

LABOUR MARKET SKILL DEFICIENCIES IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Primanjkljaji na trgu delovne sile za potrebe turizma in gostinstva

Marija Rok

University of Primorska, Faculty of Management Koper
marija.rok@turistica.si

Abstract

The Slovenian tourism and hospitality labour market suffers from several deficiencies and structural imbalances. This paper focuses on one solution to these problems in terms of certifications of accredited national vocational qualifications. The tenth anniversary of Slovenia's adoption of the National Professional Qualifications Act seems a convenient time to evaluate the results of this certification system and measure the benefits. A survey was conducted on a sample of employers in the tourism and hospitality industry. Using quantitative data analysis as well as a correlation and multivariate factor analysis, the major deficiencies in the implementation of the certification system were identified.

Keywords: labour market, employers, national vocational qualification, certification, non-formal learning, informal learning

Izvleček

Strukturna neskladja in pomanjkanje znanja in delovne sile na slovenskem trgu dela se odražajo tudi v turizmu in gostinstvu. V prispevku obravnavamo eno izmed možnih rešitev problemov na trgu dela, povezano z uvajanjem sistema certificiranja nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacij. Ob deseti obletnici sprejetja Zakona o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah ocenjujemo rezultate uvajanja tega sistema in zaznane prednosti pri deležnikih. Opravili smo anketno raziskavo na vzorcu delodajalcev v turizmu in gostinstvu. S kvantitativno analizo dobljenih podatkov, korelacijsko in multivariatno faktorsko analizo smo identificirali pogloblitve dejavnike neuspešnosti pri implementaciji sistema certificiranja nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacij.

Ključne besede: trg dela, delodajalci, nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija, certificiranje, neformalno učenje, izkustveno učenje

1 Introduction

The focal point of this analysis is the importance of the certification system (i.e., the system of assessment and validation of national vocational qualifications [NVQs]) as a competitive edge for our labour force in the tourist market. We focus here on non-formal and informal learning, which is often neglected while the validation and verification are ignored. The introduction of informal and non-formal learning into the system of NVQ accreditation has brought about several advantages for all stakeholders in the labour market. With the increased interest in human resources (HR) and the awareness of its importance as a key competitive priority of the society and the economy, all forms of lifelong learning have been recognized as important. Intellectual capital is more important than financial capital; thus, it is the employees who expand the value of the organisation and society. In education and learning, a new paradigm has emerged, integrating all forms of lifelong learning—formal, non-formal, and informal. Although the previous paradigm is based on education, the newer one stresses the importance of learning. According to Jelenc, Komljanc, and Žakelj (2007), authors of *Lifelong Learning Strategy in Slovenia*, the original paradigm was founded on a formalized structured process of education, formal relations

between the educator and the student, and the transfer of information, with the entire process leading towards certificates; meanwhile, the contemporary paradigm includes an outer circle of organized learning experiences, denoted by their voluntary nature and a zest for learning. Thus, learning is much more than education, and the complementarity of formal, non-formal, and informal learning is essential for HR development. Concurrently, a modern information society offers numerous, almost unlimited, opportunities for learning.

The introduction of informal and non-formal learning into the system of vocational qualification accreditation should bring about several positive impacts on employability, employee promotion, wage levels, and self-employment, among other factors. However, 10 years after Slovenia's adoption of the National Professional Qualifications Act (ZNPk, 2000), questions arise as to whether the certification system has actually had any effects, especially on the labour market.

Through negative demographic trends, high unemployment rates, and structural imbalances in the labour market, Slovenia has become increasingly aware of the significance of the increased market value of knowledge. Numbers of young people in the labour market have declined; at the same time, more elderly workers are in the labour market. Skill shortages at lower levels of qualification can be solved only through immigration flows. The quality of human resources changed considerably during the transition period. "It seems that human resources can grow mostly qualitatively, meaning by enhancing employees' knowledge, skills and competences" (Svetlik, 2004, p.7). HR's influence on organizational competitiveness and the economy has been emphasized by several other authors (Allen, Dawson, Wheatly, & White, 2008; Bryan & Joyce, 2007; Drucker, 2001; Pavlin, 2007; Senge, 2001; Vodopivec & Dolenc, 2009). The pace of the global market can be kept up only with lifelong learning and training. The system of NVQ certifications promotes lifelong learning in all its dimensions.

