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Factors influencing the success of business model in the hospitality service industry

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Abstract

The paper presents factors, influencing the success of business models used in the hospitality industry. The methodology of the research are scientific literature analysis and synthesis. The main results of the research showed that the success of the business, acting in the hospitality, grounded on the customer value creation, innovations implemented in the processes of the service delivery, and relationships with other partners in the sector, as well as customer.

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Keywords: Business model; Hospitality service; Hospitality industry; Factors for business models success.

Introduction

The business model is the subject for the discussion of theoreticians and practicing managers already for several decades. Searching for the best strategic decision, trying to control of the business efficiency and searching for value parameters in the high competition market – forces to analyse the elements, what open more possibilities for success, business profit, what guarantee the meeting of expectations of the consumers, etc. (Drakulevski, & Nakov, 2014; Ghezzi, 2014). However, if product-oriented business model can provide for the potential customer a product, what is usually item of the production economy; the services industry is much more complicated (Litos et al., 2011; Maglio, & Spohrer, 2013) and it is difficult to describe what business model should be in practice. It should involve specific elements, enabling to explain more intangible value for the customer, reconverting the entire business model to the *market-oriented*, *customer-oriented* or *services-oriented* business (Bowen, 1997; Pizam,

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2012). The leaving from the *generic* business model, what could be used for defining the success for all kind of businesses and turning to the *specific* business model – could be one of the success factors in finding the exceptional niche before other similar market players.

The purpose of the paper is to identify the factors of the success of business models, used in the hospitality service industry in the context of the growing competition market.

Methodology of the research based on the systemic scientific literature analysis, synthesis, and generalization. The research analyses the preconditions for the success of closely *customer-related* hospitality service industry, what involves a large part of any economy. The research covers different researches' analysis on the hospitality's subsectors business models, as accommodation, including hotels, motels, hostels, youth houses, as well as camping; catering, including high category restaurants, fast-food outlets, cafeterias, bars, buffets; travel agencies; other services, included into the hospitality service sector, such as wellness, spa, entertainment, gambling clubs, etc.

The research presents the process of deriving the success factors for the business models, what operate precisely for the hospitality service industry. The model, displaying the factors for the business success, is consolidated one and can be for whatever sector of the hospitality used, as well as for the entire hospitality industry. The essential factors, influencing the success in the hospitality service industry, are as follows: value creation, development of the relationship with partners, ICT, as well as customer relationship management.

The theoretical contribution of the paper related to the directions for theoreticians, making researches in the business models theories, as well as specific business models, for the services industry *per se*, for the hospitality or any subsector of the hospitality industry.

1. Business model and classification of business models

Business model has been an object of great interest in the scientific investigations in the management literature since last decades. This can be viewable from the increase in the number of written papers, connected to the business model. According to Kinderis (2012), the term of “business model” firstly introduced in the scientific literature in 1957, and in 1960 in – the title of the academic article already. However, majority of the authors state that the term of “business model” in the management literature has started to be widely used only since 1990. This is associated with the Internet rise and its expansion (Ballon, 2007; Demil, & Lecocq, 2010; Kinderis, 2012; Kinderis, & Jucevičius, 2013b; DaSilva, & Trkman, 2014). Several authors, such as DaSilva and Trkman (2014), Kinderis and Jucevičius (2013a) state that the term of “business model” is a controversial issue in the social sciences, especially in the management field. Authors have also marked that this term is used usually incorrectly in the public because the development of the term of business model was firstly promoted by the practitioners and then conceptualized by the scholars. The term of “business model” is used as the synonym for the strategy frequently, as a business concept, revenue model, economic model, business model, business process modelling (DaSilva, & Trkman, 2014). Thus, a lack of theoretical justification and perception leads to the wrong use of this term. It is worthy to note that, according to Ghezzi (2014), the strategic analysis, based on the business model only, is doomed to failure.

Scientists and practicing businesspersons agree with the statement that, in general, business model can be described as a logic, based on which the enterprise creates and presents the value to the customers in order to earn money. In other words, thanks to the business model, enterprises are able to commercialize new ideas, stand and create new value, meet customer needs better (Kinderis, 2012), and contribute to public welfare. Nowadays, the competitiveness of the enterprise in the market is settled not by its offered products or services, but by successfully created and consistently realizable business models.

