

# Effects of professionalism on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment at five star hotels in Baku\*

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## Abstract

Professionalism is one of the necessities for service operations in order to be sustainable at the current competitive markets. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effect of attitudinal professionalism on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment at five-star hotels in Baku, Azerbaijan. The researchers administered questionnaires to 503 employees in the selected 30 five star hotels. Professionalism is found as a significant factor in bringing job satisfaction and commitment. The employees held strong views that their job sufficiently suits their abilities. This is a clear indication that professionalism supports their level of satisfaction with their present job. The study also revealed that the self-management dimension of professionalism has the highest effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees. In the tourism and hospitality industry, professionalism is needed for employees to sustain self-discipline and achieve success in their objectives. The management of the hotels should ensure professionalism among employees to be able to get the desired success. By providing their human resources with the deserved value, job satisfaction and commitment can be enhanced.

**Keywords:** Professionalism, Job satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Human behaviour at work, Baku

## 1. Introduction

The concept of professionalism is appreciated as relevant in various works of life; therefore, its main principles continue to play significant roles regarding desired achievements (Lee 2014; Everts 2011). The concept of professionalism in the hospitality industry is concerned with the status and esteem, which employers and employees should embrace in their services (Hussey/Holden/Lynch 2011). Any failure resulting from a lack of professionalism in the hospitality ser-

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vices results inability to attain high ranking and in the long run being unattractive for the customers (Ko 2012).

Professionalism is one of the most important practices that must be upheld for the hospitality operators to offer the desired services. For this reason, the employees in the hospitality sector are trained to have competent conduct because this has a high impact on the quality of services they will render to their customers. In a supportive view, professionalism makes it possible for employees to have skills and imbibe positivity, all of which brings about motivation and increased productivity (Wang/Vela/Tyler 2008). Professionalism is instrumental in fostering policies efficiently and enhancement of employee satisfaction as well as organizational commitment (Sommerville 2007; Nickson 2007).

The focus of the current study is on the effect of attitudinal dimensions of professionalism on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment at the five-star hotels in Baku, Azerbaijan. The UNDP's Human Development Index (2016) reveals that Azerbaijan has a high level of human development that can be rated among those of most developed Eastern European countries. Besides, Azerbaijan has a high literacy rate as well as a high level of economic development, while the rate of unemployment is meagre. The capital city of Azerbaijan, Baku is considered as the country's powerhouse and is a destination for tourism. Baku is known for the best hotels in Azerbaijan, which are prominent in the hospitality industry, with affordable offers for tourists as well as outstanding facilities. Over the years, the tourism industry of Azerbaijan has fared very well. This is evident in the statistics derived from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan shows that between 2012 and 2017, a considerably high number out of the total number of visitors entered Azerbaijan for tourism purpose (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2018).

In recent years, the tourism sector of Azerbaijan has developed significantly. The State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan reports that the total number of those who arrived and departed in Azerbaijan on tour days per day was 218,982 in 2006 and was recorded as 614,009 in the year 2014. This shows an increase in the total number of international tourists who come to tour Azerbaijan. In 2017, 2.7 million foreigners and stateless persons arrived in Azerbaijan. The two major tourist groups according to their purpose of travel are leisure tourists (31%) and business tourists (31%) (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2018). Azerbaijan was one of the top business tourism destinations in Russia that is the most prominent tourist sending country for Azerbaijan (Akhundov 2017). Tourists can enjoy recreational activities and modern hotels, particularly in the Baku region. On the other hand, the high season, occupancy ratio in Baku is around 70–80%, but some months recorded 0% occupancy rate. The yearly average occupancy ratio was 26% in Baku (Japan International Cooperation Agency 2017). The employees at the hotels at Baku experience inten-

sified workloads in the high season, but it seems that they stay idle in many months of the year. Nevertheless, Baku city's positive economic contribution, which represents 81.5% of total income with 42.7% share in accommodation capacity of Azerbaijan (Japan International Cooperation Agency 2017), is vital for the country's development.