In Slovenia, both non-formal and informal learning have always supported the formal education process, although they have not been recognized—a problem the launch of the certification system in 2000 sought to overcome. The certification system was simultaneously merged with the vocational education and training (VET) system. OECD experts (Werquin, 2010) revealed that Slovenia seems to have many non-qualified workers, although they appear to have a level of performance meriting the award of a qualification. Slovenia also suffers from a shortage of semi-skilled workers. Much of these mismatches and deficiencies in the labour market can be solved through the use of NVQ certificates.

Dynamic business and social environments demand constant adjustments of school curricula as well as NVQ catalogues to the new conditions. Yet the Slovene educational system has often been criticized for failing to satisfactorily meet the demands of numerous companies. Such views

apply to the tourism and hospitality sector. The system of certifying NVQs can offer prospects for improving these anomalies as it is more flexible and dynamic; moreover, employers can provide initiatives for new NVQs. Furthermore, in the global labour market, NVQ certificates could represent a transparent qualification that can be compared among EU countries and would enable free movement of workers between member countries.

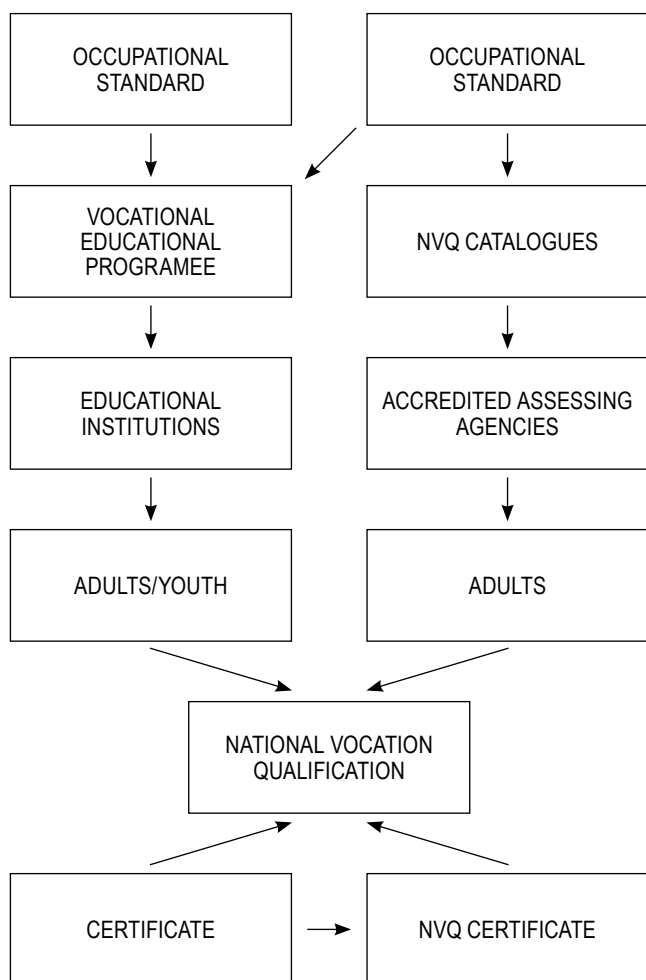
2 Research Context

A certification system means a publicly established set of bodies and procedures, which provide for the awarding of certificates. This means that the certificates issued have a similar meaning as the degrees/diplomas issued after one successfully finishes an educational programme. They give certain status and chances to individuals in the labour market. Employers are expected to view them as indicators of the quality of the labour supply and to respect them in recruitment, remuneration and other HR management procedures. In this respect, certificates should be transparent and shaped as much as possible in line with the other EU countries. (Svetlik, 2000, p. 8)

Here we must also draw attention to the specifics of the terminology because certificates generally provide written proof that students have finished certain programmes; however, in Slovenia, the term *certificate* has always been reserved for non-formal areas.