M'Pherson (1998), Teece (2010), and Bocken et al. (2014) state that „the essence of business model is in defining the manner by which the enterprise delivers the value to the customers and entices customers to pay for the value and converts this into profit“. Therefore, in the broadest sense, a business model could be defined as what enterprise does and how it gets the income from it. Therefore, every business model consists of corresponding costs and revenue model – how enterprise optimally distributes the costs in its value creation chain and what mechanisms are used in order to get incomes from conducted activity (Jucevičius, & Uus, 2008). Definitions for the business model are provided (see Table 1).

Table 1. Definitions of the business model presented by different researchers.

| Author, year | Definition |
|---|---|
| Bjorkdahl (2009) | Business model is a logic and activities, which create an appropriate economic value |
| Demil, Lecocq (2010) | Business model offers a suggestion, which create the value for the customer and organization |
| Teece (2010) | Business model is a logic, which creates value proposition for the customer and enterprise structure of incomes and expenses, which create the value |
| Zott, Amit (2010) | Business model is the whole of enterprise related activities |
| Osterwalder, Pigneur (2009) | Business model is a process, during which the value created and presented to the consumers and then the incomes gained |
| Baden-Fuller, Morgan, Perkmann, Spicer (2010) | Business model is an activity, method to gain the benefit from products and services, a tool, which enterprise model and manage their activities |
| George, Bock (2011) | Business model is perceptible as durable enterprise survival guarantee |
| Picard (2011) | Business model is the conception of how the business operates, its underlying foundations, and the exchange of activities and financial flows upon which it can be successful |
| Cavalcante et al. (2011) | Business model is an abstraction of principles, which are designed to the enterprise activity execution appear and maintain |
| Verstraete, Laf-Fitte (2011) | Business model is a chain of related elements, which complementarity assistance create new value in the market |
| Allen (2012) | Business model consists of two main activities: creation of the value and receiving of the value |
| Newth (2012) | Business model is a perception how to gain from the idea with methods and actions with reference to own abilities and competencies to create the value proposals |
| Kinderis (2012) | Business model is a logic, leading which enterprise creates, presents the value to customer, gains money from it and the way in that value is created to the society |
| Peters et al. (2013) | Business model is a structured presentation of the value creating components of the enterprise and how to appropriate that value |
| Girotra, Netessine (2013) | A business model is rational and logic manner of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value (economic, social, or other forms of value) |

Source: Zott and Amit (2010), Demil and Lecocq (2010), Teece (2010), Allen (2012), Serrat (2012), Kinderis (2012), Newth (2012), Peters et al. (2013), Girotra and Netessine (2013), Kinderis and Jucevičius (2013a), DaSilva and Trkman (2014)

Various authors define the concept of the business model in the scientific literature rather differently. Each of these authors emphasizes different things, which depend on the authors' interests. In addition, most of them use same concepts, but describe them in different ways (Kalakou, & Macario, 2013). For this reason, it is difficult unambiguously to describe the business model concept. Usually the definition of the business model puts emphasis on the value creation, the value capture, and delivery of the value. Different authors categorize business models in different ways. In scientific literature, business models are into generic business models and specific business models classified. Peters et al. (2013) state that all business models could be into three types classified: 1) calculative; 2) descriptive; and 3) dynamic one. It is worthy to note that there is no common system of business model classification altogether till now.

Burinskienė and Daškevič (2013) quote Michelini and recommend the classifying business models into: 1) isolated business models, and 2) interactive business models. A large part of authors classified business models into suitable for the traditional business and for the electronic business. Kalakou and Macario (2013) separate the airport business models, Snowden et al. (2006) separate mobile business models. Burinskienė and Daškevič (2013) suggested a classification of the trade business model. According to the authors, trade business models could be into five main groups classified: 1) business models related with goods distribution; 2) business models related with trade form; 3) business model related with information technology applications; 4) business model, allowing customers to buy goods staying at home; and 5) business model oriented to generation of revenue. However, Burinskienė and Daškevič (2013) quote Jovarauskienė et al., who state that usually business models classification method is related to the processes, which are classified into widely applicable business models: 1) *business-to-business* (B-2-B) *model* (business processes take place between business subjects); 2) *business-to-customer* (B-2-C) *model* (business processes take place direct between business representative and final consumers). Authors note that these types of business models are usually in the traditional business used.

