

The Increase of the Prosperity and its Effect on Gastronomic Enterprises in the Region of Ferizaj

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Abstract

Kosovo's economy is growing continuously, which is reflected in increased incomes and increased of prosperity through increased purchasing power. All this is positively reflecting the increasing demand for gastronomic services and products in Kosovo.

Other factors, such as the stabilization of Kosovo immigrants in Western countries and the strong emotional attachment to the homeland, are affecting the increase of this demand, which is manifested by regular vacations in the homeland, as well as ceremonies and family celebrations. At the same time, besides the requirements, they bring their experiences, which reflect the increase in the level and quality of gastronomic services and products.

This process has also been conditioned by the increase in the number of employees and is positively affecting the food industry, especially local producers.

We will analyze this situation by reviewing the scientific literature of the field, other research and analyzing the current situation through the survey of micro and small businesses in the Ferizaj Region, which will provide an overview of the situation and development trends in this field of study.

Key words: gastronomy, food, services, human resources

INTRODUCTION

According to the analysis of national and international institutions, Kosovo's economic growth in recent years was 4% or more. The perspective of Kosovo's economic growth is projected to be positive, with an average growth of 4.2%. At the same time, according to the Statistical Office of Kosovo, from 2012 to 2018, wages were increased by more, or 29.8%, with the average gross wage in the public sector that marked an increase of 44.1%.

Based on data on wages and economic growth, representatives of the Statistical Office (2019) conclude that: "When an organization is made up of capable and motivated people there is no lack of success. Wage structures are an indispensable part of effective management but they are basic and impeller factors of development".

Austrian-American philosopher and economist Peter Drucker said: "The purpose and goal of a company is to create customers". But Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said that: "The purpose is good, but the fulfillment is difficult".

Based on these two sayings the question arises: How can we transform a restaurant, hotel, or other business in the field of gastronomy into a successful enterprise?

This issue was addressed, besides others, by the author T. Hinterholzer (2013), who states that as any modern gastronomic enterprise is guided by those principles that enterprise goals are ultimately met by a magical hand, when the clients' wishes are fulfilled as optimally as possible. The success of the enterprise in this sense is a result of the best possible fulfillment of the clients' wishes.

An answer to this question is also provided by the Sector Strategy (2017) which states that this is possible when we have a rich gastronomy, which is based on regional specialties based on local tradition, produce and products, with a mix of Balkan specialties with those oriental, inherited from the Ottoman occupation, but not neglecting the specialties of modern international cuisine.

Given this, we can say that gastronomy can be considered as an alternative form of communication between businesses or businesses and clients, which is dealt with in the doctoral thesis of

Markus Zeller (2009). Today we find this phenomenon still a current topic in Kosovo's gastronomy where it is seen the use of gastronomic businesses by producers or sellers as a point of contact with beverage consumers through exposure to advertising material such as glasses, napkins, ashtrays, refrigerators, lights, etc.

In the past years, tourism experts (who have prepared the National Tourism Plan) identified gastronomy as an optimally unused element, and the econometric assessment suggests that improving gastronomic supply would have a high impact on attendance, image and the satisfaction of domestic gastronomic service users, tourists outside the area but also foreign tourists.

Businesses in the field of gastronomy, led by visionary managers in the Ferizaj Region, aware of the potential of gastronomy, are continuously increasing their outputs, all of which is made possible also by the region's growing economic development, and especially by the increase of wages, based on changing the mindset of the population from the experiences gained from the employment of Kosovo citizens outside Kosovo, who brought money and experience and culture from those countries, but also from the experience of international staff and representatives of foreign firms in Kosovo.

All this reflected in the sustainability of businesses in the field of gastronomy, which was reflected through the increased volume of work, the increased number of employees and the plans for growth in the coming years.

In the Kosovo tourism industry, food is taking on particular importance. Food is increasingly being recognized as an important part of Kosovo's culture and economy. Gastronomic companies are facing the challenge of delivering new experiences that include the atmosphere, creativity and lifestyle. Services like restaurants, bars, cafes, etc. have a significant impact on regional development due to the increasing number of daily visitors. The development of gastronomic enterprises also has an important impact on the food industry itself, increasing production and sales opportunities for tourist consumers. The development of gastronomy services is of paramount importance to the entire national economy, as it absorbs a considerable number of human resources.

The field of gastronomy is an area where many of our domestic citizens have been successful in other countries, as we can see in various publications such as: "Gastronomy, the field where

Kosovo citizens are a success story" or data from the websites of our co-founders in the diaspora. Of course this is of particular importance because they transfer their experience in Kosovo from different countries in the world where they work.