The effectiveness of hotel operations has also mainly contributed to the growth of the tourism sector in Azerbaijan. It is against the backdrop of the growing tourism industry in Azerbaijan that the hospitality services are also in high demand. The hospitality industry involves demanding roles and employees are expected to live up to the task. In recent times, professionalism has gradually become a concept that is widely accepted in the tourism and hospitality industry. Professionalism is one practice that must be upheld for the hospitality operators to offer the desired service. For this reason, the employees in the hospitality sector should be trained to have professionalism, because this has a high impact on the quality of services they will render to their customers. Therefore, through professionalism, it is possible for employees to maintain self-restraint and still perform well in their various duties. This study has the primary objective to evaluate the effect professionalism has on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment at selected five-star hotels in Baku, Azerbaijan. Therefore, the five-star hotels in Baku are demanding a higher level of professionalism from their employees to achieve a high level of expectation of their customers.

It is of the essence to reiterate that the location of the study is Azerbaijan with particular concern on five-star hotels in the city of Baku. The researchers were inspired by the increasing number of five-star hotels in the Baku region, because of the significant increase in the number of inbound tourists and economic development of the country.

In this study, the researchers' particular concern is to evaluate the impact of attitudinal professionalism on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Knowledge pursuance, self-management, orientation of the employees, sense of calling concerning their work, customer orientation will primarily be used to assess the impact professionalism has on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

## 2. Literature Review

Professionalism comprises people who are "autonomous; are guided in their decision-making by professional ethics or code of conduct; are in special relations of trust with clients as well as with employers/managers, and are altruistic and motivated by universal values" (Evets et al. 2009:142). Based on the definitions, the dimensions of professionalism are mentioned with the primary focus on those with the scope of the attitudes of individuals as described by value and belief system imbibed in their profession (Evets 2011; Hussey/Holden/Lynch

2010; Parkan 2008). Nonetheless, professionalism ranges from inter- and intra-personal attributions that quality services as professional in the tourism and hospitality industry (Van de Camp/Vernooij-Dassen/Grol/Bottema 2004; Caro 1992; Sheldon 1989).

Professionalism has become a potent resource in various professions through which employee relations, working conditions, and services can be controlled and improved (Svenson/Evets 2010; Sciulli 2005; Olofsson 2009). All organizations and professions employ workers and strive to function as best as possible. Professionalism “is constantly changing and constantly being redefined in different ways and at different times to serve different interests” (Evets 2006:523). For this reason, most organizations strive for excellence which can only be achieved by means of ensuring professionalism, without which control in the occupation will be challenging to carry out (Brante 2010; Champy 2011; Evets 2014).

For this study, the researchers employed the three attitude-behaviour theories: theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behaviour and theory of trying (Bagozzi/Warsaw 1990; Bagozzi 1992) as the theoretical framework. Attitudes tend to influence people's ideas either in a direct or indirect manner (Bentler/ Speckart 1981; Bagozzi/Baumgartner/Yi 1989; Bagozzi 1992; Zint 2002). The attitude theory is considered because, through attitude, impact on action comes about by the plans of individuals. The stated theoretical frameworks can be utilized to ascertain the impact of attitudinal dimensions of professionalism on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The attitude is a mental manifestation of the emotion of an individual that represents an intended desire (Zint 2002). Attitude motivates an individual to take action about a particular situation. In conceptualizing the attitude theory, it is important to note that attitude and behaviour have great roles in the understanding of employees' job satisfaction and their commitment to the goals. Theory of reasoned action focuses on behaviour and takes into the fact that certain circumstances constrain the effect of attitude has on behaviour (Ajzen/Fishbein 1973). The theory of reasoned action provides a leap into actual behaviour. There are two elements addressed by the theory of reasoned action, namely attitudes and norms. Using these two elements, the theory presupposes that attitudes give way for actions, but with the influence of norms, results in different behaviour. In other words, both attitude and norms affect the behaviour of an individual. Theory of planned behaviour is concerned with linking belief to behaviour (Ajzen 1991). As a compelling theory, the planned behaviour is relevant in discourses on behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and intentions. The theory of planned behaviour is widely accepted based on its ability to describe the existing connection between behaviour and intention. The theory of trying makes efforts to explain an ability that is involved in the attitude of the individual as well as the intention of behaviours (Bagozzi/Warshaw 1990). According to Carsrud and Brännback (2009), “an atti-

tude toward a reasoned action is replaced by an attitude toward trying and an intention is restricted to an intention to try" (p. 155).

