, 50 or older, 17%); Ethnicity (Macedonian 36%, Albanian 47%, Turkish 7%, Roma, 4% , Other 6%); Level of education (Primary education 17%, Secondary education 32%, Undergraduate studies 44%, MSc/PhD 6%); Total years of service (up to 5 years 17%, 5-10 years 32%, 11-20 years 40, over 20 years 11%).

In terms of demographic data of employees in the restaurant industry, the obtained data is as follows: Gender (75% male, 25% female); Age (18-29 years 33%, 30-49 years 47%, 50 or older 20%); Ethnicity (Macedonian 39%, Albanian 43%, Turkish 6%, Roma, 6% , Other 6%); Level of education (Primary education 14%, Secondary education 38%, Undergraduate studies 42%, MSc/PhD 6%); Total years of service (up to 5 years 12%, 5-10 years 39%, 11-20 years 34, over 20 years 15%).

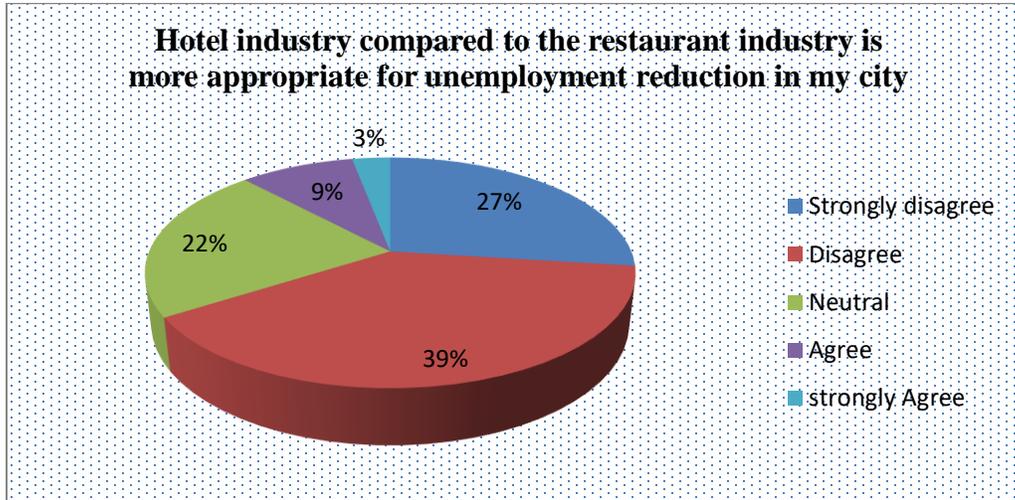
The specific hypothesis which is tested in this paper reads: *“The restaurant industry is an inspiring guide to a successful reduction of unemployment rate in the Republic of Macedonia, i.e. in contrast to the hotel industry, the restaurant industry offers greater prospects for business integration and increase in the number of employees and profitability for a shorter period of time.”* The hypothesis will be tested simultaneously, to the employees of the two categories, that is employees in the hotel industry and employees in the restaurant industry respectively in the city of Tetovo, Macedonia, in order to obtain a realistic image of the current situation while carrying out the research.

The hypothesis is tested based on the replies given to the following questions:

- "Hotel industry compared to the restaurant industry is more appropriate for unemployment reduction in my city"- a question aimed for the employees in hotel industry.
- "I intend to start my own restaurant business as a part of the hotel industry since in my native town the restaurant industry has bigger priority for success and making profit" – a question aimed for the employees in hotel industry.
- "In case the citizens have better knowledge and are informed about the attractiveness of the restaurant industry, they will be more conscious of the employment possibilities offered by the same" - a question aimed for the employees in the restaurant industry.

