

# QUANTITY OR QUALITY? Effects of Overtourism on Restaurant Service Quality in Dubrovnik

---

**Petrušić, Mara**

**Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad**

**2024**

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **RIT Croatia / RIT Croatia**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:229:942504>

*Rights / Prava:* [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2024-07-17**



*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[RIT Croatia Digital repository - Rochester Institute of Technology](#)





# QUANTITY OR QUALITY? Effects of Overtourism on Restaurant Service Quality in Dubrovnik

Senior Project

## Abstract

This study examines the qualifications of restaurant employees in Dubrovnik, Croatia, amid challenges of overtourism and high customer expectations. Data from a survey of 51 employees in 20 upscale restaurants reveal that older, more experienced, and formally trained workers demonstrate higher qualifications. However, the majority of employees lack formal training and education, which may affect service quality. The findings underscore the need for investment in employee education and training to address the impacts of overtourism on service standards and employee qualifications in Dubrovnik's restaurant industry.

**Key Words:** overtourism; Dubrovnik, Croatia; restaurant employees; qualifications, customer expectations; tourism employment; hospitality industry; service quality; employee training; employee education

Mara Petrušić  
Mentor: Professor Kevin Walker  
RIT Croatia

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Overtourism, Customer Expectations & Tourism Employment

Dubrovnik, Croatia, known for its stunning architecture and picturesque coastline, has been known as a prime destination for travelers worldwide. The destination, especially in the peak season, has a significant number of visits and can be named as a mass tourism destination. Mass tourism can bring prosperities to destinations, but when the number of visitors is uncontrolled and number of visitors exceeds carrying capacity of multiple aspects, where number of tourists exceeding number locals is the main one, the destination is facing overtourism (*Abbasian et al., 2020*).

Overtourism creates undesirable effects socially, culturally and contextually and has led to a disproportionate use of the destination, and when paired with bad management, can create problems not only for tourists but on the host destination and its businesses too (*Gonzales et al., 2018*). Nevertheless, even if destination is facing overtourism or not, tourists' expectations are important factor that local businesses need to fulfill in order to both create profits and create customer loyalty. When visiting a particular place, customer expectations are related to several features: culture, architecture, gastronomy, infrastructure, landscape, events, shopping and other. These characteristics draw individuals to the destination and enhance the overall trip experience (*Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2019, Phys.org*). Personalized experiences, enhanced itineraries, exceptional customer service, and customer reviews are also the factors that influence customer expectations when visiting a destination and businesses in that destination (*Ng, 2023*).

As mentioned previously mass tourism in destination can bring prosperity, one of them being economical activities, (*Abbasian et al., 2020*). Since tourism refers to the activities of visitors and their role in the acquisition of goods and services, tourism can also be viewed from the supply side and is a set of productive activities that cater mainly to visitors of a destination. As such, tourism is an important source of job creation (*Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries – Guide with Best Practices, 2014*).

## 1.2. Overtourism in Dubrovnik

After creating a picture of overtourism and customer expectations of the destination, Dubrovnik is the perfect example of the destination, where overtourism is present. The data from Statista shows that number of visits in the past few years is significant. The number of overnight stays in Dubrovnik in its record year of 2019 is 1.4 million, and after the Covid 19 pandemic, number of visitations is quickly raising back, and in 2022 has reached the number of 786 thousand overnight stays. The same source also puts in perspective how tourist visits exceed the number of locals, where in 2019, the record year, there was about 36 tourist per resident (*Dubrovnik Visitors 2022 | Statista, 2023*).

This number of visitors create many problems such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, physical damages, displacement of locals in the Old Town, low quality of tourist experiences and lower quality of life for locals, and increased prices (*Abbasian et al., 2020*). A popular webpage, Balkan Insight, that does reports on destinations in the Balkan area, reported that UNESCO heritage sites in Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia are suffering damage from overtourism that is putting their heritage status into question. Besides pollution of the environment, the uncontrolled number of tourists is completely overwhelming some of the sites, which could result in them losing their status altogether” (*Marusic et al., 2018*).

Another issue that is created by overtourism in Croatia and Dubrovnik, is employment that can accommodate such a large number of visitors. According to Croatian Employment Institute, 104 thousand people were employed in the tourism sector. And to prove that employment is an issue in not only Dubrovnik but the entire country, out of those 104 thousand, only 20% of the employed are Croatian residents. These statistics show that Croatia and Dubrovnik where overtourism is present, does not have enough employees to endure such large number of visitors to the destination (*Turizam u brojkama 2022, 2023*).

### 1.3. Dubrovnik Restaurant Scene

Dubrovnik is as any other popular tourist destination famous for its culture, architecture, gastronomy, infrastructure, landscape, events, shopping and other. Gastronomy is one of the most popular choices of tourist choices, which is evident on the TripAdvisor's webpage where there are reviews and information on more than 400 restaurants (*TripAdvisor, n.d.*). Another popular and renewed source, Dubrovnik Eats, has categorized those restaurants into different categories people can choose from based on their preferences which shows a variety and popularity in Dubrovnik's restaurant scene. The categories are: Breakfast & Brunch, Street Food, Fine Dining, Mediterranean, Modern European, Pizza, Rustic and Landscape, Seafood, Secret Gem, Steak and Grill, Wine Stations, Sweet & Cake, and International (*Dubrovnik Eats, 2020*).