Boyt, Lusch, and Naylor (2001) hold the view that "professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possess towards one's profession... an attitudinal and behavioural orientation that individuals possess towards their occupation" (p. 322). Hoyle and Wallace (2005) further affirm that professionalism can be "seen as the identification and expression of what is required and expected of members of a profession" (p. 103). This perception is in line with the view that professionalism can be viewed as using the values of an individual's behaviour and belief to improve their skills and status in society through a job opportunity. The attitudinal professionalism theorizes that an individual holds a belief system, which enables them to set self-goals and conceive strategies with which same can be actualized (Evetts 2011; Parkan 2008).

Professionalism as a multidimensional concept can be characterized by knowledge pursuance, self-management, sense of calling, customer orientation (Evetts 2011). Knowledge pursuance is the level of professionalism of a given employee that distinguishes them from that of other professions. Therefore, professionalism is typically believed to have an exceptional position through which the ability to improve learning and perfecting of skills are of utmost necessity (Evetts 2011). Self-management includes accords that an individual make decisions based on her/his values, even when the circumstances surrounding their choices are found to be intricate (Evetts 2011). By being self-managed, the professional can have control of actions and though influenced by personal judgment, upholds reliability, independence, and self-control (Lee 2014; Evetts 2011; Parkan 2008). The sense of calling enables professionals to form positive attitudes towards their occupations (Parkan 2008). The sense of calling emphasizes the purpose an individual hold towards ensuring their successes on the job (Hall/Chandler 2005). The fourth attitudinal dimension of professionalism is customer orientation. Customer orientation is concerned with the relationship that exists between customers and professionals in the service industry (Stock/Hoyer 2005). Employees value the contact they have with clients to promote the policy of their organization (Lee 2014). Customers tend to have a plethora of needs, and so the only way to match up to their demands is for the service providers to improve their orientation for satisfactory service delivery. This statement clearly explains how each of the attitudinal elements tends to have a positive influence on the other.

Employee satisfaction is "the degree to which employees are content with the job that they perform" (Hong/Hamid/Salleh 2013: 26). Job satisfaction indicates an expression of emotions used to show the attitude of employees toward their job circumstances. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experi-

ences.” Job satisfaction is conceived differently most particularly on issues relating to professionalism in organizations (Kinicki/McKee-Ryan/Schriesheim/Carson 2002). Contemporary studies on job satisfaction have increased suggesting its relevance in the successes of professions and occupations (Byrne/Chugh-tai/Flood/Willis 2012).

The term organizational commitment the term is considered as “an attachment to the organization, characterized by an intention to remain in it; identification with the values and goals of the organization; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf” (Porter et al. 1974:604). It is the attachment of an employee to the organization (Nehmeh 2009). The commitment of employee also related to attachment to goals, values, and policy of the employer, with no intention to leave (Cohen 2007). The “job satisfaction is an antecedent to organizational commitment” (Williams/Hazer 1986; Vandenberg/Lance 1992; Mak/Sockel 2001) and both positively related to professionalism (Welsch/LaVan 1981). There is the core need for employees to have dedicated understanding and expertise while it is also significant for employees to acquire knowledge for attitudinal professionalism (Lee 2014). This means that for any worker to function effectively there must be a conscious effort to get a form of knowledge for the skills required to carry out their duties. Professionalism, therefore, is at the core to ensure that employees have the needed development (Miner/Crane/Vandenberg 1994).

