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## THE STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED HUMAN RESOURCES IN TOURISM — THE CITY OF UŽICE CASE STUDY

*Slobodanka Marković*\*<sup>1</sup>, *Marija Perić*\*, *Maja Mijatov*\*\* , *Miloš Tucović*\*\*\*

\* University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography, Belgrade, Serbia

\*\* University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Novi Sad, Serbia

\*\*\* Hospitality and Tourism School, Belgrade, Serbia

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**Abstract:** Today, tourism development cannot be imagined without the function of travel agencies and tourism organizations related to providing the information and advices. This function should be managed carefully, because providing the tourism information and advices is realized in direct contact with the client, which means that employees' education should be correspondent to required tasks of each workplace. This paper indicates the structure of employees throughout the travel agencies and tourism organizations within the City of Užice (Western Serbia), but also the structure of unemployed human resources with tourism education in order to determine the socio-demographic structure and the share of young people in employed/unemployed category. Methods used in this paper are: survey, analysis and synthesis, statistics and comparison. Collected data were processed by using the mathematical-statistical software SPSS 17.0. Results of the study showed that females under the age of 40 are prevailing within the employees' category, while females under the age of 30 are prevailing within the unemployed human resources.

**Key words:** tourism, employed and unemployed structure, employment, Užice

### Introduction

The twentieth century will stay remembered by the economic effects of mass tourism development. Specific needs of modern tourists directed the tourism development towards the socio-humanistic, cultural and educational spheres (Kovačević, 2012). Therefore, tourism entities should constantly monitor the technical and technological, cultural and other types of changes in order to ensure adequate and promptly knowledge regarding the characteristics of tourism demand (Vujović, Premović, Premović, & Grujić, 2014). However, adaptation to new tourists' needs requires adequate human resources, which is confirming their importance and role in the modern tourism development.

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence to: [markovicsslobodanka@gmail.com](mailto:markovicsslobodanka@gmail.com)

Tourism employees represent the “human capital” of this sector, while the individuals with specific competencies, knowledge, experience and creativity are often a key factor of business success and creation of additional values within the tourism market (Becker, 1993). In recent years, human resources became an important component within the process of tourism development and tourism planning at local, regional and national level (Liu & Wall, 2006). They also represent one of the most important segments of service quality in tourism, because they are resources that cannot be imitated and resources that “mark” the specific tourism service in relation to competition (Kovačević, 2012).

International conferences organized throughout the nineties of the twentieth century indicated the importance of planning and developing the human resources (such as conferences in Indonesia in 1993, Portugal in 1994, Pakistan in 1995, the United States of America in 1995, Germany in 1995, etc.). At the Conference organized in Pakistan (1995) it was concluded that the UN World Tourism Organization should contribute to quality education of human resources in member countries throughout its advisory role (Jafari & Var, 1994; Jafari & Sola, 1996).

Szivas & Riley (1999) and Baum (2007; 2015) believed that development of human resources continues to be a key problem of contemporary tourism, which means that tourism remains to be the sector with employment practices that are below standard. Tourism can contribute to the overall economic and social development through the employment process. However, the question of quality and employment sustainability appears on the one hand, while the government role in supporting the development of human resources in the tourism sector appears on the other.

By developing the modern system of education, staff training and “lifelong learning” became very important. However, some theorists (Poolock & Ritchie, 1990; Amoah & Baum, 1997; Peacock & Ladkin, 2002; Mayaka & Akama, 2007; Zagonari, 2009) still have different views and opinions regarding the representation of tourism programs in high schools and universities.

Since Tourism Organization of Užice in Western Serbia does not have official evidence about the structure of human resources and number of employees in tourism sector, authors of this paper decided to research the given problem. The paper describes the structure of employed and unemployed human resources in tourism, without the hospitality sector. The research obtained the employees in travel agencies and tourism organizations and unemployed resources with education in the field of tourism. The aim of the paper is to determine the

employed and unemployed structure of human resources regarding their socio-demographic characteristics. The paper will answer the question whether the total number of employed and unemployed human resources is under the age of 30 years and the question regarding the percentage of middle/high educated human resources, as well as the percentage of human resources that gained their education at Business and Technical College of Vocational Studies in Užice in the total number of employed/unemployed structure. It is necessary to identify the causes of the problem and to find a solution for the improvement of employment practices in accordance with the results of the survey research conducted within employed human resources and data regarding the unemployed structure provided by the National Employment Service — Office in Užice.