Dubrovnik's restaurant scene also has highly rated restaurants. According to Michelin Guide Croatia, there are 12 restaurants inspected and are approved by Michelin inspectors. Some even have a recommendation from Michelin and a star. To be more precise three have the recommendation and one has a star. Being on Michelin guide means that a restaurant has a good cook with good menu and meals made out of quality ingredients (*Dubrovnik MICHELIN Restaurants, n.d.*).

Talking with the owner and a manager of two restaurants in Dubrovnik, there are more restaurants that are still not inspected by Michelin but regardless are on a similar level as those that are and fit the description of higher end restaurants (*D. Pandžić, personal communication, October, 2023*).

#### 1.4. Restaurant Employee Qualifications

After inspecting the Dubrovnik restaurant scene, to better distinguish the differences in restaurants offerings can be viewed as a continuum. On one end of the continuum would be restaurants with minimum service, no covers or simple placemats, a quick pace, fast foods prepared easily, and general informality to the entire operation. The other end of the continuum would be restaurants with luxurious surroundings; table linens; silver service ware; soft music; an unhurried pace; skilled servers; and expensive, well-prepared, and well-presented foods and wines. However, regardless of the type of restaurant, customers rightfully anticipate a welcoming smile, accurate order taking and delivery, and a promptly presented bill for the correct amount. Effective service remains of greatest importance for the success of any establishment.

Since effective service is of the greatest importance and skilled service is part of the fine dining restaurant description, it is logical to assume that employees need to fit a certain set of qualifications. To qualify for a restaurant employee, candidates “must” be: reliable, cooperative, personable, healthy, clean and neat, knowledgeable, persuasive, attentive, and diplomatic. To achieve the success of the establishment, good servers are hired, and they must know appropriate methods for serving tables and how to apply them in a seamless and efficient manner. They also must have an extensive knowledge of the menu in order to answer questions intelligently, suggest foods, and help increase sales. Knowledge of local history, events, and cuisine trends

also help in order to make conversation with guests and improve their experience (*Dahmer & Khal, 2008*).

Given Dubrovnik's dynamic restaurant scene it is evident that gastronomy plays a significant role in enhancing overall tourist experience. However, with Dubrovnik facing challenges of overtourism, there are concerns about the quality of services provided by its restaurants, particularly in its upscale establishments that have skilled servers in their description (*Dahmer & Khal, 2008*). Investigating the impacts of overtourism on employee qualifications in these restaurants is crucial. Insights on employee qualifications can provide valuable data that is shaping the restaurant industry of Dubrovnik.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Participants**

Participants of the research are employees, mainly servers of 20 different higher-end restaurants in Dubrovnik, who answered questions about their qualifications, skills, education, and training. Participants are reached by email using personal connections while working in the restaurant industry, and visiting locations where wanted participants are employed.

The sample consists of 51 participants. When it comes to age, 47.1% of the participants were from the age group of 26-35, and 43.1% were in the age group of 18-25 years; 66.7% of the participants are male and 33.3% are female.

27.5% of the participants are from Dubrovnik area, while 72.5% of the participants came to Dubrovnik for employment reasons.

## 2.2. Materials

Materials used to conduct the research was a questionnaire that was created using an existing sample evaluating key competencies evaluating tourism graduates from the employers' point of view (*Zehrer & Mössenlechner, 2009*) (see Appendix A for the complete source). Questionnaire aimed in evaluating knowledge, skills and competencies of waiters in the higher-end restaurants of Dubrovnik in order to get a better understanding of hiring practices and training methods of restaurant managers.

The questions asked in the survey were divided in 5 sections with the total of 39 questions, where participants were self-evaluating their knowledge, skills, and competencies by answering to multiple-choice questions, five-point Likerd scale questions and two open-ended questions.

The sections of the questionnaire were: Professional Skills & Experience, Social & Communicational Skills, Personal Qualities, and Problem-solving Skills. Demographic section of the research was also included at the end (see Appendix B for complete list of the questionnaire items)

## 2.3. Procedure

The questionnaire could be accessed and filled out for the duration of 30 days. Participants could access it through their email address through a link that was sent to them. Through the entire procedure, participants were thanked before and after they filled out the questionnaire

Participants of the questionnaire were instructed to answer questions in aim to gather insights into various aspects of the restaurant employee qualifications, and better understand the diverse skill sets and experiences of the individuals.



They were also told that their feedback was invaluable in shaping the understanding of the qualifications for restaurant employees across different settings, and their contribution would aid in identifying areas of strength and potential improvement within the industry. It was stated that the data collected from the questionnaire is completely anonymous and confidential, and was used for research purposes only, and that the duration of the procedure would take approximately 5 minutes. Through in-person feedback, some of the participant stated that they took 2-3 minutes longer to answer all of the questions because they wanted to give more detailed answers to the open-ended questions.

### **3. Results**

Data provided from the questionnaire aimed in better understanding of the restaurant employee qualifications, knowledge and competencies in order to investigate employment practices of restaurant managers of Dubrovnik restaurant scene operating in overtourism. (see Appendix C for the full results of the questionnaire)

#### **3.1. Data Collection**

The results from the questionnaire were transferred into the Excel platform to further investigate the data. Excel platform provided data for all of the 39 questions, by showing answers from each individual participant. Data provided by Excel included what each participant answered on multiple-choice question, and what each participant answered on five-point Likert scale questions was displayed numerically in numbers from one to five.