The main purpose of the certification system is to include knowledge, skills, know-how, competences, etc., acquired from outside the formal system through non-formal and informal learning among the formally recognized competences. In the past, people learned everything at school; such learning sufficed for their lifetime. Today, knowledge must be constantly upgraded and expanded; otherwise it is in danger of becoming dated. People do not just learn in school; they learn along with various activities, through practice, volunteer activities, hobbies, and the media, among others. In addition, new technologies are fostering an interest in learning and self-learning. Such tacit knowledge has to be made explicit and verified so that an individual's employability and competitiveness can be increased. People need formal proof that they possess certain competences: If this is managed, then the value of human capital in society can be utilized.

Different ways exist for recognizing non-formal and informal learning in Slovenia. The OECD national report for Slovenia indicates that the national concept of recognizing prior learning does not exist, although some forms—NVQ certifications—have been developed (Ivančič et al., 2007). Furthermore, the higher education sphere followed the example of the certification system when establishing recognitions on a tertiary level in 2003. Figure 1 shows both systems leading towards vocations under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (left side) and the Ministry of Labour (right side).

Figure 1: *The two paths towards vocation (CPI, 2011)*


Thus, in Slovenia, individuals can obtain qualifications in two ways. The basis of vocational qualifications is occupational standards. These qualifications lead to either vocational educational programmes or catalogues of NVQs. The latter are only for adults whilst young people should attend formal educational programmes. They do not award degrees; rather, candidates receive a vocational qualification.

Several experts (OECD, 2007; Svetlik, 2000) have warned that NVQ certificates could lead to a parallel educational system that competes with the existing system. Concerns that the certification system could undermine the educational system are widely shared among other stakeholders as well. Would such a system create a shorter and easier way to obtain a proof of qualifications? The fact is that it can compensate for some deficiencies endemic to formal learning, but it does not lead towards higher education. In addition, it is intended exclusively for adults. More persuasive is the argument that the two systems should complement one another. The linking points are credits acquired through certificates that can be recognized in schools. Moreover, many people have expectations that NVQ certificates could help solve the problem of drop-outs. Duvekot,

Schuur, and Paulusse (2005, p. 198) agreed: “The fact that Slovenia has got relatively high rates of drop-outs from the formal educational system, gives more value to the validation of experiential learning as a factor of national policy of improving the qualification structure of the labour force.”

3 Implementation of the NVQ Certification System

Between 1997 and 2000, the Ministry of Labour launched a pilot project for NVQ certification: 25 proposals for NVQ catalogues were introduced by chambers, ministries, or various associations. This pilot project ended rather miserably as all 25 proposals were rejected. Analysts blamed social partners for the lack of consensus, institutional barriers, indecisiveness of the authorities involved, and long-lasting procedures (Kopač, 2000). In 1999-2000, a PHARE Mocca project developed and implemented assessment and recognition procedures. In 2000, the National Vocational Qualifications Act was approved by Parliament and NVQ certifications were legally introduced in Slovenia. Another important milestone for the development of the certification system happened when they merged it with the VET system. Thus, some NVQ certificates can be obtained through a formal system of education while adults can also return and progress in the VET system after acquiring an NVQ certificate.

Thereafter, all national strategic documents addressing HR development and national strategies coping with unemployment problems and problems of structural disparities in the labour market (e.g., active labour market policy programmes, programmes addressing social cohesion) have been promoting the acquisition of NVQs based on non-formal education, learning and work experiences as an important measure directed towards the improvement of qualifications and employability of the labour force. (OECD, 2007, p. 17)

Table 1. *Results of the Certification System, 2000-2010*

Occupational standards	532
NVQ catalogues	247
Certificates	56,824
Accredited assessment institutions	147
Licensed members of assessing committees	1,907
Counsellors	320

Sources: Čot (2010), NRP (2011), RIC (2010)

Table 1 shows the necessary technical and organizational infrastructure for the NVQ system and its progress since 2000. Apparently, the number of ratified NVQ catalogues does not support the dynamics of ratified occupational standards. Furthermore, assessment institutions and counsellors seem numerous enough, but they do not cover all the regions. In addition, some NVQs are “dead” because assessment institutions and licensed assessors have not been accredited yet.