To sum up, it should be noticed that until now there is no established business model definition and business model classification system. According to the analysis, business model could be as enterprise's logic and decisions,

which based on the aspiration to create and get value through value network and increase the competitive advantage defined. In addition, the ground of business model is the proposition of the value to the customers.

2. The coverage of hospitality service industry

Recently, researchers' attention has been by the hospitality industry caught, which is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Hospitality service industry has great potential for encouraging growth of the economy, increase in the number of new jobs, and improvement of the social environment. The hospitality often identified as a part of the tourism or considered as one of tourism types. However, authors mostly separate these into concepts because the tourism without the hospitality is impossible practically.

The hospitality is one of the branches of the longest living service industries. In the Oxford English Dictionary, the hospitality is defined as friendly and generous reception and entertainment of the guests, visitors (Barrows et al., 2012). According to Walker (2013), the hospitality concept is from the old French language known and means "taking the care and shelter giving to the travellers", hence provides the service; and was known in the ancient civilizations already. The *hospitality* and *hospitality industry* concepts are changing rapidly because of changing environment and customer mobility (Crick, & Spencer, 2011). Furthermore, nowadays the definition of the hospitality is associated with the help for the guests, involving them into common activities, conversations. The hospitality service providers are expected become involved in the game with consumers despite the fact that it might seem not a serious activity, having clear define result in this way (Crick, & Spencer, 2011). However, according to Kandampully et al. (2014), there is no accepted hospitality definition until this moment.

Several authors, such as Crick and Spencer (2011), Barrows et al. (2012), Walker (2013), Wood (2013) state that the hospitality industry business is unimaginable without its essential structural components. The elements are as follows: polite and well-wishing meeting, greeting and appealing to the quest by name, customers' needs foresight and their correspondence, care of the quests, polite behaviour with the customers, tolerance with respect to the quests, involving quests into various activities and polite farewell. Furthermore, according to Kandampully et al. (2014), the hospitality industry relates to the specific services provided the service industry, which services are vitally for everyone. Authors also note that the most important aspect in this industry within service providing is the interaction between the employee and the customer, what must be based on the emotional proposal, which requires an emotional connection with customers, warmth and generosity.

Bagdan (2013) marked that "the hospitality industry is the service industry" and it covers accommodation and catering sectors, as well as travel agencies services. Nevertheless, the hospitality concept is even wider. It also includes the private clubs, casino, resorts, events, entertainments, etc. (Barrows et al., 2012). Therefore, previously the hospitality has primarily been associated with accommodation services, later on – with the catering, and nowadays – more and more with other leisure services such as travels, attractions, meetings and other, beginning to relate with hospitality industry (see Fig. 1.).

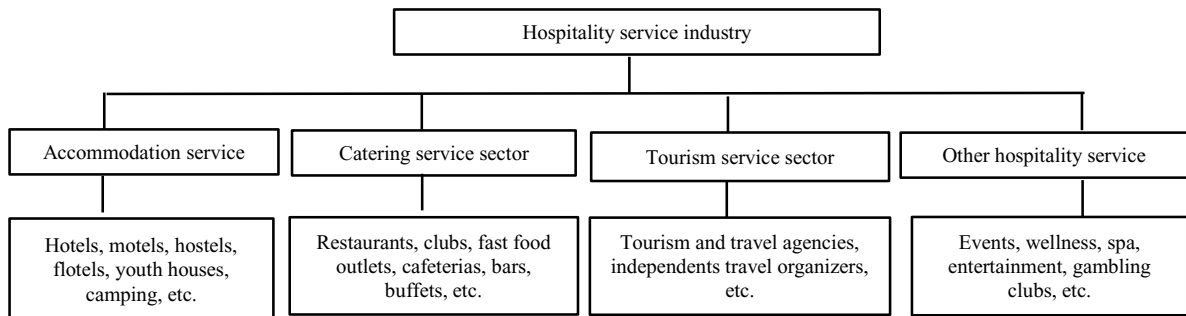


Fig. 1. The classification of hospitality industry. Source: contributed by authors on Sheela (2002), Hassaniien et al. (2010), Crick, Spencer (2011), Barrows et al. (2012), Walker (2013), Bagdan (2013), Stanulevičiūtė, Daunoravičiūtė (2014)