That gastronomy is a promising field can also be seen in the many articles (from antiquity to the present) in this field, which visionary managers are using meticulously. While entrepreneurship research primarily deals with the question of how good business opportunities in the field of gastronomy can be identified, evaluated and used, strategic management in these enterprises deals with creating and maintaining competitive advantages and thus long-term success of companies. Hitt et al. (2001) require that both perspectives need to be integrated in order to consider how new companies can be established and become successful in the long-term.

Schneider (2008), in her study explores the issue of success factors in gastronomy from the point of view of industrial economics and resource-based theory, with particular attention to the human and social capital of the entrepreneur. The study provides a quantitative test of the resource-based perspective on small service enterprises, using the example of St. Gallen's gastronomy.

The quality of service is crucial to the success of a gastronomic business. According to Schneider (2008), the quality of services in gastronomy is divided into three elements:

1. Basic performance (food taste),
2. How the service is done (friendliness, service attention),
3. Environment (layout - room layout, table decoration, environment).

Quality of service refers to the service itself, which includes the fulfillment of all invisible, intangible contact components provided by the company's employees to the customer.

The above mentioned requires the definition of the term gastronomy. In most of the published papers on gastronomy there is agreement about the genesis of the term. According to the prestigious German website Hoteljer.de the concept of gastronomy (based on Hoteljer.de), according to etymology, comes from Greek culture and is made up of *gastri* = abdomen and *nomos* = law. What exactly is gastronomy?

1. A part of the hospitality industry that deals with professional guest food in restaurants and offers a service, or

2. An elevated level of cuisine known as Haute Cuisine.

The term also known as Haute Cuisine - by definition comes from 19th century France and means something like "excellent cuisine". Today Haute Cuisine is internationally renowned for its unique gourmet taste experience - its temple is the gastronomy of the stars.

According to Morton M (1997), the word gastronomy, in Greek "gastri (abdomen) and nomos (law)" (Morton 1997, pp. 139-140), has its origin in the name of a work of the Greek poet Archistratus (about 350 before our era). He points out that Archistratus's work primarily provides references to fish and wine in the Mediterranean region in a humorous way, and may perhaps be understood as the forerunner of today's travel guides rather than as a cookbook.

According to Fritz & Wagner (2015), there are many definitions in the literature that consider gastronomy from different perspectives. Depending on the topic or field of research, are made various independent definitions, but we can say that gastronomy themes the enjoyment of good food and drink, at the beginning of the 19th century gastronomy was considered the "art of good eating". (Scarpato 2002; Kivela and Crotts 2005).

In order to analyze the current situation in the field of gastronomy, after reviewing national and international literature, a field research was conducted where were surveyed businesses in the Ferizaj region.

The purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to identify the positive steps of gastronomy development in the Ferizaj Region and its potential for employment growth by emphasizing the role of economic development and new approach to gastronomic services in Kosovo.

Methodology

The research methodology is based on the treatment of secondary sources from domestic and international literature as well as primary sources from research. The design of the questionnaire was done with GrafStat software, where the data was processed first, then the data were transferred to SPSS for more detailed analysis, using deductive methods, comparing synthetic and analytical research data with direct access to primary and secondary sources. The questions are

mostly closed type, with one or more solution options (which later turned into separate questions in SPSS), but there are also open-ended questions and questions based on the Likert scale. The sample was randomized, where was used prior empirical selection to select them before being asked. Thus individuals are considered as equally representatives of the population. This method was chosen for the fact that the survey was conducted by the researcher himself. This avoids the disadvantage of this method and in particular the fact that the surveyors could be mistaken. Some of the data from this survey will be compared with the data from the research of author Çeku (2014) conducted in the field of tourism in some parts of Kosovo, such as: Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Prishtina, Shterpce and Dragash, but he didn't include Ferizaj. For a comparison of data some of the questions are similar.

Findings of the paper

The survey was conducted by 67 businesses out of which 50.7% were micro enterprises (with 1-9 employees) and 49.3% small enterprises (with 9-49 employees).

Viewed from the ownership point of view in the survey, 73.1% were individual businesses, followed by partnerships with 10.4%, LLCs with 9.0% and general partnerships with 7.5%, while public and socially owned enterprises weren't the part of the research because they are privatized or they aren't operational. In this way the sample represents the population fairly.

The number of employees in the last three years tends to increase continuously (table 1). Expressed as a percentage it is planned to be at least 44% compared to the initial year

Table 1. Developments in the number of employees

Statistics		Total number of employees in the past year	Total number of employees now	Planned number of employees for the following year
N	Valid	67	67	67
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		10.63	11.85	15.25
Minimum		2	2	2
Maximum		40	45	50
Sum		712	794	1022
%		100%	112%	144%

The number of visitors has increased significantly and in 2019 was as follow:

Table 2: Number of visitors (domestic and foreign) in the past year

Statistics		
N	Valid	67
	Missing	0
Mean		32267.69
Minimum		1000
Maximum		100000
Sum		2161935

The reason for the difference between the minimum and maximum value lies in the type of product/service that is offered. Compared to Çeku's (2012) research there is a significant increase.