Table 2. *Development of NVQ Catalogues and Number of Issued Certificates (2000-2010)*

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Catalogues	6	4	3	36	17	22	13	57	18	35	36
NVQ certificates	-	-	35	46	633	4258	7849	9589	14335	15357	4722

Sources: RIC (2010), NRP (2011)

Table 2 implies a constantly increasing number of NVQ catalogues and issued certificates, although the structure is unbalanced. The majority of certificates were awarded in the construction industry, security, agriculture, and transport services, where responsible ministries have included NVQs in sectoral legislation. However, the decline in issued certificates in 2010 stemmed from the exclusion of the NVQ Driver from legal requirements for this occupation.

4 Identified Problems

Objectives of this analysis result from several perceived problems concerning the certification system within the sphere of tourism and hospitality. The first problem is the limited number of NVQs that can be certificated for the sphere of tourism and hospitality. Initiatives for new NVQs are few, deriving mostly from schools, whilst employers do not seem to be interested in participating. Their acknowledgments of certificates when recruiting personnel seem unfavourable as they still prefer school diplomas. Employers demonstrate very weak awareness of the main distinctive features of the certification system. Results are discouraging as well when comparing demands for workers in the labour market with the collection of existing NVQs in the sector.

5 Research Methodology

A survey was performed on a sample of employers in tourism and hospitality as the most important stakeholders in the certification system. We focused on employers for several reasons. First, employers participate in the development of the certification system (an important distinction from the situation in the formal education system). Second, if certified NVQs are not acknowledged in the labour market (i.e., by employers), the whole system fails. Therefore, the success of the NVQ certification system rests on the basis of trust. As Ivančič (2000) pointed out, the value of experiential and non-formal learning in the labour market (as well as in the formal education system) is not only an administrative and a technical problem, but also first and foremost a problem of general trust.

The purpose of the analysis was to collect in-depth data concerning attitudes and viewpoints of key groups of stakeholders. We wanted to find out whether this system is known among stakeholders at all and observe their standpoints. The main goal of the research was to identify the deficiency factors of the implementation of the NVQ certification system. Additional aims of the research were to present the current state of NVQs in the tourism and hospitality industry and assess the responsiveness of employers to this new evidence of personal qualifications.

Complete, usable data were obtained from the respondents and processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Using the data obtained, we tried to determine whether the hypotheses could be rejected or accepted. In the present study, we expressed relationships through the following hypotheses:

- H1 Cooperation exists between social partners and an adequate organizational and administrative regulation of the system of certifying NVQs.
- H2 The NVQ system is well-promoted, transparent, and simple, with low costs and without excessive bureaucracy in its procedures.
- H3 Certified competences increase employability, mobility, and career promotion of the workforce, thereby enhancing their competitive edge in the labour market.

Since efficiency of the implementation of the certification system is not measurable we searched for factors in the background that influence the variable performance using a correlation and multivariate factor analysis. The extraction methods used were the principal axis factoring and the maximum likelihood. Thus, we recognized the major factors that affect the implementation of the certification system.

6 Data

Data were collected via questionnaires distributed to members of employers in the tourism and hospitality industry (management level). The questionnaire was designed for the purposes of this study, and all 22 questions were based on the three hypotheses. Questionnaires sought information on participants' attitude towards NVQs and their current practices when employing individuals, paying wages, and promoting personnel. Most questions were closed—some with yes-no options and others with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I agree entirely) or from 1 (very discouraging) to 5 (very encouraging). A neutral answer (neither agree nor disagree or indifferent) was adopted in order to reduce uninformed answers. Open-ended questions were added to elicit other attributes considered important by respondents. At the end we gathered demographic data.

Addressees were selected from the databases of the Chamber of Craft and Small Business and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. When sampling, we tried to avoid small entrepreneurs where we expected less developed HR policies and a weak familiarity with NVQs. Ultimately, 250 questionnaires were distributed via email. Two reminder

emails followed. A total of 111 completed questionnaires were received, representing a 44% response rate; all data were usable. Of the 111 respondents, 60 were female and 51 were male; 18% were owners, 25% general managers, 22% HR managers, and 25% other members of middle management staff.

7 Results

The first aim of the research was to determine whether the certification system is even known among employers. The results of the analysis indicated a rather low familiarity with NVQ certificates. Only 19% of respondents had participated in the system although 59% knew of it. However, when asked to name some NVQs, 13% of the latter group listed several non-existent ones (e.g., tour guide, chambermaid, cook), suggesting rather limited knowledge. Almost half of the respondents were not informed of the possibility of participating (initiatives for new NVQs, verifying providers, etc).