### **The business of travel agencies and tourism organizations**

The business of travel agencies and tourism organizations is connected within the tourism market through the function related to providing the information and advises which facilitates inclusion of tourist into the tourist flows at the same time. Potential users of this information are likely to use tourism services during the visit to particular destination or a tourist site (Spasić, 2011).

Five travel agencies are operating in Užice. Those are: “Riva Tours”, “SIM Tours”, “Amigo Travel”, “Matović Tours” and “Srce-clock travel”. Beside the function related to providing the information and advises, these agencies also deal with functions related to propaganda, mediation and organization.

By the type of ownership, these agencies belong to private travel agencies with local and regional significance, except the agencies “SIM Tours” and “Srce-clock travel” that have a national character. Agencies “Riva Tours” and “Amigo Travel” belong to the group of small travel agencies, without the network of offices. The agency “Riva Tours” is a typical “retail-seller” (Štetić & Šalov, 2000). This agency offers travel arrangements of co-operating tour operators, but it also organizes tours by requests of its clients (in a form of short trips and excursions). “Amigo Travel” agency has its own travel arrangement, which ranks it into the mixed travel agencies according to the type of business. Agencies with the network of offices are: “SIM Tours”, “Matović Tours” and “Srce-clock travel”. These agencies belong to large commercial entities, due to the fact that they make the contact with wider tourism market through this network. The agency “SIM Tours” (3) has slightly wider network of offices in comparison with “Matović Tours” (2) and “Srce-clock travel” (2). Travel agency “Amigo Travel” is the only one that cooperates with travel agencies and tourism organizations of the Zlatibor County. The main goals of this cooperation are

promotion and development of excursion tourism. Programs of these excursions are presented in the catalog “The best tourism routes” published by Tourism Organization of Western Serbia. Travel agency “Amigo Travel” made a great marketing move in its promotion at the regional level. At the national level, this agency performs at the stand of Tourism Organization of Western Serbia at Belgrade International Tourism Fair. The only agency that has its own stand at this Fair is “SIM Tours”. No matter the fact that agencies “Riva Tours”, “Matović Tours” and “Srce-clock travel” do not promote themselves at Belgrade Tourism Fair, the management of these agencies regularly visits the Fair in order to make co-operating agreements for next tourism season.

Tourism organizations located in Užice are Tourism Organization of Užice and Tourism Organization of Western Serbia. They have the status of legal entities and they are operating in accordance with the regulations for public services, with the main activity focused to tourism improvement and promotion. Tourism Organization of Užice was formed in 2004, with the aim of tourism improvement and promotion through the activities and cooperation with commercial and other entities that contribute to tourism development in direct or indirect manner. Tourism Organization of Western Serbia was formed in 2007 and its formation was initiated by local authorities across the ten Zlatibor county’ municipalities, in order to enable mutual participation at international and regional tourism fairs. The task of this Organization is to coordinate the operations of local tourism organizations within the region (Jovičić, 2002). For the purpose of presentation and promotion of Zlatibor’ tourism region, this Organization realized the cooperation with cross-border organizations and together they actively participate in elaboration and implementation of tourism projects.

Employees of travel agencies and tourism organization reached their education and skills at University of Belgrade (Faculty of Geography and Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management — Singidunum), University of Novi Sad (Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management), University of Niš (Faculty of Science and Mathematics), University of Kragujevac (Business and Technical College of Vocational Studies located in Užice) and in Čajetina (High School of Hospitality and Tourism).

Human resources in travel agencies with the high school education are engaged in selling the arrangements and performing the administration. Those with the higher education degrees are engaged in the same working tasks, but they also have extra duties. They deal with the business operations related to travel payments, marketing and commerce and they are also visiting Tourism Fair with

their managers in order to participate in the conclusion of contacts regarding the cooperation agreements. However, the biggest responsibilities regarding the determination of work quality and quantity have the owners of travel agencies.

Organization of work tasks in tourism organizations is defined by the work experience and education degree of human resources. Graduated employees are engaged in providing the information and they are promoting the destination values through the direct contact with tourists. Marketing tasks are performed by the human resources with the second level of University education (master degree). Their tasks include the contact with potential tourists at national and foreign tourism fairs. Management positions belong to human resources with faculty and master education degree.