Table 3: The value of products and services realized in the past year

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <100,000 €	35	52.2	52.2	52.2
100,000 € - 1,000,000 €	27	40.3	40.3	92.5
1,000,000 € - 5,000,000 €	5	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The survey results show a considerable increase in revenues compared to the research by Çeku (2012), which proves a considerable improvement in revenues in this sector. The average monthly wage expenditures for all employees in a business, grouped into four categories, are most expressed being in the amount of € 801-3000 in 44.8% of cases, but 9% of surveyed businesses state that they spend € 12,001-45,000 on wages. It should not be forgotten that the declared wages are lower than those paid in order to avoid liabilities.

Table 4: Average monthly expenditures on wages in the past year

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 80 - 800 €	6	9.0	9.0	9.0
801 € - 3,000 €	30	44.8	44.8	53.7
3,001 € - 12,000 €	25	37.3	37.3	91.0
12,001 € - 45,000 €	6	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

Compared to Çeku (2012) where the average monthly expenditures of the € 80-800 category were stated in 22% of cases now there are only

in 9% of cases. There is also an increase in the following two categories.

In terms of ownership (whether the facility used is in business ownership or rented) the research findings are similar to those of Çeku (2012).

Plans for the following year, based on questions:

- Your future plans: The number of employees,
- Your plans for the future: The working space,
- Your plans for the future: The number of products / services offered, with response options: *growth*, *same* and *decrease*, are very promising and there will be no reduction in any of these areas.

Table 5. Plans for the following year

Plans for the following year	Growth	Same	Decrease
Your future plans: The number of employees	94.03 %	5.97%	0
Your plans for the future: The working space	80.60 %	19.40%	0
Your plans for the future: The number of products/services offered	53.57 %	46.27%	0

There is no reduction in either category of expectations. There is an increase in the number of employees in 94.03% of the cases, in 80.60% of the cases it is planned to increase the working space. The number of products / services will increase in 53.73% of the cases and this can be seen as a path to stabilization.

As a result of the survey and the conversation, estimates were also given of the reasons for the increase in the number of visitors and thus of the number of employees and plans for future development. Respondents' responses are as follow:

The reasons for the growth and development of micro and small enterprises in the field of gastronomy in Kosovo are:

- Economic development of the country and increase of the prosperity of the population, as a result:
 - For individuals:
 - Increase in the income per capita, and thus the possibility of allocating funds for non-essential life purposes,

- Increase in the cost of home cooking (individual prices of ingredients higher than group prices of ingredients, almost all purchased),
 - Use of time for other purposes, etc.
 - For businesses and institutions:
 - Business meetings outside business facilities with foreign and local businesses,
 - Celebrations of business achievements and those of the end of the year,
 - Manifestations organized for the end of the school years,
 - Different trainings, etc.
- Cultural developments and borrowings from other countries' cultures (related or not related to the prosperity of families and individuals), as a result:
 - Traditional meetings with friends and relatives have been moved from the family environment to the gastronomic premises:
 - Engagements,
 - Weddings,
 - Birthdays,
 - Anniversaries,
 - Celebrations for educational achievements,
 - Regular meetings with friends and companions,
 - Meetings of returnees on holiday by migrants,
 - Foreign visitors, etc.
 - Increase of the quality of services in gastronomy:
 - Living spaces,
 - Inventory
 - Hospitality,
 - Food and beverage quality,
 - Increase of the level of knowledge of the employees (local and international education and experience),
 - Access to electronic resources to information sources about field innovations, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above, we can draw the following conclusions:

- The findings from the paper prove that the field of gastronomy is the right track and that in the future, in addition of meeting the consumer demands and needs for these services, this will also be a growing field of employment, and thus it will play an important role in reducing unemployment.
- The paper has practical implications. The practical implications of the paper stem from the fact that this paper provides sufficient data to show the current state of micro and small gastronomic enterprises in the Ferizaj region, these results show a positive development in the field of gastronomy and an impact on the employment growth in this field. The practical implication also involves identifying improved managers' access to these businesses for the maintenance and expansion of businesses that can serve as examples for other regions in Kosovo where through fulfilling the demands and needs for gastronomic products and services, the number of employees in the region may increase.
- The originality and value of this paper is noticed by the fact that the data were collected through direct surveys with the responsible persons of businesses and the information gained from them presented in the paper shows the real situation of micro and small gastronomic enterprises in the Ferizaj region. A part of the information gained from the data is compared with information from earlier research in this field in other parts of Kosovo.

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