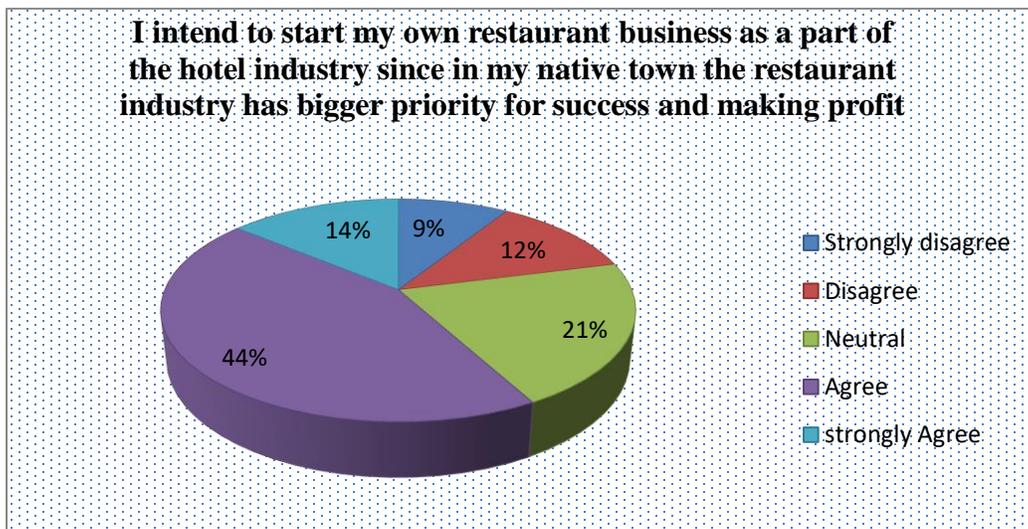
Based on the above stated questions, statistically processed data brings the following outcome:

Pie chart no .1:



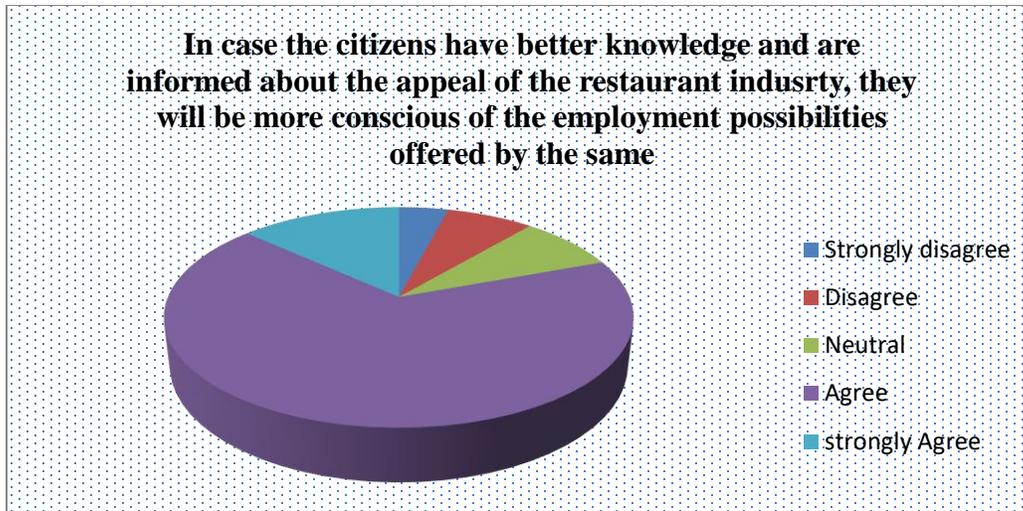
Source: Author's personal research

Pie chart no.2:



Source: Author's personal research

Pie chart no.3:



Source: Author's personal research

Accordingly with gained data presented in Pie chart 1, 2 and 3, on the basis of the answers given by the employees in the hotel and restaurant industry in Tetovo, Republic of Macedonia to previously prepared questions, the hypothesis of this research has been proven. Namely, according to the data in pie chart 1, there is high percentage of respondents, employees in the hotel industry who think that hotel industry is less popular than restaurant industry when it comes to decreasing the unemployment rate in this city, i.e. 66 % do not agree with this statement (categories: I strongly disagree and I disagree), furthermore, 22% are indecisive, while 12% agree with the claim (categories: I agree and I fully agree). Moreover, the restaurant industry is more appealing to the working people in Tetovo, which may be noticed by the fact that it is prioritized over the hotel industry. Further research in this domain is necessary, so that relevant data connected with the reason behind favorising the restaurant industry may be found.