The primary aim of this study is to examine attitudinal professionalism’s influence on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment at hotels in Baku. This study was guided by the objectives outlined below:

- To ascertain the usefulness and level of professionalism at five-star hotels in Baku.
- To identify the impact of professionalism on employee’s job satisfaction.
- To identify the impact of professionalism on organizational commitment.
- To evaluate the influence of professionalism on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

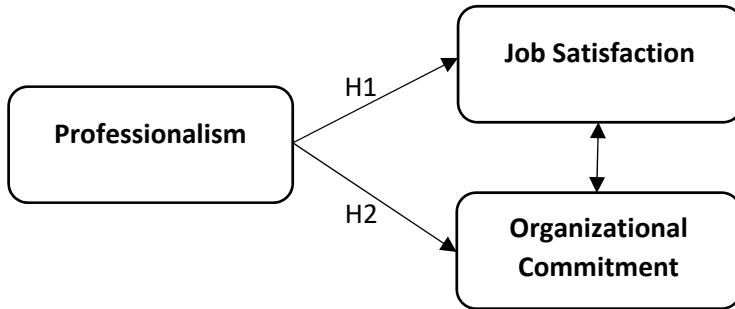
Based on the theoretical discussion and conceptual relations, the following research questions, hypotheses, and the research model were proposed.

1. What is the degree of professionalism at five-star hotels in Baku?
2. What influence does professionalism have on employees’ job satisfaction at five-star hotels in Baku?
3. What influence does professionalism have on organizational commitment at five-star hotels in Baku?

*Hypothesis 1: Professionalism has a significant positive influence on employees’ job satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 2: Professionalism has a significant positive influence on employees' organizational commitment.*

*Hypothesis 3: Job satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment.*



**Figure 1. Research Model**

### 3. Methodology

The researchers chose the quantitative research method to solicit the primary data. It was necessary to adopt the quantitative method because it enabled researchers to promptly conduct a field survey and quantify the data obtained from a larger population and sample size. The survey research as a type of quantitative research method is conducted that is defined as a study on populations by selecting samples chosen from the desired population and discovering relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations (Kerlinger 1973). Levine (2009) holds the view that when responses from the research are quantified, there is a more straightforward approach to assess the issue under study.

In this study, the population was identified as five-star hotels in Baku. By using the convenience sampling method, the researchers administered questionnaires to 503 front-line employees from three departments (front office, food and beverage, and housekeeping) in the selected 30 five star hotels (by considering the branches of chain hotels). The method of data collection in the study is the survey. The instrument of primary data collection is the questionnaire. It is recommended for researchers to adapt questionnaires from a previously conducted study (Mathers/Fox/Hunn 2009). The questionnaire adopted for the study is borrowed from a reputable and reliable source (Lee 2014). The questionnaire was translated into Azeri by a professional translator and then back-translated by another translator. The original English questionnaire was compared with the back-translated English version, and the translation discrepancies were corrected. The questionnaire was self-administered and did not pose any economic challenges

for the researchers during the fieldwork. The researchers used the help of two research assistants to administer the questionnaire.

The questionnaire had 30 questions based on the 5-point Likert scale and comprised of four sections. In the first part, 16 questions were directed to the respondents about professionalism and the second part had five questions that were dedicated to organizational commitment. In the third part, there were four questions on job satisfaction while the fourth part had five questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A pilot study was carried out at the Jumeirah Bilgah Beach Hotel in Baku, Azerbaijan with 20 employees. The hotel is a five-star chain hotel, and it is one of the largest hotels in the capital. The reason for this pilot study was to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire. The items were polished to eliminate the misunderstandings. The pilot study was also conducted to test the research process; putting all resources into consideration; including time, finance as well as other materials, and to check the possibility of problems and the related solutions.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-version 21.0) was used to carry out analysis, calculate findings, and create tables for clear interpretation. For the demographic data of respondents, the frequency distribution of simple percentages was used. Furthermore, descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, were applied to study results on professionalism, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