### **Methodology**

Research regarding the structure of employees in travel agencies and tourism organizations in the City of Užice was conducted by using the questionnaire, which contained a “closed” questions (were respondents circled one of the given answers) and “open” questions (where participants wrote the answers by themselves). The survey research included leaving the questionnaires to respondents during their distribution and taking the questionnaires from participants after a certain time. The advantage of this research type is reflected in saving the time and general efficiency throughout the data collection (Bešić, 2008). Data were collected in March 2016.

The questionnaire contained ten questions, in the form of seven “closed” and three “open” question types. The questions were formulated and aligned with the research goals and they were represented in two paper sides. In addition to demographic characteristics (such as gender and age), respondents also answered the questions regarding their education (knowledge, qualifications and foreign languages), employment and work experience in the field of tourism. In order to determine the number of unemployed human resources within the City of Užice territory, authors contacted the National Employment Service, Office in Užice. Data were collected by using the electronic request (in March 2016) that contained questions from the questionnaire. Data were processed by applying the statistical program SPSS 17.0 and their analysis included the application of statistical description. The results are represented in the form of tables (Pallant, 2011).

In the process of researching the equalities, similarities and differences in the structure of employed/unemployed human resources, but also in determination of knowledge regarding the English language according to the number of

employees in travel agencies and tourism organizations, authors used a comparative method. Comparisons and results are represented in the form of charts.

### Results

The City of Užice disposes with a small percentage of tourism employees, which is confirmed through the questionnaire analysis. Data analysis showed that there are 17 respondents within employed human resources and that there are 68 unemployed individuals with acquired tourism education, registered by the National Employment Service, Office in Užice on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2016.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>
Total number of respondents	17	68
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	2	12
Female	15	56
<b>Age</b>		
21–30	2	47
31–40	7	20
41–50	3	1
51–60	5	1
<b>Education degree</b>		
High school	2	/
Higher education	2	57
Faculty	10	11
Master degree	3	/
<b>Work experience</b>		
Without experience	/	55
Up to 3 years	3	8
3–5	2	1
5–10	5	2
10–15	/	2
15–20	2	/
> 20	5	/

According to the Table 1, human resources under the age of 40, with faculty degree and with work experience between 5 and 10 years and over the 20 years of experience are the most represented within the structure of employees. Based on the results, it could be concluded that individuals under the age of 30 years, with finished high school or faculty degree, without or with work experience up to three years are mostly represented within the structure of unemployed human resources.

Table 2. Travel agencies and tourism organizations according to the number of employees

Travel agencies	Number of employees	Tourism organizations	Number of employees
Riva tours	3	Tourism Organization of Užice	6
Amigo travel	2		
SIM tours	2	Tourism Organization of West Serbia	1
Matović tours	2		
Srce-clock travel	1		
TOTAL:	10		7

Data from the Table 2 indicate that employment opportunities for young people in the City of Užice are very limited. The number of graduates who found the first job in the field of their education immediately upon the graduation is very low. Unemployment of these human resources is the result of incompatibility between school curricula and the needs of specific market (Vujović et al., 2014), and it is followed by the unwillingness of young people to work and take the responsibilities for performing the obligations required for starting their own business, but also their unwillingness for additional qualification (e.g. only 1.5% of unemployed human resources finished the course for tour guides).

The willingness of young people to be exposed to daily migrations regarding the “permanent residence-place of working” (Solnet, Ford, Robinson, Ritchie, & Olsen, 2014) still represents a key problem in hiring the females. Also it is evident that young people, especially males, prefer working even if they are not legally registered, rather than volunteering in the profession.

The sample analysis points to the domination of females in total structure of employed/unemployed human resources (82.4% versus 82.4%). The higher percentage of them is employed in travel agencies compared to the percentage of those employed in tourism organizations (52.9% versus 29.4%). On the other hand, males are more represented within tourism organizations compared to travel agencies (5.9% versus 11.8%).

Individuals under the age of 30 are well represented within the female employees. These individuals are employed only within tourism organizations (28.6%). However, the largest percentage of human resources under the age of 30 is unemployed. According to the National Employment Service, Office in Užice, females are prevailing in the structure of unemployed human resources compared to males (82.4% versus 17.6%).