The data given in pie chart 2 analyzes the testing of the main hypothesis in greater detail, because it is directly oriented towards the necessity of restaurant industry in Tetovo, as well as the personal perception of the respondents who are part of the hotel industry. Namely, 18% do not agree with the claim (categories: I strongly disagree and I disagree), 21% are indecisive and 58% fully agree (categories: I agree and I fully agree). These results show that the restaurant industry is more appreciated than the hotel industry by the working people in the service businesses. Moreover, the idea of developing a restaurant industry in this city needs to be examined thoroughly, because in that way the employment rate will be affected more efficiently, which will lead to improvement of the citizens' standard of living as well.

On account of the two answers given by the employees in the hotel industry, pie chart no. 3 presents the answers of the employees in the restaurant industry. The percentage distribution of the statistically processed answers points out the main idea of hypothesis 3, i.e.

the restaurant industry attractiveness and how may it be achieved. Namely, the respondents emphasize their attitude related to how much the local people are informed when it comes to the possibilities offered by the restaurant industry, as well as the possibilities of finding a job position there, especially starting a family business. According to obtained data, only 11% do not agree with the statement (categories: I strongly disagree and I disagree), 8% are indecisive, while 81% have positive perception (categories: I agree and I fully agree). Furthermore, the community needs to work on creating additional plans and projects for initiating the benefits of the restaurant industry for the people, as well finding additional funds which will make the process of starting a family restaurant industry easier. This will greatly contribute to the positive increase of the employment rate in Tetovo.

Based on the presented data, a conclusion can be made that the specific hypothesis is proven as a positive one, i.e. the restaurant industry is an inspiring guide in successful reduction of unemployment rate in the Republic of Macedonia, i.e. as opposed to the hotel industry, the restaurant industry offers greater prospects for industry integration and expansion in the number of employees as well as profitability for a shorter period of time. However, in the future it is necessary to specify these different perceptions among the population of the same area, exposed to similar daily matters, in order to use positive examples from the practice and to influence the overall lifestyle betterment for those residing in Tetovo.

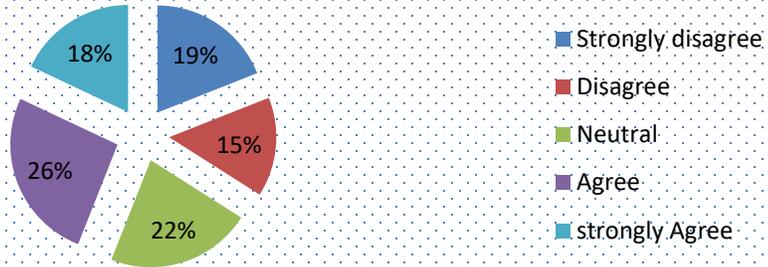
The general hypothesis in the research for the scientific paper states: *"If Republic of Macedonia promotes a positive strategy for development of the catering industry, in that case, it can be expected that the rate of unemployment may decrease, and appropriate conditions for integration of the unemployed into their own businesses in this domain may be encouraged."*

The testing of the General Hypothesis will be made by three questions. Initially, through a question which brings forward state's involvement in the promotion of the hotel and restaurant industry, i.e. "I think that the state supports positive growth in the tourist/catering industry through promotion of additional programs for the business development in this area". This question is aimed for the employees in the hotel industry. Furthermore, the second question referring to the additional support provided by the state and related to the hotel industry promotion, states: "I have heard about the application of additional funds for development of the hotel industry in my country". The third question is focused on the support provided by the state, yet this time aimed for commencing restaurant family business, i.e. "I don't have enough information regarding the possible support from the state in relation to restaurant family business establishment"