One of the main statistical estimator models in behavioural research that widely used is the regression. It is assumed that explanatory variables in the regression are usually independent (Kibria 2003). However, in practice, explanatory variables may have a strong relationship with each other (Farrar/Glauber 1967). In that situation, the assumption of independence for variables is not valid which leads to the multicollinearity. Estimating the effect of variables in the case of multicollinearity is impossible in linear regression analysis (Khalaf/Shukur 2005). In order to solve the undesirable effect of multicollinearity on ordinary least squares estimation, Hoerl and Kennard (1970 2000) introduced the Ridge Regression (RR) as a remedy to that (Guilkey/Murphy 1975; Mahajan/Jain/ Bergier 1977). Therefore, in this study as independent variables have a strong relationship with each other, the ridge regression analysis was applied in order to study the effect of variables. The ridge regression was performed using the NCSS – *Number Cruncher Statistical System* -version 11.0 (NCSS 2016). NCSS is a statistics package produced that is created by Jerry L. Hintze in 1981. Woodward, Potito, and Beilman (2012) and Toker, Yildirim, Demir, Ucar, and Kilic (2015) analysed the ridge regression by using NCSS statistical software. NCSS specializes in providing statistical analysis, which is extensively used in different studies and disciplines.

## 4. Data Analyses and Findings

### 4.1 Profile of the survey respondents

There were 341 male respondents representing 67.8%, while female respondents were 162 representing 32.2% of the total sampled population. Since these percentages were reflecting the existing gender distribution of the employees in the sampled five-star hotels in Baku, the researchers did not prefer to administer more questionnaires to include additional male responders.

The majority (60.4%) of the respondents were university graduates (four years), 37.4% of them were college graduates (two years), and the remaining (2.2%) were high school graduates. The age groups of the respondents are presented in the table given below. The majority of the respondents (58.4%) is in between the ages of 21–30 years; followed by 31–40 years with 28.8%.

**Table 1. Ages of the Respondents**

Age Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent
Under 20 years	9	1.8
21–30 years	294	58.4
31–40 years	145	28.8
41–50 years	38	7.4
51 years and above	17	3.4
Total	503	100.0

According to the working years in the hotel industry, 278 respondents (55.3% of the total) indicated that they have three years or fewer experience. One hundred eighty-nine respondents (37.3%) worked for 4–9 years and 36 respondents (7.2%) for ten years or more. These findings indicate that most of the employees are in the early years of their career in the industry. 51 (10.1%) respondents specified their monthly income as 300–400 AZN, 148 (32.7%) as 401–500 AZN, 106 (24.5%) as 501–600 AZN, 87 (20.7%) as 601–700 AZN, 81 (16.1%) as 701–800 AZN, 21 (4.2%) as 801–900 AZN, and 9 (1.8%) as 901 AZN and above. It is required to mention that low skilled Azerbaijan wages stand at 423 AZN/month and high skilled Azerbaijan wages stand at 601 AZN/month (IECONOMICS 2016 a,b). The differences between these wages arose in connection with the departments of the respondents. Those working at the front office department (6%) earn higher wages than the respondents earn at food and beverage (57.2%) and housekeeping (36.8%) departments. The results related to job satisfaction, which are addressed in the following parts of this article, revealed that the respondents are not satisfied with the match between their aptitudes and the work. These findings should warn the managers regarding the potential indicators of dissatisfaction in their organizations.

#### 4.2 Reliability of the scales

In the effort to measure the reliability of the items used for data collection, Cronbach's alphas were computed.

**Table 2. Reliability Test**

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge Pursuance	4	.937
Self-Management	4	.935
Sense of Calling	5	.945
Customer Orientation	3	.906
Organizational Commitment	5	.971
Job Satisfaction	4	.941

The calculated Cronbach's alpha values indicate that all the measures are above the threshold level of 0.7 (Nunnally 1978:245). These high Cronbach's alpha values have attained satisfactory reliability levels for the data analysis.