After analyzing data, valuable data was extracted from each section that helped in shaping the understanding of the qualifications of restaurant employees.

### 3.1.1. Demographic Data

In this section, participants were asked twelve questions. Valuable data from this section was important in further analysis of the data.

Participants in this section were asked was their age, and the answers have shown that people employed in the restaurant industry of Dubrovnik were predominately young; more than 90% of the participants are from the age groups of 18-25, and 26-35.

The education level of the participants is mostly high school diploma, 68.6% of them. Only 31.4% of the participants have more than a high school diploma, most of them having college/associate diploma.

When participants were asked about their total years of experience working in the restaurant industry, 54.9% of the participants stated that they have 3 or less years of experience working in the restaurant industry, while 31.4% have 4-6 years of experience, and 13.7% have 7-10 years of experience. This data shows that most of the employees don't have a lot of experience in the restaurant industry which shows that employment practices did in fact change.

Participants were also asked about their employment status, and 74.5% of the participants are employed temporarily/seasonally, 21.6% are employed full time, and 3.9% part time. Such a high level of seasonal workers may indicate a high level of employee turnover and not enough time to train workers just for the tourist season.

Another question aimed in finding out for how are restaurants that are employing these participants in the operation. 41.2 participants stated that the restaurant they are employed in is working 4-6 years, 25.5% that it is working 7-10 years, 9.8% that it is working 1-3 years, 9.8 that it is working more than 10 years, 3.9% that it is working less than a year, and 9.8% participants stated that they do not know.

Lastly, participants were asked how many hours per week do they work. 96% of the participants stated that they work more than 40 hour per week, 2% are working 31-40 hours per week, and 2% are working 20-30 hours per week.

### 3.1.2. Professional Skills & Knowledge

In this section, participants were asked seven questions regarding their previous education and professional training; professional training provided by their employers; how often do they attend ongoing training at their job position; their wine knowledge; food knowledge; menu knowledge; and knowledge of Dubrovnik's history, culture and gastronomy.

74.5 % of the participants stated that they did not have any previous education or professional training, while 23.5% of the participants did. One participant stated that they did not have previous education or training, but a short practice before starting their position.

82.4 % of the participants stated that they did not have professional training provided by their restaurant of employment, while only 17.6 % of the participant stated that they did.

When it comes to ongoing training 68.6 % of the participants stated that their restaurant of employment does not provide ongoing training, 13.7 % stated that they have ongoing training occasionally, 7.8 % have it rarely, and 7.8 % never.

When participants were asked about their wine knowledge, only 25.5 % of the participants stated that they had official wine training, while 74.5% of the participants don't have any wine training or wine training certificate.

In the questions about food and menu knowledge, participants rated themselves highly on all of the above statements, even though they did not have any previous education nor training before starting their position or had ongoing training.

Most of the participants stated that they have limited knowledge of Dubrovnik history and culture, and all of them stated that they have substantial or very substantial knowledge of Dubrovnik's gastronomy. This can be related to most of the participants stating that they are not Dubrovnik residents, but came to Dubrovnik for employment reasons.

### 3.1.3. Social & Communicational Skills

In this section participants were asked six questions about their communicational training; language knowledge; and their communicational and social skills.

86.3% of the participants stated they did not have any communicational training before starting this position, while 11.8% of the participants stated that they did have communicational training.

One participant stated they just had a brief conversation with their employer about the communicational practices before starting their position.

When it comes to language knowledge, 78.4% of the participants stated that they are proficient in two languages (native language + one), 17.6% of the participants are proficient in three languages (native language + two), and 3.9% of the participants are proficient in four languages (native + three).

In the questions about communicational and social skills, like communicating with customers and colleagues, participants ranked themselves high or very high to all of the questions.

#### 3.1.4. Personal Qualities

In the Personal Qualities section, participants were asked seven questions regarding working under pressure, questions of how criticism affects their job performance, and questions about customer feedback.

In the evaluation of this data, it is noticed that participants rated themselves highly when working under pressure. When it comes to customer criticism directed at their workplace and themselves, they stated they are not really affected by it, and there are not seeking much feedback from their customers.

In the demographic section, participants stated that they work excessive number of hours and there is a lot of work; this may be a reason for these responses to these questions.

#### 3.1.5. Problem-solving Skills

In the Problem-solving Skills section, participants were asked 6 questions regarding working under pressure, recognizing problems, proactiveness, seeking help from others, and voicing their opinion.

Participants again, ranked themselves high in working under pressure, and they stated that they are proactive rather than seeking help from others. When it comes to voicing their opinion about restaurant operations and proposing suggestions in order to increase customer satisfaction, most of them stated that they would rather stay quiet. This can also be connected to excessive amount of work.

### 3.2. Comparison of Subcategories

Further analysis in order to get a better understanding was needed. Based on the sections of the questionnaire, mainly based on the demographic section subcategories of data analysis were created. Subcategories were divided into 5; Age difference, Experience, Prior Professional Training, Education, and Years of Restaurant Working.