In addition, 20% of the employers rejected this type of qualification, recruiting personnel only based on evidence of formal education or—surprisingly—based on past work experience. Yet NVQ certificates formalize work experience. Thus, these results suggest that participants are not informed about the system.

The research also sought to present the current state of NVQs in the tourism and hospitality industry and assess the responsiveness of employers to this new evidence of personal qualifications, especially in connection with industry vacancies. Regarding skill shortages in the tourism labour market, employers identified profiles that correspond with evidence of the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS, 2011)—namely, waiters, cooks, bartenders, chambermaids, and animators. We checked whether these lists correspond with available NVQs in this area and found 10 existing NVQs in tourism and hospitality (NRP, 2011): NVQ Barman, NVQ Diet Cook, NVQ Catering Manager, NVQ Cook Assistant, NVQ Waiter Assistant, NVQ Sommelier, NVQ Cheese Sommelier, NVQ Croupier, NVQ Tourist Animator, and NVQ Tourist Informant. Evidently the available qualifications show a very weak correspondence with the needs of the sector. However, the certification system should adapt to the demands of the labour market, follow the trends, and be able to predict future job profiles, thereby gaining a distinct advantage over the formal system of education.

The quantitative analysis implied that employers have not yet acknowledged NVQ certificates for several reasons, varying from weak promotional and informative activities regarding NVQ certificates to a distrust of their quality and credibility and disappointingly ineffective institutions within the system (chambers, employer representatives, trade unions, professional bodies, as well as ministries). We asked employers to grade institutions within the certification system (chambers, trade unions, Ministry of Labour, Institute for the Vocational Education and Training, and the National Examination Centre). Their grades were quite unfavourable and ranged from discouraging to indifferent

(ratings between 2.0 and 2.8). Even ministries differ in their attitude towards this system: Some sectoral acts require an obligatory NVQ certificate for certain jobs (e.g., security) whereas others require other types of evidence (licences). Respondents were very critical of the institutional order of the system and evaluated the role of partners as ambiguous and unresolved (mean value 3.8). Thus, our hypothesis that cooperation exists between social partners and an adequate organizational and administrative regulation of the system of certifying NVQs cannot be confirmed.

Furthermore, respondents have not noticed any promotional activities of NVQ certificates. Only 7% of them have come across information on a website or in other media or received promotional materials from assessment institutions. Meanwhile, only 17% of them have heard of the national reference point for NVQs. Evidently, the information and promotional activities are scarce. Analogous results of surveys in two other fields (medical care and ICT) were published by Može (2005) and Vešligaj (cited in MVZT & Žejn, 2006); OECD experts pointed out the same weaknesses of the NVQ system (Ivančič et al., 2007).

Respondents want more information on the certificate system (3.9). They also want existing data on NVQs to be simplified and easily accessible and the terminology to be adapted to people with lower educational degrees (3.7). Respondents are dissatisfied with procedures that are too long and bureaucratic (2.9); information is not broadly available (1.7), and the language used is not comprehensible enough (1.7). Employers who participate in the system find the costs of participation too high and un-motivating (3.8). In further research the factor analyses emphasized the importance of the cost of the system to employers as one of the key factors for a successful implementation of NVQs. Therefore, the second hypothesis that the NVQ system is well-promoted, transparent, and simple, with low costs and without excessive bureaucracy in its procedures, cannot be confirmed.

Although NVQ certificates have existed since 2000, the number of them acquired in tourism and industry is still too low to evaluate their value on the labour market. A disappointing number of employers appreciate NVQ certificates, put them in tenders for recruits (4.5%), and include them in internal legal acts (4.5%). Although employers agreed that the certification system could provide a more qualified labour force (4), they confirmed that they prefer recruits with formal evidence (3.1). However, they indicated dissatisfaction with school programmes (2.7) and highly valued only those candidates with professional experience in the field (4.0). Vešligaj (cited in MVZT & Žejn, 2006, 12) came to the same conclusions: “Slovene companies are not willing to invest in the knowledge of their personnel, yet they expect them to appear on the labour market when needed.” Thus, the third hypothesis—that certified competences increase the employability of the workforce their mobility, and their career promotion, thereby enhancing their competitive edge in the labour market—can be neither confirmed nor disproved.