#### 4.3 Findings related to professionalism

The responses related to the respondents' attitudinal professionalism items are all above 3.00 level with the highest point of 4.59 that stands for the statements that the respondents gain knowledge and the skills needed to work efficiently and that they find their work to be very important to them.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Dimensions of Professionalism**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge pursuance	4.1754	.78021
Self-management	3.7525	.83237
Sense of calling	4.1058	.92763
Customer orientation	3.9748	.92421

In the table above, the descriptive statistics for dimensions of professionalism indicate average means ranging from 3.75 to 4.18. This implies that the outlined dimensions of professionalism have very high mean scores based on the data derived from the field survey. The highest mean was observed for the knowledge pursuance dimension. In table 4, the correlation between dimensions of professionalism indicates that they are highly correlated with each other.

**Table 4. Correlation between Dimensions of Professionalism**

	Knowledge pursuance	Self-Management	Sense of calling	Customer Orientation
Knowledge pursuance	1.000	0.961*	0.981*	0.981*
Self-Management		1.000	0.961*	0.948*
Sense of calling			1.000	0.967*
Customer Orientation				1.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the  $P \leq 0.001$  level.

#### 4.4 Findings on organizational commitment and job satisfaction

Four questions were asked to the respondents about job satisfaction. The findings of these questions are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction**

Statement	Mean
I am satisfied with my work	3.80
I think my work fits my aptitude	3.36
I feel my work is fun	3.60
I think my work is valuable	4.63

The findings on the statements reflect that the respondents perceive their work valuable. The employees' appreciation of their work is essential for their satisfaction and their ambition. On the other hand, they do not perceive their work as matching their abilities. This issue can give rise to a decrease in job satisfaction in the hotels. In this regard, their satisfaction with their work is moderately above the average. Furthermore, they do not have fun with their work. The managers need to address these critical points with the aim of increasing job satisfaction in their hotels.

In this study, five survey items sought to ask respondents about organizational commitment. The respondents who are pleased to choose their company as a workplace had the highest mean of 4.04, while those who if a given opportunity will not differ in their choice of the employer had 4.00 mean value. Those who said they would accept their employer's fate as theirs recorded 3.87 mean score and those who think their employer is the best had a mean of 3.52. One survey item, which indicates that respondents would likely not to continue working at the company neither will they consider it as a workplace for life is slightly above the average mean (3.04). Overall, the respondents reflected their commitment to the objectives and services rendering to their organizations. This is clearly expressed by their resolve to remain with their employers, and even when there is an opportunity to work, they will choose to stay with their current employer. By

identifying with the values of their employing organization, they are able to remain committed to their jobs. These perceptions are indicating that they intend to stay consciously with their employing organization.

**Table 6. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment based on Duration of Hotel Service**

Variable		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Job satisfaction	3 years or fewer	278	3.122	0.720	0.043
	4–9 years	189	4.690	0.288	0.021
	10 years or more	36	5.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	503	3.846	0.985	0.044
Organizational commitment	3 years or fewer	278	2.914	0.718	0.043
	4–9 years	189	4.594	0.426	0.031
	10 years or more	36	5.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	503	3.695	1.056	0.047

The results of the descriptive analysis based on the duration of hotel service in Table 6 show that the majority of the respondents were in three years or fewer in the hotel service, which the average of their job satisfaction was greater than organizational commitment not only in this duration but also for 4–9 years duration.

**Table 7. Comparison of Means based on Duration of Hotel Service**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	328.325	2	164.162	515.878	0.000*
	Within Groups	159.110	500	0.318		
Organizational Commitment	Between Groups	383.341	2	191.670	541.825	0.000*
	Within Groups	176.875	500	0.354		

\*. The mean difference is significant at the  $P \leq 0.01$  level.

The results of the one-way ANOVA test in Table 7 show there are significant differences between the respondents' duration of hotel service in job satisfaction and organizational commitment variables. It denotes that there is a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment based on their duration of hotel service.