For each group in the subcategories several variables are calculated; including mean, variance, standard deviation, and degrees of freedom. Using those variables, t-test (two-sample assuming unequal variances) was performed in order to compare two groups of each subcategory. In the tables that show the results, means are presented to show how each group answered on questions

#### 3.2.1. Age Difference

Table 1.1. Age Difference

COMPETENCY	18-25 YEARS OF AGE (22)	26+ YEARS OF AGE (29)
What is your wine knowledge?	5	4.276
I can pair meal items with beverages.	3.727	4.206

I am able to identify food and beverage options for customers with various dietary restrictions and allergies without seeking help from others.	3.863	4.310
How confident are you in your ability to remain calm and composed under pressure?	3.727	4.206

- All significant at  $p < 0.05$

The table above shows that the group of 26+ years of age have better results even though they are in the minority. This shows that older people have better skills, knowledge and competencies in the restaurant industry. It is important to mention that this does not mean that younger people are less desirable in hiring, but the results show that more years in the industry bring more experience.

### 3.2.2. Experience

Table 1.2. Experience

COMPETENCY	3 OR LESS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE (28)	4 OR MORE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE (23)
What is your wine knowledge?	4.421 *	4.3043 *
I know about food safety rules.	4.393 **	4.7826 **
I know about different food diets restricted by religion.	4.107 **	4.608 **
I know the difference between vegetarian, pescatarian, and	4.5 **	4.826 **

vegan meals.		
I can describe & discuss every meal item and its ingredients.	4.571 **	4.869 **
I can pair meal items with beverage items.	3.821 *	4.217 *
I am aware of potential allergens and food diet restrictions	4.214 *	4.783 *
I can answer guests about where food and beverage items come from.	4.321 *	4.869 *
I am confident in the ability to influence customers to order your recommendations.	4.464 **	4.739 **
How confident are you in handling challenging situations or complaints from customers effectively?	4 *	4.304 *
How confident are you in your ability to remain calm and composed under pressure?	3.786 *	4.260 *
I remain composed and focused on providing excellent service, even in high-pressure or demanding situations.	3.786 **	4.043 **



I am able to identify food and beverage options for customers with various dietary restrictions and allergies without seeking help from others.	3.964 **	4.304 **
---	----------	----------

- \* Significant at  $p < 0.05$

- \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.10$

Results show that participants with more experience answered better to the questions even though, again, they are in the minority. This shows how experience is important in creating better service quality in the restaurant industry, and that knowledge, skills and competencies develop as years pass.

### 3.2.3. Prior Professional Training

Table 1.3. Prior Professional Training

COMPETENCIES	NO PRIOR TRAINING (39)	PRIOR TRAINING (12)
What is your wine knowledge?	4.897	3.583
I can pair meal items with beverage items.	3.871	4.416
What is your knowledge about Dubrovnik's history, culture and gastronomy? [Dubrovnik's history and	2.948	3.75

important events.]		
--------------------	--	--

- All significant at  $p < 0.05$

People with prior training again answered better to asked questions even though they are in the minority. Results show the significance of professional training before starting the job position.

Interesting thing with this subcategory is that people that have no prior training stated that they have better wine knowledge that people who have it even though there are more people with wine knowledge certificates in that group.

#### 3.2.4. Education Level

Table 1.4. Education Level

COMPETENCY	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (35)	MORE THAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (16)
What is your wine knowledge?	4.8 *	4.125 *
I can pair meal items with beverage items.	3.857 *	4.313 *
What is your knowledge about Dubrovnik's history, culture and gastronomy? [Dubrovnik's history and important events.]	2.857 *	3.75 *
How confident are you in managing your time and	4 **	4.313 **

prioritizing tasks during busy periods?		
Customer criticisms directed at me personally affect my work performance.	3.228 **	2.687 **

- \* Significant at  $p < 0.05$
- \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.10$

Results show that education influences knowledge, skills and competencies of restaurant workers, especially in the soft skills and time management. And that education should be influencing employment practices.

#### 3.2.5. Years of Restaurant Working

In this subcategory after analyzing results and comparing a group of restaurants that have been in operation 6 and less years and restaurants that have been in operation for more than 7 years, it was concluded that there is no difference between these two groups.

These results show that restaurants that are in operation for longer time and have no difference in hiring practices when evaluating employees' knowledge, skills and competencies.

## 4. Discussion

After analyzing the results of the questionnaire that was conducted, it can be concluded that employees that are older, more experienced, have more education, and had prior training can create better service quality for restaurants.

A majority of participants of the questionnaire have shown that they do not have adequate competencies that can create that level of service quality. Reason for that may be multiple factors

that are created by overtourism in Dubrovnik. The biggest reason that could be connected is the employment issue, and the data from the prior research shows that 80% of the workforce employed in the tourism sector in Croatia are foreign workers (*Turizam u brojkama 2022, 2023*). Since that is the case, it can be concluded that there is a lot of vacant job positions need to be filled in in a fast notice, and there is no time nor the luxury to find qualified restaurant employees to fill them in.

Suggestion for the restaurant managers and owners would than be to invest their resources into educating and training their employees. The data from the research has shown that training and education is important and that employees that had or have it, do their job better and bring service quality to a higher level.

Educating and training employees is not only beneficial to the restaurant managers and owners to have more qualified workers, it also shows that they care for their employees which can lower the turnover employment rates and attract more employees that are willing in developing their skills.

This issue has now been proven in the restaurant industry, nevertheless it should be researched more and not only for this but many other industries in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and even further.