The main sectors of hospitality service industry are accommodation, food and beverage, and tourism sector, too. Nevertheless, majority of the authors usually divide hospitality industry into two broad categories, which considered as the main: a) accommodations; and b) food and beverages. Therewith, there is no commonly accepted system for the hospitality industry classification but many authors in the scientific literature analyse these two main classes: 1) accommodation services, and 2) food and beverage services.

Reid and Bojanic (2009) and Hassanien et al. (2010) quoted by Stanulevičiūtė and Daunoravičiūtė (2014) state that hospitality industry differs from other industries by such aspects as:

- **Intangibility.** Hospitality services are intangible, they cannot be seen, touched, smelled or tasted prior to purchase (Hassanien et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to ensure the service quality and to reduce the customer's risk. In addition, the hospitality industry services could include tangible (for example, food) as well as intangible elements (for example, advice of the food and beverage selection). Despite the fact that the hospitality service industry has many tangible elements, the essence in value proposition is on the basics of intangible value created.
- **Inseparability.** It means that goods and services are provided and used at the same place as they are provide, for example, in the restaurants, hotels, clubs, etc. no one hotel or restaurant, or even travel agency can store the vacant room or table till the moment, when the service will be demanded.
- **Perishability.** This means that service-providing time is limited and if the service is not be purchased now, it won't be done later. This characteristics is closely related to the mentioned above as each service provider in the hospitality industry should think how to attract customers to use the service not in the peak-demand period.
- **Lack of ownership.** The hospitality industry customers could not purchase hospitality goods and services. It is very important to ensure the highest quality services that the customer experienced, the evaluation of the services should be positive, enjoyable, and memorable for this reason.
- **Heterogeneity.** In this industry, service's provision and customer practice are different. For this reason, hospitality industry enterprises should ensure similar quality service, if possible. In some cases – to guarantee the individual approach, if individualism in specific services appreciated.

According to Bagdan (2013), the most important role in the hospitality industry played by the customers, because business success depends on their needs. For this reason, the hospitality service providers must search new ways for the customer needs and their expectations satisfaction (Caruntu, & Ditoiu, 2014). Globalization, changes in the business environment, as well as consumers' demands have an impact on the hospitality service business. Recently organizations are more and more dependent on their customers, especially in the service industry. For this reason, it is important to understand the current and future customers' needs, meet their requirements and try to exceed their expectations.

Summarizing, the hospitality industry is the service business, which realized by the benefit receipt satisfying the customer needs providing the hospitable services. Whereas in the hospitality industry services usually prevails intangible, customer is not sure because of service quality. For this reason, it is very important to ensure not only high quality service but the level of the service, too. In addition, it is obvious that hospitality industry cover various sectors and their providing services, which could satisfy the various tourists and local people needs in the certain place.

3. The specifics of business models in hospitality

Nowadays, enterprise competitiveness success in the market settled not by its offered products or services, but from successfully created and consistently realizable business model. Correctly selected business model helps the enterprises to transform their business processes, reduce operating costs, improve the products or services quality, win new markets, etc. Moreover, in order to provide the competitive advantage business model must not only satisfy customers' needs, but also exceeded them, help to maintain long-term relationship with the customers, suppliers and partners, and be tricky to replicate. In addition, Serrat (2012) state that one of the ways to acquire the competitive advantage can be only by delivering the unique products and services for which customers are willing to pay more achieved.