The main goal of the research was to identify the deficient factors in the implementation of the NVQ certification system. Therefore, the next step was a correlation and multivariate factor analysis. First, we eliminated some variables with low correlations (with a Pearson correlation coefficient under 0.4). Finally we extracted eight dependent variables (Table 3). We used the principal axis factoring and the maximum likelihood methods to reduce the number of variables. The rates of explained variance were very high with the variables “Existent NVQs follow labour market demands” (follow_LABmarket), “Existent NVQs follow trends in the industry” (follow_TRENDS), “With NVQs employers have more labour choice” (LAB_Choice), “Recruiting requirements include NVQ certificates” (recruit_NVQ), “NVQ certificates are necessary for promotions” (NVQ_promotion), “Existent NVQs suit current demands of the industry” (NVQ_demand) and “With NVQs employers have lower training costs” (TRAINING_cost). They were very low with the variable “Some existing workpositions lack both an educational path and a NVQ” (WORK_NVQ_School).

Table 3. Communalities

Extraction method	Principal Axis Factoring		Maximum Likelihood	
	Initial	Extraction	Initial	Extraction
LAB_Choice	.521	.577	.521	.631
TRAINING_cost	.423	.362	.423	.436
Recruit_NVQ	.415	.458	.415	.382
NVQ_promotion	.394	.458	.394	.368
NVQ_demand	.404	.406	.404	.403
Follow_LABmarket	.710	.955	.710	.974
follow_TRENDS	.594	.607	.594	.606
WORK_NVQSchool	.234	.167	.234	.177

The final results highlighted two factors; 61% of the total variability of the model could be explained by them (Table 4). Analogous results were yielded using the maximum likelihood method.

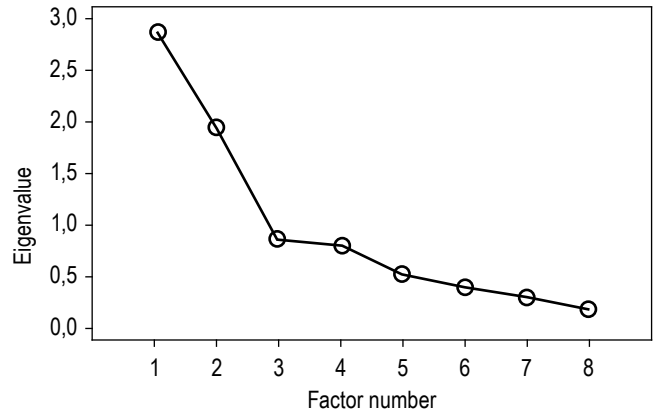
Table 4. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.911	36.384	36.384	2.516	31.449	31.449
2	1.967	24.582	60.966	1.474	18.422	49.870
3	.863	10.793	71.759			
4	.820	10.249	82.008			
5	.536	6.696	88.704			
6	.398	4.978	93.683			
7	.318	3.969	97.652			
8	.188	2.348	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

A scree diagram (Figure 2) confirmed that the two factors were the correct choice.

Figure 2: Scree plot



In order to get a stable matrix, we used Oblimin with Kaiser normalization rotations (Table 5). A rotational strategy enabled a clear pattern of loadings.

Table 5. Rotated Factor Matrix

	Structure Matrix	
	Factor	
	1	2
LAB_Choice	-.239	.781
TRAINING_cost	-.135	.658
Recruit-NVQ	-.131	.615
NVQ_promotion	.071	.589
NVQ_demand	.619	-.219
Follow_LABmarket	.981	-.230
follow_TRENDS	.774	-.182
WORK_NVQSchool	.389	.110

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Apparently, the first factor is more highly correlated with the variables than the second factor. We defined the first factor as the flexibility of available choice of NVQs; it consists of correlating current demands of the industry and the labour market as well as following trends in the industry and in the education system. We defined the second factor as the employers’ costs for participating in the NVQ system and the implementation of NVQ certificates into the sectors’ legislation. It consists of the influence of the NVQs on the quantity and quality of the workforce, labour costs, and implementation of NVQ certificates in HR procedures and legal acts.