Table 3 The structure of employed/unemployed human resources

	Employees				Employees (total)		Un-employees (total)	
	Travel agencies		Tourism organizations					
	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
<b>Gender</b>	10.0	90.0	28.6	71.4	<b>17.6</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>82.4</b>
<b>Age:</b>								
21–30	0	0	0	28.6	0	11.8	10.2	58.8
31–40	10.0	40.0	14.3	14.3	11.8	29.4	7.4	22.1
41–50	0	10.0	14.3	14.3	5.9	11.8	0	1.5
51–60	0	40.0	0	14.3	0	29.4	0	0
<b>Education degree:</b>								
High school	0	10.0	0	14.3	0	11.8	0	0
Higher	10.0	20.0	14.3	14.3	0	17.6	14.7	69.1
Faculty	0	60.0	0	14.3	11.8	41.2	2.9	13.2
Master	0	0	14.3	28.6	5.9	11.8	0	0
<b>Work experience:</b>								
Without experience	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.7	66.2
Up to 3 years	10.0	0	0	28.6	5.9	11.8	1.5	10.3
3–5	0	20.0	0	0	0	11.8	0	1.5
5–10	0	20.0	14.3	28.6	5.9	23.5	0	2.9
10–15	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	1.5
15–20	0	10.0	0	14.3	0	11.8	0	0
> 20	0	40.0	14.3	0	5.9	23.5	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>	

All employees have previously work experience in the field of tourism. For human resources under the age of 40 (53.0%), the current work position represents their first work experience in tourism sector at the same time. Results indicate that even some unemployed human resources (17.8%) have the experience of working in tourism. Mostly, those are individuals younger than 30 years, usually engaged in seasonal or temporary jobs.

Data analysis showed that there are more employed human resources with faculty degree comparing to higher education (76.5% versus 11.8%). Among unemployed human resources, higher educated individuals are more common than those with the faculty degree (83.8% versus 16.2%). Percentage of respondents with finished high school degree is represented only within employed human resources (11.8%). The percentage of employed human resources with high school education degree in travel agencies and tourism organizations amounts 10.0% versus 14.3%.



Interestingly, respondents employed in travel agencies older than 50 years (33.3%) gained their education at former Department of Geography at the Faculty of Sciences in Belgrade. These human resources are working at managerial positions in travel agencies, while some of them are even agencies' owners. Opposite to situation in travel agencies, 33.3% of employees in tourism organizations between 30 and 50 years reached their education at Faculty of Geography in Belgrade. Employed human resources younger than 30 years (33.3%) finished Faculty of Science, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management in Novi Sad.

It could be noticed that 11.1% of employees in travel agencies gained their education at Business and Technical College of Vocational Studies in Užice, while human resources with education gained at this Institution are not represented within tourism organizations. The largest percentage of these human resources is registered among the official evidence of National Employment Service, Office in Užice (70.6%).

The employed and unemployed human resources are electronically capable and they are speaking foreign languages, which is very important in the contemporary process of economic changes, globalization and competition (Vujović et al., 2014). According to information of the National Employment Service, Office in Užice, all unemployed human resources possess the skills related to English language. The employed human resources are also able to speak English language.

The results showed that English language is the first one and often the only one foreign language for 41.2% of employees. A more detailed analysis showed that 41.2% of employees possess intermediate level of English language proficiency, while the higher level is characteristic for 52.9% of them. Therefore, it could be noticed that employees in travel agencies and tourism organizations possess different skills regarding the English language (Figure 1).