Based on the given replies, the findings provided statistically are as follows:

Pie chart no. 4:

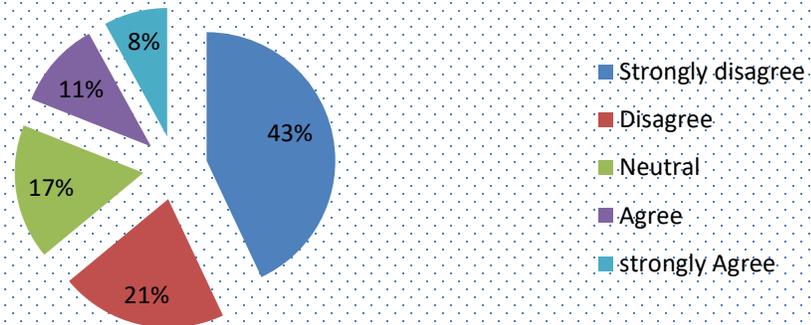
I think that the state supports positive growth in the tourist/catering business through promotion of additional programmes for the business development in this area



Source: Author's personal research

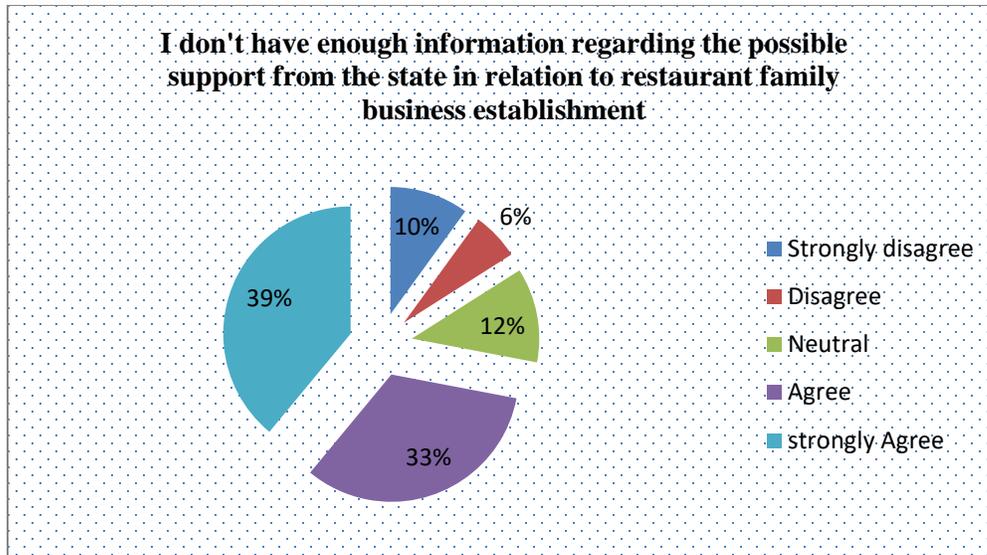
Pie chart no. 5

I have heard about the application of additional funds for development of the hotel industry in my country



Source: Author's personal research

Pie chart no. 6



Source: Author's personal research

Presented data in pie charts no. 4, 5 and 6 reflect the real situation in the country regarding the aspects of government policies designed to make the hotel and restaurant industry more popular in encouraging family business by using state funds. Through data obtained from Pie 1, 2 and 3 used to prove the specific hypothesis, it becomes evident that the restaurant industry is very attractive and at the same time it positively impacts the increase of the employment rate in the city of Tetovo. On the other hand, data shown in the pie chart no. 4 indicates that the state strives, but not sufficiently, to promote further development programs for tourist / catering industry, respectively. However, even if this is the case, the working population in this city is not familiar enough with this area of business. Namely, based on gained data, 34% disagree with the statement (categories: strongly disagree and disagree), 22% are indecisive, while 44% have a positive response (categories: I agree and fully agree). Consequently, there is a percentage balance regarding gained responses, which means that the population is not sufficiently aware of the strategies at state level. Based on this, the local community is indicated as the one to begin with a positive treatment programs in this domain, thus bringing the policies close to the citizens and their way of contemplation.