8 Discussion

Theoretical bases have been tested using stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry. The correlation and factor analysis identified major factors in the deficiency of

the NVQ system. These comprise the system's recognition, effective promotion, cost acceptability and procedural efficiency, implementation of NVQs in the legislation, and adaptation to the needs of the market.

The results of this survey show that employers in the tourism and hospitality industry generally have no doubts about the benefits of recognitions of non-formal and informal learning, but only in theory. When it comes to practice, in HR activities and legal acts, they show less confidence in this system. One of the reasons lies in the existing collection of NVQs in tourism and hospitality, which does not match skill shortages in the industry. The results of the poll on the sample of employers revealed various reasons for this disappointing perspective: the system is not known among employers, inadequate promotional and informative activities, NVQ certificates have a low image, social partners act more as an obstacle to the system, and the role of the ministry in charge is too passive.

Although a high unemployment rate exists in Slovenia (8.7 per cent in 2011), large numbers of vacancies remain unfilled, especially in catering, the construction industry, and public utilities (ESS, 2011). According to Werquin (2010), general consensus exists about the fact that the recognition of prior learning outcomes may be beneficial for all levels of the population. However, certain groups are especially vulnerable to professional or social exclusion because they lack significant competences or, more precisely, recognised knowledge and skills. The real target group of NVQ certifications comprise workers without any qualifications, especially those with considerable experience. They can receive formal recognition of NVQ and increase their employability. Opportunities are also considerable for people who have prematurely left the formal education system. In the tourism and hospitality industry, plenty of opportunities for this labour force are available.

9 Conclusions

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Slovenia exists in various forms; the NVQ system seems, despite several weaknesses, the most developed. Although the legal basis for NVQ certification was established 10 years ago, the results thus far have not been satisfactory.

Certificates of NVQs will be fully asserted when employers treat diplomas and NVQ certificates equally and employees become interested in acquiring certificates because they bring about employment, promotions, and wage increases. They will be asserted when the formal educational system does not compete with the system of NVQ certifications, but realizes that it offers new opportunities as well, especially in times of decreasing youth population, to concentrate on adults. Training programmes for them can be tailor-made to the requirements of NVQs. To some degree, NVQs can solve the problem of drop-outs as well. Finally, it is high time for a coordinative functioning of all institutions within the system, with harmonized inter-sectoral legislation, fluid communication with stakeholders, and

clear roles of all partners. Sadly, respondents exposed the rather ignorant role of the caretaker, the Ministry of Labour.

Finally, we must bear in mind the limitations of this research. The findings of this analysis cannot be generalized beyond the margins of this industry. However, the sample is representative, for it consists of management staff from all types of tourism and hospitality companies. Further research on this topic is necessary, using a larger sample of relevant respondents from other industries. Furthermore, a large variety of stakeholders (e.g., employees) would also provide further insights into this area.

10 References

- Allen, R. S., Dawson, G., Wheatley, K., & White, C. S. (2008). Perceived diversity and organizational performance. *Employee Relations*, 30(1), 20–33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01425450810835392>
- Bryan, L. L., & Joyce, C. I. (2007). *Mobilizing minds*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Center za poklicno izobraževanje (CPI). (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.cpi.si/>
- Čot, D. (2010). *NPK—nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija: 10 let NPK, 60.000 novih priložnosti (NPK-National Vocational Qualifications: 10 years of NPK, 60,000 new opportunities)*. Ljubljana: CPI.
- Drucker, P. F. (2001). *Managerski izzivi v 21. stoletju (Management Challenges for the 21st Century)*. Ljubljana: GV Založba.
- Duvecot, R., Schuur, K., & Paulusse, J. (2005). *The unfinished story of VPL: Valuation and validation of prior learning in Europe's learning countries*. Utrecht: Foundation EC-VPL & Kenniscentum EVC.
- Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). (2011). *Zavod za zaposlovanje RS*. Retrieved from <http://www.ess.gov.si/>
- Ivančič, A. (2000). Feststellung der zuvor erworbenen Kenntnisse (zusammenfassung) (Determination of the previously acquired knowledge (abstract)). In P. Grootings (Ed.), *Vocational education and training developments in Slovenia, Germany and the Netherlands, Documentation from two policy workshops*. Ljubljana: MŠŠ.
- Ivančič, A., Mohorčič, V. Š., Vrečer, N., Svetina, M., Pavlin, S., Svetlik, I., ... Demirtshyan, M. (2007). *Priznavanje neformalnega in priložnostnega učenja: aktivnost OECD 2006–2007: nacionalno poročilo za Slovenijo (Recognition of informal learning: the activity of the OECD 2006-2007: National Report of Slovenia)*. Ljubljana: CPI.
- Jelenc, Z., Komljanc, N., & Žakelj, A. (2007). *Strategija vseživljenjskosti učenja v Sloveniji (Lifelong learning strategy in Slovenia)*. Ljubljana: MŠŠ in Javni zavod Pedagoški inštitut.