## Reference List:

Abbasian, S., Om, G., & Arnautovic, D. (2020a). Overtourism in Dubrovnik in the eyes of local tourism employees: A qualitative study. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2020.1775944>

Dahmer s. J., Kahl K. W. (2008). *Restaurant Service Basics*- John Wiley & Sons.

[https://books.google.hr/books?hl=hr&lr=&id=4hFkxwPqbr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=restaurant+staff+qualifications&ots=\\_ouoqXC0Mx&sig=JbHKJPa59pRjrNcSb\\_soxxjvkNZk&redir\\_esc=y#v=one](https://books.google.hr/books?hl=hr&lr=&id=4hFkxwPqbr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=restaurant+staff+qualifications&ots=_ouoqXC0Mx&sig=JbHKJPa59pRjrNcSb_soxxjvkNZk&redir_esc=y#v=one)

Dubrovnik Eats. (2020, February 27). The Best Restaurants in Dubrovnik | Fine dining | Seafood | Burger | Pizza. <https://dubrovnikeats.com/restaurants/>

Dubrovnik MICHELIN Restaurants - The MICHELIN Guide Croatia. (n.d.-a). MICHELIN Guide. <https://guide.michelin.com/hr/en/dubrovnik-neretva/dubrovnik/restaurants>

Dubrovnik visitors 2022 | Statista. (2023, November 16). Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/886613/dubrovnik-tourist-arrivals/>

Gonzalez, A. T. (2018). Venice: The problem of overtourism and the impact of cruises.

*Investigaciones Regionales – Journal of Regional Research*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10017/37087>

Ghimire, A. J. (2012). Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Restaurant Business: Case Study - Sagarmatha Nepalese Restaurant in Vantaa.

[https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/46914/Ghimire\\_Abadh.pdf](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/46914/Ghimire_Abadh.pdf)

Marusic, S. J., Milekic, S., & Tomovic, D. (2018, May 18). Uncontrolled tourism threatens Balkan UNESCO sites. Balkan Insight. <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/04/17/uncontrolled-tourism-threatens-balkan-unesco-sites-04-13-2017/>

Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries – Guide with Best Practices. (2014). <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284416158>

Ng, B. (2023, June 2). Evaluating customer expectations and satisfaction in the tourism industry. Rezdy. <https://rezdy.com/blog/customer-expectations-vs-customer-satisfaction/>

Statista. (2023, October 16). Cruise passenger movements in Dubrovnik, Croatia 2009-2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/888969/dubrovnik-call-cruise-passenger-numbers/>

Turizam u Brojkama 2022, Ministarstvo turizma i sporta Republike Hrvatske (2023). Hrvatska Puna Života. [https://www.htz.hr/sites/default/files/2023-07/HTZ%20TUB%20HR\\_%202022.pdf](https://www.htz.hr/sites/default/files/2023-07/HTZ%20TUB%20HR_%202022.pdf)

Tripadvisor. (n.d.). THE 10 BEST restaurants in Dubrovnik (Updated March 2024). <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g295371->

[Dubrovnik\\_Dubrovnik\\_Neretva\\_County\\_Dalmatia.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g295371-Dubrovnik_Dubrovnik_Neretva_County_Dalmatia.html)

Universitat Pompeu Fabra (2019, April 24). Tourist destination choices influenced by culture and gastronomy. Phys.org. <https://phys.org/news/2019-04-tourist-destination-culture-gastronomy.html>

Zehrer, A., & Mössenlechner, C. (2009). Key Competencies of tourism Graduates: The Employers' Point of View. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 9(3–4), 266–287.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220903445215>

## Appendix

### Appendix A

Professional and methodological competencies	Social and communicative competencies	Personal competencies	Activity and action-oriented competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• language competencies</li><li>• fundamentals in management</li><li>• fundamentals in economics and law</li><li>• fundamentals in finance</li><li>• fundamentals in information and communication technologies</li><li>• tourism-related knowledge</li><li>• skills and competencies in written communication</li><li>• applying and using information to specific contexts</li><li>• efficient text work</li><li>• rhetorical skills</li><li>• problem solving skills</li><li>• conceptual skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• skills for conflict resolution</li><li>• social networking skills</li><li>• social and team skills</li><li>• ability and willingness to change</li><li>• adaptability skills</li><li>• proactive communication skills</li><li>• active listening</li><li>• persuasion skills</li><li>• overall communication abilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intercultural skills</li><li>• ability to work under pressure</li><li>• emotional intelligence</li><li>• self reflection</li><li>• empathy</li><li>• self management</li><li>• willingness and personal commitment</li><li>• self motivation and willingness to learn</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• determination and goal orientation</li><li>• innovative spirit</li><li>• decision-making abilities</li><li>• initiative and proactiveness</li><li>• assertiveness</li><li>• creativity</li></ul>

(Zehrer & Mössenlechner, 2009)

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire Question List

#### Restaurant Employee Competencies and Experience Survey

Dear Participant,

My name is Mara Petrušić and I am a senior student at Rochester Institute of Technology in Dubrovnik, studying Hospitality and Tourism Management. I am writing my Senior Project with the help of my mentor, Professor Kevin Walker. I want to first thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. This questionnaire aims to gather insights into various aspects of restaurant employee qualifications. Your responses will help us better understand the diverse skill sets and experiences of individuals working in the restaurant industry.