Scientific literature analysis showed that seeking to reveal the business model the majority of authors use the elements in the business model structure. Business model elements are as follows (see Table 2):

Table 2. The elements, provided by different business models, and their urgency to hospitality service industry.

| Author, year | The elements, provided in business model | Business model elements for the hospitality industry |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Ballon (2007) | Combination of assets, vertical integration, customer ownership, modularity, distribution of intelligence, interoperability, cost sharing model, revenue model, revenue sharing model, positioning, customer involvement, intendant value | Positioning, customer involvement, intendant value |
| Aziz et al. (2008) | Value network, target market, value proposition, company's competences, cost elements, strategy, processes and activities, revenue and price consideration, competitors, customer relationships, etc. | Target market, value proposition |
| Laudon, Traver (2008) | Value proposition, revenue model, market opportunities, competitive environment, competitive advantage, marketing strategy, development of organisation, management team – competent managers | Management team – competent managers |
| Johnson (2010) | Customer value proposition, profit formulas, key resources, key process | Key process |
| Osterwalder, Pigneur (2010) | Customer segments, value proposition, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key activities, key partnerships, cost structures | Customer relationships |
| Al-Debei, Avison (2010) | Value proposition, value network, value architecture, value finance | Value proposition |
| Bocken et al. (2014) | Value proposition (product/service, customer segments and relationships), value creation and delivery (key activities, resources, channels, partners, and technology), value capture (cost structure, revenue streams) | Technology |
| Drakulevski, Nakov (2014) | Value proposition, target customer, customer handling/distribution channel, customer interfaces/relationship, value configuration, capability/core competency, partner network, and cost structure, revenue model. | Value proposition |

Source: contributed by authors on Ballon (2007), Kinderis (2012), Serrat (2012), Peters et al. (2013), Barquet et al. (2013), Drakulevski and Nakov (2014), Bocken et al. (2014)

The majority of the researchers are focusing on the increase of the value proposition. Peters et al. (2013) state that authors in recent researches use the same business model elements, which were by Osterwalder and Pigneur suggested, too, only the terminology is different. It is worthy to notice that business model framework suggested by these authors is limited because it does not analyse the interrelation between elements inside the business model.

Several researches have investigated the factors, influencing the success of the business model in the hospitality industry. The research by Boveen (1997) was an attempt at developing a market-driven approach to the business development and service improvement in the hospitality industry. According to this approach, the hospitality enterprises, in order to improve their performance, should not only communicate with the markets, the employees and the customers, but also get feedback from them. Information, get through communication, will lead the hospitality organizations to choose the right segments, propose more valuable propositions for them and gain the competitive advantage. This approach also suggests involving customers into the hospitality business development. Crick and Spencer (2011) state that customer involvement into the performance of the service in the hospitality industry heightened the expectations and perceptions of the customer.

The findings of Kandampully (2006) identify the essential factors for the hospitality business model, which supports hospitality enterprises to operate effectively within the new business model such as technology, external orientation, value, products, efficiency, relationship, empowered employees, uniqueness, networks, services, internal coordination. Authors also found that the customer is the most important link in the supply chain. According to the authors, their suggested customer-centred business model is becoming more and more important because of the increasing competition and competitive advantage gaining, constantly changing customers' needs.

The research by Litos et al. (2011) was an attempt to develop a business excellence model (BEM) for the hospitality industry. Using BEM criteria and sub-criteria were identified the most critical parameters for hospitality industry. They represent customer satisfaction, leadership, human resource management, people results, and operating results. According to the scientific literature analysis, the most important factors, influencing the success of business model in the hospitality industry are as follows (see Fig. 2):