11. Kopač, A. (2000). Evaluation study of pilot certification projects. In I. Sevtlik (Ed.), *Certification of qualifications in Slovenia, Volume 1: Status report on certification of professional/vocational qualifications and summary of background studies*. Ljubljana: MŠŠ.
12. Može, M. (2005). Pridobivanje nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacij na področju zdravstvene nege (Obtaining national vocational qualifications in nursing). *Obzornik zdravstvene nege*, 39(1), 39–45.
13. MVZT and Žejn. (2006). *Študija o poklicnih standardih s področja računalništva in informatike (A study of professional standards in the field of computer science)*. Retrieved from <http://www.mvzt.gov.si>
14. National Reference Point (NRP). (2011). *Podatkovne baze (Databases)*. Retrieved from <http://www.nrpslo.org/index.aspx>
15. Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2007). *New OECD activity on recognition of non-formal and informal learning: Draft country background report. Slovenia*. Reterieved from <http://www.oecd.org/>
16. Pavlin, S. (2007). *Vpliv tihega in izraženega znanja na profesionalizacijo poklicev (The impact of tacit knowledge and expressed knowledge on the professionalisation of occupations)* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana.
17. Republiški izpitni center (RIC). (2010). *Posvet o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah, gradivo za udeležence (Consultation on National Vocational Qualifications, materials for participants)*. Ljubljana: RIC.
18. Senge, P. (2001). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
19. Svetlik, I. (Ed.). (2000). *Certification of qualifications in Slovenia, Volume 1: Status report on certification of professional/vocational qualifications and Summary of background studies*. Ljubljana: MŠŠ.
20. Svetlik, I. (Ed.). (2004). Kadrovska dejavnost pred novimi izzivi (Personnel action against new challenges). *Kadri*, 10(13), 5–9.
21. Vodopivec, M., & Dolenc, P. (2009). Live longer, work longer. In R. Holzmann, L. MacKellar, & J. Repanšek (Eds.), *Pension reform in Southeastern Europe: Linking to labor and financial market reform*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
22. Werquin, P. (2010). *Recognition of non-formal and informal learning: Country practices*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/>
23. Zakon o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah (ZNPk). (2000). *Uradni list RS*, št. 81/2000. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve.



Marija Rok studied economics and business at EPF Maribor and holds a M.Sc. in management from the Faculty of Management Koper, where she also completed her specialization in management in education. She works at the Faculty of Tourism Studies Turistica Portorož. In addition to pedagogical and research work, she also participates in project groups comprising tourism and HR. Her main points of interest in academic and applied research are studies of tourism, lifelong learning, recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and the labour market.

Marija Rok je študirala ekonomijo in poslovne vede na Ekonomsko-poslovni fakulteti Univerze v Mariboru in magistrirala iz menedžmenta na Fakulteti za management Univerze na Primorskem v Kopru, opravila pa je tudi specializacijo iz menedžmenta v izobraževanju. Zaposlena je na Fakulteti za turistične študije - Turistica v Portorožu, sodeluje pa tudi v različnih projektnih skupinah s področja turizma in človeških virov. Objavlja članke s področij trga dela, izobraževanja in usposabljanja za turizem, vseživljenjskega učenja, priznavanja neformalnega in izkustvenega učenja.