The data collected from this survey is completely anonymous and confidential and will be used for research purposes only. In accordance with RIT Croatia's Data Protection Notice under EU GDPR regulations, we take safeguards to protect data from unauthorized use or access. Your participation is voluntary and poses no risk to you.

Your feedback is invaluable in shaping our understanding of the qualifications for restaurant employees across different settings. Your contribution will aid in identifying areas of strength and potential improvement within the industry.

This survey will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you once again for your participation. Let's begin the survey!

#### Section 1. Professional Skills & Experience

In this section, knowledge, skills, and abilities related to working in the restaurant industry are examined.

Please answer the following questions honestly.

1. Did you have any previous education or professional training related to the restaurant industry before working in it?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other
2. Did you have professional training provided by your restaurant before starting your position?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other



3. How often does your restaurant provide ongoing training that helps you build your professional skills?
  - Regularly
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Never
  - My position does not require ongoing training
4. What is your wine knowledge?
  - Master Sommelier Diploma (CMS IV)
  - Advanced Sommelier Certificate (CMS III)
  - Certified Sommelier Examination (CMS II)
  - Introductory Sommelier Certificate (CMS I)
  - None of the above
5. The below statements relate to your food knowledge.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know about food safety rules.					
I am aware of the main food allergens.					
I know about different food diets restricted by religion (Halal, Kosher, etc.)					
I know the difference between vegetarian, pescatarian and vegan meals.					

6. The below statements relate to your knowledge of the restaurant's menu items and ingredients.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can describe and discuss every meal item and its ingredients.					
I can describe and discuss every beverage item.					
I can pair meals items with beverage items.					
I am aware of potential allergens and food diet restrictions on the menu.					
I can answer questions about where food ingredients and beverages come from.					

7. What is your knowledge about Dubrovnik's history, culture and gastronomy?

	Very Limited	Limited	Partial	Substantial	Very Substantial
Dubrovnik's history and important events.					
Dubrovnik's culture (music, art, etc.).					
Local dishes and beverages.					

## Section 2. Social and Communicational Skills

In this section, interacting with customers and colleagues will be examined.

Please answer the following questions honestly.

1. Did you have any communication training for this job position? (verbal and nonverbal communication, public speaking, active listening, conflict resolution, etc.)

- Yes
- No
- Other

2. How many languages are you proficient in (including your native language)?

- Only one language (my native language)
- Two languages (my native language + one)
- Three languages (my native language + two)
- Four languages (my native language + three)
- More than five languages (my native language + four or more)

3. My communication skills are adequate in terms of clearly conveying information, avoiding technical terms or language barriers:

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

4. How confident are you in your ability to influence customers to order your recommendations?

Not confident at all				Very confident
----------------------	--	--	--	----------------

5. How confident are you in handling challenging situations or complaints from customers effectively?

Not confident at all				Very confident
----------------------	--	--	--	----------------

6. How often do you collaborate with coworkers so as to satisfy your customers?

Very rarely				Very frequently
-------------	--	--	--	-----------------

## Section 3. Personal Qualities

In this section, personal qualities, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, are examined.

Please answer the following questions honestly.

1. How confident are you in your ability to remain calm and composed under pressure?

Not confident at all				Very confident
----------------------	--	--	--	----------------

2. How confident are you in managing your time and prioritizing tasks during busy periods?

Not confident at all				Very confident
----------------------	--	--	--	----------------

3. Customer criticisms directed at my place of employment affect my work performance.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

4. Customer criticisms directed at me personally affect my work performance.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

5. During busy times, I am able to show sincere interest in customer concerns or problems when addressing their issues.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

6. I actively seek feedback from customers to identify areas for improvement in service delivery.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

7. I can converse and interact with customers from other countries without making any cultural mistakes; offending them (for example; recommending pork to Muslim customer).

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

#### Section 4. Problem Solving Skills

In this section, the ability to take action, and to identify and seize new opportunities are examined.

Please answer the following questions honestly.

1. I can effectively handle multiple tables or tasks simultaneously during peak dining hours.

Not confident at all				Very confident
----------------------	--	--	--	----------------

2. I remain composed and focused on providing excellent service, even in high-pressure or demanding situations.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

3. When I recognize problems at work, I:

Always wait for others to tell me what to do				I never wait for others to tell me what to do (I am proactive)
--	--	--	--	--

4. I am able to identify food and beverage options for customers with various dietary restrictions and allergies without seeking help from others.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

5. I regularly propose suggestions that will potentially increase customer satisfaction.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

6. I voice my opinion regularly regarding restaurant operations.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

## Section 5. Demographics

As previously mentioned, your answers are completely anonymous, and for research purposes only.

Please answer to all of the questions honestly.

1. Gender
  - Male
  - Female
  - Nonbinary
  - Prefer not to say
2. Age
  - Under 18
  - 18-25
  - 26-35
  - 36-45
  - 46-55
  - 55 and above
3. I came to Dubrovnik for employment reasons
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other
4. Education level
  - Less than High School diploma
  - High School Diploma
  - Collage/Associate Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's Degree and above
5. Total years of experience in the restaurant industry (current job plus others)
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-10 years
  - More than 10 years

6. How many years have you been working in this restaurant?
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-10 years
  - More than 10 years
7. What is your job position in the restaurant currently employing you?
  - Floor Manager
  - Head Waiter/Waitress
  - Waiter/Waitress
  - Runner (or assistant waiter; delivers meals and clears tables)
  - Busser (clears tables)
  - Bartender
  - Other
8. Employment Status
  - Full time
  - Part time
  - Temporary/Seasonal
  - Other
9. How long has your current employer been in operation?
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1-3 years
  - 4-6 years
  - 7-10 years
  - More than 10 years
  - I don't know
10. How many hours per week do you work?
  - Less than 20 hours
  - 20-30 hours
  - 31-40 hours
  - More than 40 hours
11. How satisfied are you with your current job?