Pie chart no.5 explores a particularly important topic when it comes to the opportunities offered by Republic of Macedonia in developing the hotel industry. According to statistically obtained replies, the outcome is the following: 64% disagree with the statement (categories: strongly disagree and disagree), 17% indecisive and 19% agree (Category: I agree and I fully agree). As a result, we can see that there is very little support to the claim that additional funds for hotel industry development are promoted within the Republic of Macedonia. In terms of these data it can be concluded that the population is not sufficiently aware of the possibilities offered by the state to develop the hotel industry, especially if it comes to additional funds for the realization of this idea in the form of family business.

The same conclusion is obtained analyzing the data in the pie chart no. 3, regarding available information on the possible support from the state for opening the restaurant industry. Mostly respondents do not have enough information, that is, 72% agree with the statement (categories: I agree and I agree completely), 12% indecisive and 16% disagree (categories: strongly disagree and disagree). Consequently, as was the case in the previous question, it is necessary to address the need for strategic promotion of hotel and restaurant family business, especially through submitting additional funds for its commencement. From another perspective, if the state already promotes funds in this area of business, the local community needs to develop programs which will regularly inform population about all available possibilities, thus making them familiar with the issue, as well as enabling them to plan their future within this type of service. All this will positively influence the growth of the employment rate, also improving the standard of living and the economic growth in Tetovo, and the entire country.

With the enclosed analysis, based on the processed data in the pie charts 4, 5 and 6, the general hypothesis is tested as positive, i.e. on the basis of the fore mentioned, it has been acknowledged that in case Republic of Macedonia promotes positive development strategy for the hotel and restaurant industry, a decrease in the unemployment rate can be expected, i.e. an encouragement of positive conditions for integration of the unemployed in their own businesses in this domain.

Conclusion

Macedonia faces a big challenge in reducing the unemployment rate, especially at regional and local level. One of the exceptionally interesting aspects in encouraging positive actions in this area is developing a private business or promoting the development of SMEs. Having in mind that we are talking about a country that has a number of tourist predispositions, the development of a family hotel business is a particularly important guide in the process of achieving positive economic growth, high employment rate and better life standard of the population. However, based on the research conducted in the city of Tetovo, an example of multiethnic peace and coexistence in the country, it can be acknowledged that the restaurant industry as opposed to the hotel industry is a better idea for establishment of a private business. Namely, population here is not aware of the benefits that are offered for the development of small and medium enterprises on a state level through additional funds and development programs, which points to the need for elaboration of strategies on a local level for better promotion of the fore mentioned among the citizens in Tetovo. As major problems causing the occurrence of such a state are mostly the insufficient investments in research and development; low levels of innovation and investment, transfer of new technologies, increasing exports of high technology; inadequate infrastructure; insufficient number of highly educated staff and their training in the service activity, insufficiently flexible banking and non-banking institutions and financial services.

Thus, to achieve improved competitiveness in setting the family hotel and restaurant industry it is necessary to: create new individual policies for increased competitiveness based on the latest technological advances; to provide advanced communications and information technology; highly skilled workforce, and to increase productivity as a major determinant for economic growth and living standards; to improve the business environment and support the development of strong and sustainable business initiative that can compete globally and be directed to a well-functioning competitive markets for goods and services, in particular through the implementation of competition rules, developing the necessary infrastructure and fostering competitiveness and innovation.

Only in this way can utilization of the possibilities for development of a family catering industry be expect, as a positive indicator for the increase in the employment levels in the country, thus improving the level of economic growth and development as well.

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