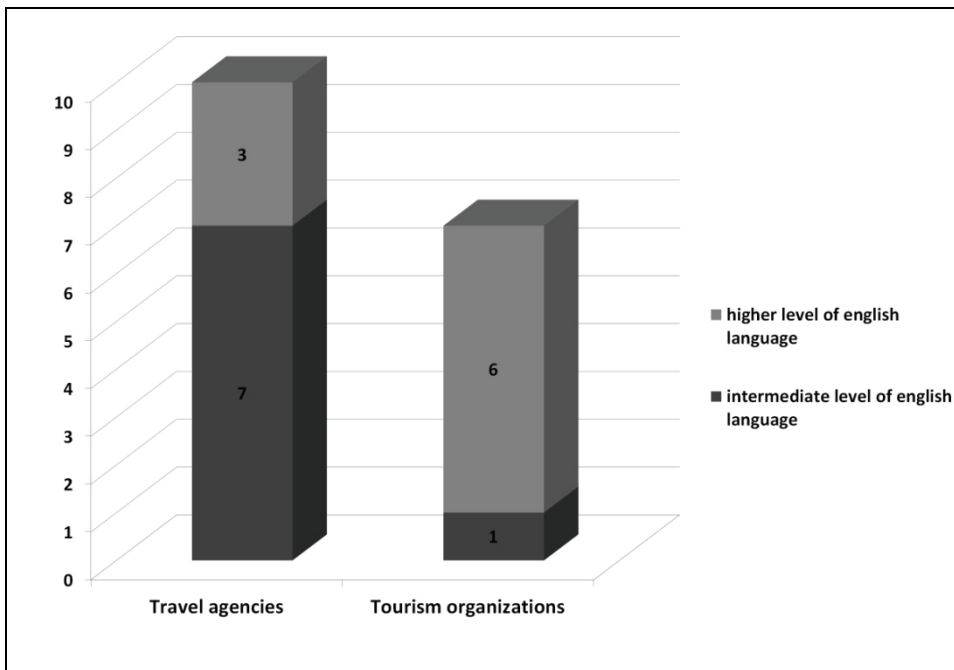


Figure 1. The level of knowledge regarding the English language by the number of employees

By analyzing the results, it could be found that 70% of employees in travel agencies have the intermediate level of English language skills. The percentage of employees with higher level of knowledge regarding the English language is higher in tourism organizations compared to travel agencies (85.7% versus 30%). The results confirmed the real situation, which is indicating the fact that human resources employed in tourism organizations are more committed to improvement of personal education compared to those employed in travel agencies. Beside English language skills, 52.9% of employees possess the minimum knowledge of even one or two other foreign languages. Precisely, 23.5% of employees use the knowledge of Russian, French or Italian languages during the communication with tourists.

Table 4. The structure of unemployed human resources by the length of waiting for a job

The waiting time at the evidence of National Employment Service, Office in Užice								
Gender	up to 1 years	up to 2 years	up to 3 years	up to 4 years	up to 5 years	from 5 to 8 years	> 8 years	Total
Male	0 0%	8 11.8%	1 1.5%	2 2.9%	1 1.5%	0 0%	0 0%	12 17.6%
Female	11 16.2%	14 20.6%	12 17.6%	7 0.5%	2 2.9%	8 11.8%	2 2.9%	56 82.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b> <b>16.2%</b>	<b>22</b> <b>32.4%</b>	<b>13</b> <b>19.1%</b>	<b>9</b> <b>13.2%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>4.4%</b>	<b>8</b> <b>11.8%</b>	<b>2</b> <b>2.9%</b>	<b>68</b> <b>100%</b>

The unemployed human resources are usually waiting for the first work experience between 5 and 8 years in average, although tourism industry is at the second place according to labor demand. Compared to 2012, percentage of unemployed that are up to 2 years registered at the evidence of unemployment decreased from 62.01% to 32.4%. However, it is necessary to highlight the fact that males usually find their jobs faster and easier compared to females, due to the fact that their waiting time amounts two years in average. In the most cases, these jobs are not in the field of their education. Generally speaking, females are usually looking for a job in the field of their education, which is the main reason of longer waiting for the job. Also, there is a significant percentage of females that are initially realized as wives and mothers, and then in terms of career. Those are the main reasons why females are waiting between 3 and 5 years for their first employment.

### Discussion

During the last year, employment of new human resources is not registered within the travel agencies. The reason is, on the one hand, that the current number of employees is adequate for successful operation of these agencies, while on the other hand, it is about the small family-owned agencies or agencies where head office creates an employment policy. Opening the new agencies represents a chance for employment of youths, which is recorded in 2015, but on the other hand there is the question of their business success and survival within the limited market. Situation is the similar within the tourism organizations. In 2013, for the purposes of specific working conditions in the info-center, Tourism Organization of Užice employed human resources with faculty degree and following acquired vocations: graduated manager in hunting tourism and

graduated manager in tourism. However, new systematization regarding the jobs could lead to layoffs for certain number of human resources.

In the small and competitive market, such as the City of Užice territory, business efficiency of travel agencies and tourism organizations depends on employees' ability to meet various needs of their users through the skills necessary for introducing the innovations, creativity, or adopting the new and leaving the old knowledge in order to meet tourists' expectations. Therefore, the most important task for employees is managing the knowledge through development and construction of proper competencies in the field of tourism. Continuous educations and trainings for employees are necessary during the whole working period, while possession and acquisition of knowledge regarding the modern marketing and management (such as team work, leadership, innovation, negotiation skills, etc.) are considered to be very important.