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
-------------------	--	--	--	----------------

12. Please provide a brief explanation to your response to the prior question.
13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide regarding your role as a waiter or the workplace environment? (Open-ended)  
This question is optional.

## Appendix C

### Responses to Questionnaire

#### Section 1. Professional Skills & Experience

1. Did you have any previous education or professional training related to the restaurant industry before working in it?
  - Yes – 12
  - No – 38
  - Other – 1
2. Did you have professional training provided by your restaurant before starting your position?
  - Yes – 9
  - No – 42
  - Other
3. How often does your restaurant provide ongoing training that helps you build your professional skills?
  - Regularly – 0
  - Occasionally – 7
  - Rarely – 4
  - Never – 4
  - My position does not require ongoing training – 35
  - Other – 1
4. What is your wine knowledge?
  - Master Sommelier Diploma (CMS IV) – 0
  - Advanced Sommelier Certificate (CMS III) – 3
  - Certified Sommelier Examination (CMS II) – 2
  - Introductory Sommelier Certificate (CMS I) – 8
  - None of the above – 38
5. The below statements relate to your food knowledge.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know about food safety rules.	1	1	2	11	36
I am aware of the main food allergens.	0	4	3	9	35
I know about different food diets restricted by religion (Halal, Kosher, etc.)	1	4	3	12	31
I know the difference between vegetarian, pescatarian and vegan meals.	0	1	4	7	39

6. The below statements relate to your knowledge of the restaurant's menu items and ingredients.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can describe and discuss every meal item and its ingredients.	0	1	2	8	40
I can describe and discuss every beverage item.	0	3	1	8	39
I can pair meals items with beverage items.	0	1	7	10	33
I am aware of potential allergens and food diet restrictions on the menu.	0	1	9	28	12
I can answer questions about where food ingredients and beverages come from.	1	2	3	5	40

7. What is your knowledge about Dubrovnik's history, culture and gastronomy?

	Very Limited	Limited	Partial	Substantial	Very Substantial
Dubrovnik's history and important events.	1	9	28	8	5
Dubrovnik's culture (music, art, etc.).	2	9	17	17	6
Local dishes and beverages.	1	0	5	32	13



## Section 2. Social and Communicational Skills

1. Did you have any communication training for this job position? (verbal and nonverbal communication, public speaking, active listening, conflict resolution, etc.)
  - Yes – 6
  - No – 44
  - Other – 1
2. How many languages are you proficient in (including your native language)?
  - Only one language (my native language) – 0
  - Two languages (my native language + one) – 40
  - Three languages (my native language + two) – 9
  - Four languages (my native language + three) – 2
  - More than five languages (my native language + four or more) – 0
3. My communication skills are adequate in terms of clearly conveying information, avoiding technical terms or language barriers:

Strongly disagree 0	0	3	14	Strongly agree 34
------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

4. How confident are you in your ability to influence customers to order your recommendations?

Not confident at all 0	0	3	15	Very confident 33
---------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

5. How confident are you in handling challenging situations or complaints from customers effectively?

Not confident at all 0	0	4	36	Very confident 11
---------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

6. How often do you collaborate with coworkers so as to satisfy your customers?

Very rarely 0	0	15	25	Very frequently 11
------------------	---	----	----	-----------------------

## Section 3. Personal Qualities

1. How confident are you in your ability to remain calm and composed under pressure?

Not confident at all 0	1	6	36	Very confident 8
---------------------------	---	---	----	---------------------

2. How confident are you in managing your time and prioritizing tasks during busy periods?

Not confident at all 0	0	5	36	Very confident 10
---------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

3. Customer criticisms directed at my place of employment affect my work performance.

Strongly disagree 10	21	16	3	Strongly agree 1
-------------------------	----	----	---	---------------------

4. Customer criticisms directed at me personally affect my work performance.

Strongly disagree 3	6	28	13	Strongly agree 1
------------------------	---	----	----	---------------------

5. During busy times, I am able to show sincere interest in customer concerns or problems when addressing their issues.

Strongly disagree 0	1	6	37	Strongly agree 7
------------------------	---	---	----	---------------------

6. I actively seek feedback from customers to identify areas for improvement in service delivery.

Strongly disagree 1	1	20	25	Strongly agree 4
------------------------	---	----	----	---------------------

7. I can converse and interact with customers from other countries without making any cultural mistakes; offending them (for example; recommending pork to Muslim customer).

Strongly disagree 0	1	4	4	Strongly agree 42
------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------

#### Section 4. Problem-Solving Skills

1. I can effectively handle multiple tables or tasks simultaneously during peak dining hours.

Not confident at all 0	1	1	25	Very confident 24
---------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

2. I remain composed and focused on providing excellent service, even in high-pressure or demanding situations.

Strongly disagree 0	0	10	36	Strongly agree 5
------------------------	---	----	----	---------------------

3. When I recognize problems at work, I:

Always wait for others to tell me what to do 0	0	12	31	I never wait for others to tell me what to do (I am proactive) 8
---	---	----	----	---

4. I am able to identify food and beverage options for customers with various dietary restrictions and allergies without seeking help from others.