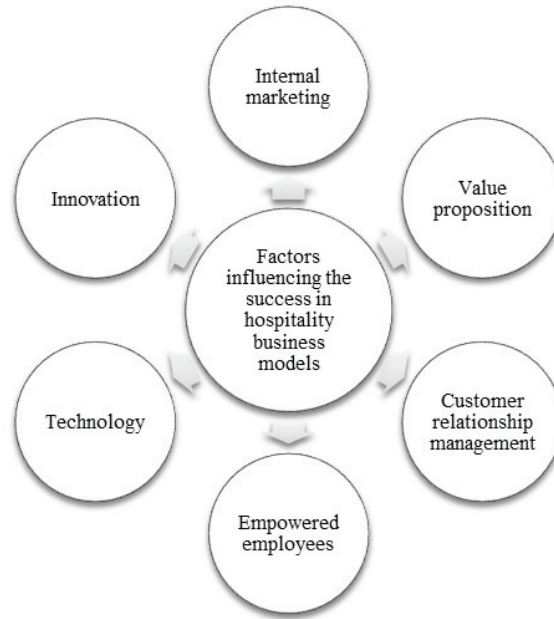


Fig. 2. Factors, influencing the success of the hospitality business model

Innovation – according to Chang et al. (2011), thanks to innovation, the hospitality industry enterprises could improve the quality of the products as well as services, reduce the costs, meet and satisfy the changing customer needs better, increase the profit, gain the competitive advantage. Various types of innovation development and implementation (for example, service innovation, product innovation, administrative innovation) – could lead the hospitality enterprises to the application of novel ideas, services and products.

Empowered employees – the hospitality industry is unique one because employees are involved into service process in this industry (Barrows, 2012). Thus, the customer's opinion about the enterprise and the quality of its providing services – also depends on the employees' ability to provide the service. Therefore, competent managers should empower the employees to provide the highest quality services in order to maintain and attract new customers.

Customer relationship management – in the hospitality industry, in contrary to other industries, special attention must be to the customers paid. Bagdan (2013) states that the success of the hospitality business enterprises largely depends on the customers and their needs.

Technology – enhance interaction and communication with customers in order to reduce operating costs, to create strategic opportunities, and to maximize profits could help in the hospitality industry. The using of the latest technology in the hospitality services will allow enjoyable experience for their customers.

Internal marketing – this factor could help for the hospitality enterprises to find out and understand customers attitude to their delivering services, in order to discover the possibilities for hospitality services development in the future.

Value proposition – this factor should focus on the customer needs and include elements of the factors listed. Moreover, the unique and value-added value proposition, offered by the hospitality enterprises and customer's needs, distinguishes the company from other similar competitors. As many authors agree that value proposition is crucial in the services enterprises business, this element should attain the largest attention from the business strategists. Clarifying the needs and requirements from the hospitality customer's perspective, agreeing on value what should be provided and capturing the value for the service shareholders, the best balance between wishes of the customer and possibilities of the services providers should be found.

Summarizing, these factors have a positive effect on the successful development of the enterprises of the hospitality service industry. Moreover, the application of these factors to the hospitality industry could lead the enterprises to gain the competitive advantage and improve enterprise performance.

Conclusions

The hospitality service industry covers a large part of any advanced economies. Increasing competition forces the managers to think what business model to use trying to be competitive. The factors for the success of the business model are dictated by characteristics of closely related relationship with the customer in the hospitality services industry, as well as by main elements, such as value proposition, innovations, technologies, etc., relative namely to the hospitality. Customer relationship management becomes to be urgent in many services business, as well as in the hospitality, where repeated customer make a large proportion of the target market. From the viewpoint of service enterprise management – empowerment of the employees to take decision as soon as possible, to participate in urgent solutions, strategy formation – important. The coordination with the internal customer – internal marketing – is starting position in joining all elements, necessary to provide the value for the customer, satisfying the increasing requirements of the current and potential market.

Practical implications of the research. More demanding customers force the hospitality service providers to think about getting competitive advantage before other by not only proving cheaper service or exclusive value, such as exceptional location of the hotel, or menu in the highest category's restaurant, but to bundle the value for the firm, for the customer, etc. Factors, influencing success of the business model, should gain maximum affords from the hospitality business managers, as well as strategists, developing the idea for such kind of business'. The business model for the hospitality service providers enables to act more efficiently and to achieve the long-term success, to develop business and improve services and its evaluation from the customers' perspective. Practical implication of the paper associated to the recognizing the model, used by competitor and capability to look for opportunities to create, to find solutions in the response to competitor's actions, to find effective marketing solutions and to implement the innovative and competitive business model in practice.

The authors of the paper are going to do further researches on the hospitality business model adequacy to the requirements of the market in the near future. Empirical survey of the managers of the accommodation, catering, tourism and travel, as well as health and wellness services industry planned. Qualitative survey will include also opinion of managers of related associations, such as Hotels Association, Spa Association, an etc., as well as foreign capital investors in the hospitality industry, who have the clear position, what the business model should be chosen in order to provide the better balance between value capture, value for a customer and value proposition.

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