Tourism employees of Zlatibor County actively participate in professional training courses as part of the project "Education of tourism employees", organized by the National Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Services and the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Singidunum University from Belgrade. The workshops were organized for the first time at Zlatibor in 2007. Workshops for those employed in travel agencies were about the business administration. Those employed in tourism organizations attended training programs regarding the development of rural tourism and management of tourism destination.

This kind of training should also be organized for unemployed human resources, because in this way they could learn and acquire knowledge and skills that are not enough represented in official education system. Human resources with high school education degree should also be involved in educational courses. It is also necessary to organize educational trainings regarding the actively searching for a job, due to the fact that they are less recognized by the labor market.

The labor market indicates that trainings for human resources should be in the line with commercial trends and needs (Todorović, 2012). Contemporary employer expects that educated human resources, particularly those who are faculty educated, possess the skills regarding the foreign languages, electronic business, marketing and promotion, administration and skills of adequate tour guide (Djuricic & Jovanovic, 2014). The surveyed employers in the City of Užice emphasized before mentioned knowledge and skills as criteria in hiring elimination. Practice showed that employers invested considerable time and money into the training of new human resources, particularly in the field of

business communications, information technology, foreign languages and correspondence. However, in Serbian economy, development of employees is considered as cost rather than investment.

On the other hand, quality human resources with accredited faculty degrees who are waiting for their first job are represented within the evidence of National Employment Service, Office in Užice. According to consideration of business seasonality and spatial limitations in employment it could be concluded that these reasons might decrease the interest of pupils from high schools and students from universities to continue their education in the field of tourism.

For that reason, Tourism Organization of Western Serbia, as one of the participants of TEMPUS and IPA projects, should be more involved in linking the education with tourism and hospitality sector. Precisely, it should create the opportunities for practice, internships and volunteering of youth through providing the cooperation with tourism and hospitality commercial entities, but also with the public organizations (such as Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Užice, Regional Development Agency “Zlatibor” located in Užice, IPA offices in Užice and Prijepolje, Statistical Office - Department in Užice, Tourism Organization of Zlatibor, etc.). In that way, unemployed human resources would have a chance to gain necessary knowledge, practical experience and business skills, which also might increase their willingness for additional trainings.

Projects of the European Union regarding the cross-border cooperation between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (IPA) represent employment opportunities for youth. These projects represent proposals in addressing the key economic problems of the border areas and define the chances of future tourism and ecology development. The Offices of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the IPA projects with Bosnia and Herzegovina are located in Užice, while the Office of cooperation between Serbia and Montenegro is located in Prijepolje. The existence of these Offices allows and provides the opportunity for young people of Zlatibor County to apply the acquired knowledge, but also to further educate and improve their competences. The best ones could become collaborators and participants in the specific projects.

## **Conclusion**

The main goal of TEMPUS project “Harmonization and modernization of academic programs in the field of tourism in Serbia” is education and training for future high educated professional, but also for experts in the field of tourism. The project is implemented by Business and Technical College of Vocational Studies from Užice in association with: Higher Business School from Leskovac,

Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism from Vrnjačka Banja and Tourism Organization of Western Serbia.

During the closure of the first conference “Higher education in function of sustainable development of tourism in Serbia and Western Balkans”, held in 2014 in Užice (from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of October), it was concluded that highly educated human resources, in addition to theoretical knowledge, should also possess the skills and practical knowledge that will enable easier employment and inclusion into the business in tourism sector.

It is necessary to create education systems that could harmonize curricula in a way to satisfy the requirements of effective and rational businesses in tourism industry. This will contribute to providing the better services and tourism products. Therefore, in this way the City of Užice could raise its position at higher level within the Serbian tourism.

Results of this research might represent a starting point for future papers that should also analyze the structure of employed/unemployed human resources in tourism sector in more details, not only within the City of Užice territory, but also within the other municipalities of the Zlatibor County. Therefore, future research should include tourism and hospitality industry in more details in order to determine the real situation. Such research could determine the educational profiles and age groups of individuals that are the most represented within the employment/unemployment structure, which knowledge and skills contributed to more rapid employment for individuals up to 30 years, the readiness of human resources to mobility and the level of their willingness to be involved in further trainings.

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