Strongly disagree 0	0	10	25	Strongly agree 16
------------------------	---	----	----	----------------------

5. I regularly propose suggestions that will potentially increase customer satisfaction.

Strongly disagree 0	0	6	32	Strongly agree 13
------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------

6. I voice my opinion regularly regarding restaurant operations.

Strongly disagree 1	3	18	18	Strongly agree 11
------------------------	---	----	----	----------------------

## Section 5. Demographics

1. Gender
  - Male – 34
  - Female – 17
  - Nonbinary – 0
  - Prefer not to say – 0
2. Age
  - Under 18 – 0
  - 18-25 – 22
  - 26-35 – 24
  - 36-45 – 4
  - 46-55 – 1
  - 55 and above – 0
3. I came to Dubrovnik for employment reasons
  - Yes – 36
  - No – 13
  - Other – 2
4. Education level
  - Less than High School diploma – 0
  - High School Diploma 35
  - Collage/Associate Degree – 8
  - Bachelor's Degree – 6
  - Master's Degree and above – 2

5. Total years of experience in the restaurant industry (current job plus others)
  - Less than 1 year – 2
  - 1-3 years – 26
  - 4-6 years – 16
  - 7-10 years – 2
  - More than 10 years – 5
6. How many years have you been working in this restaurant?
  - Less than 1 year 2
  - 1-3 years – 26
  - 4-6 years – 16
  - 7-10 years – 2
  - More than 10 years – 5
7. What is your job position in the restaurant currently employing you?
  - Floor Manager – 2
  - Head Waiter/Waitress – 8
  - Waiter/Waitress – 39
  - Runner (or assistant waiter; delivers meals and clears tables) – 0
  - Busser (clears tables) – 0
  - Bartender – 1
  - Other – 1
8. Employment Status
  - Full time – 11
  - Part time – 2
  - Temporary/Seasonal – 38
  - Other – 0
9. How long has your current employer been in operation?
  - Less than 1 year – 2
  - 1-3 years – 5
  - 4-6 years – 21
  - 7-10 years – 13
  - More than 10 years – 5
  - I don't know – 5
10. How many hours per week do you work?
  - Less than 20 hours – 0
  - 20-30 hours – 1
  - 31-40 hours – 1
  - More than 40 hours – 49
11. How satisfied are you with your current job?

Strongly disagree 0	1	10	30	Strongly agree 10
------------------------	---	----	----	----------------------

12. Please provide a brief explanation to your response to the prior question.

- I am satisfied because of positive atmosphere while communicating with my team and customers, team work environment is excellent because it is easy to communicate with others and come to normal conclusion.
- I like it, but I don't see myself doing it.
- I chose 3 because of the extensive working hours. It is really hard to give my best because of the long working hours.
- Building something new is exciting
- I don't want to
- I am not very satisfied because of the long working hours.
- Working for the same boss for 10 years, in this restaurant more than 5 years, as a manager, always learning something new, meeting new people, perfect job
- Too much working
- I sometimes do a lot more than my colleagues because I know the job the best
- I earn a lot but I don't have any days off
- It is really expensive to live and work in Dubrovnik
- Too much work
- Satisfied with salary, not much with co-workers
- 
- my working place have a good vibe and for me, working there isn't exhausting.
- Dubrovnik is really expensive and crowded. I rarely find something to do besides work.
- I earn a lot more than in my hometown
- I would like my job to have better work conditions
- Because of my salary
- Not much opportunity to grow
- Salary
- I like chill atmosphere and that the company provided me apartment because Dubrovnik is really expensive
- N
- I have great work conditions
- It is good atmosphere and conditions. But it is a lot of stress
- Everything is good
- It can be really busy and a lot of work but everything else is great
- The tourist season is crazy
- It can be really stressful but my colleagues are great
- Guest can be really challenging and it is a really hard job to do everyday. My work environment is amazing.
- Everything at my job is great. I earn a lot and have fun while I work
- I work too much, but I love my job
- Everything is great except I almost never have any days off
- I love my job but Dubrovnik is really stressful during the season
- I don't know how to explain it. Not everything is great...
- I don't want to answer this

- Everything is great. It is stressful but I love working here
- I like everything except in last the 2 years there are a lot of foreigners coming to work - without knowing anything.
- I like my job but I just realized doing this survey that it would be better if we are trained and prepared before starting to work
- I would like if my employer invested in our education
- Since I am assertive I can fix everything I am not satisfied with.
- I would like to change my work, but I think that it will not be better than this one
- It can be a little better when scheduling the shifts
- I like it but it can be better. I earn a lot but Dubrovnik is expensive and I need to share my apartment with a lot of people
- It is nice but I don't plan on staying this long in Dubrovnik
- A looooot of work, and it is really crowded
- Everyone accepted me when I came here, but it is a lot of work
- I like it but people from Dubrovnik need to have more benefits
- It is so busy I sometimes don't have time for a break
- Conditions during the season are not good, but my place of work is great
- It is sometimes too much work

13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide regarding your role as a waiter or the workplace environment? (Open-ended)

This question is optional.

No valuable data.