**Table 8. Tukey HSD post hoc test for the duration of hotel service and JS & OC**

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	
						Upper Bound	
Job satisfaction	3 years or fewer	4–9 years	-1.568	0.053	0.000*	-1.693	-1.443
		10 years or more	-1.878	0.100	0.000*	-2.113	-1.643
	4–9 years	3 years or fewer	1.568	0.053	0.000*	1.443	1.693
		10 years or more	-0.309	0.103	0.008*	-0.551	-0.068
	10 years or more	3 years or fewer	1.878	0.100	0.000*	1.643	2.113
		4–9 years	0.309	0.103	0.008*	0.068	0.551
Organizational commitment	3 years or fewer	4–9 years	-1.679	0.056	0.000*	-1.811	-1.547
		10 years or more	-2.086	0.105	0.000*	-2.333	-1.838
	4–9 years	3 years or fewer	1.679	0.056	0.000*	1.547	1.811
		10 years or more	-0.406	0.108	0.001*	-0.661	-0.152
	10 years or more	3 years or fewer	2.086	0.105	0.000*	1.838	2.333
		4–9 years	0.406	0.108	0.001*	0.152	0.661

\*. The mean difference is significant at the  $P \leq 0.05$  level.

The result of the post hoc test of Tukey HSD test in Table 8 confirmed the significant differences in job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels based on the duration of hotel service. These findings indicated that the employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels could be increased in conjunction with increasing the years of working in hotel service.

Both job satisfaction and organizational commitment increase as the years of duration in hotel service increases. This finding should motivate the hotel managers to retain their employees to stay in their hotels. The more their employees stay the more job satisfaction and organizational commitment will come to their business.

#### 4.5 Hypothesis testing

Ridge regression analysis was conducted to assess the ability of four dimensions of professionalism (knowledge pursuance, self-management, customer orientation, sense of calling) to predict job satisfaction. The result showed that four factors predict job satisfaction  $F (4, 498) = 1129.562$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.901. All four factors significantly affect job satisfaction. Knowledge pur-

suance ( $\beta = 0.224$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), self-management ( $\beta = 0.241$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , customer orientation ( $\beta = 0.220$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), sense of calling ( $\beta = 0.236$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In order to find the effect of professionalism on job satisfaction, the ridge regression was used and the test showed that 97.1 % of 16 items of professionalism effect on job satisfaction ( $F(1,501) = 12541.968$ ,  $\beta = 0.971$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

**Table 9. Effect of Professionalism on Job Satisfaction**

Predictors	B	Se	$\beta$	VIF
Knowledge pursuance	0.283	0.007	0.224	0.151
Self-management	0.286	0.009	0.241	0.302
Sense of calling	0.235	0.007	0.220	0.233
Customer orientation	0.250	0.007	0.236	0.199

The result of regression analysis supported the hypothesis (H1); ‘Professionalism has a significant positive influence on employees’ job satisfaction’.

**Table 10. Ridge vs. Least Squares Comparison ( $k = 0.346034$ )**

Independent Variable	Regular Ridge Coeff's	Regular L.S. Coeff's	Stand'ze d Ridge Coeff's	Stand'ze d L.S. Coeff's	Ridge Standard Error	L.S. Standard Error
Knowledge pursuance	0.283	0.169	0.224	0.134	0.007	0.054
Self-management	0.286	0.397	0.241	0.336	0.009	0.028
Sense of calling	0.235	0.209	0.220	0.196	0.007	0.034
Customer orientation	0.250	0.360	0.236	0.339	0.007	0.036
R-Squared	0.901	0.982				

Likewise, ridge regression analyses conducted to assess the effect of professionalism on organizational commitment. The result showed that there is a significant effect of professionalism on organizational commitment ( $F(1,501) = 3051.557$ ,  $\beta = 0.890$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Ridge regression analysis was used to assess the ability of four dimensions of professionalism (knowledge pursuance, self-management, customer orientation, sense of calling) to predict organizational commitment. The results showed that the factors predict organizational commitment ( $F(4,498) = 1427.420$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.920).

**Table 11. Effect of Professionalism on Organizational Commitment**

Predictors	B	Se	$\beta$	VIF
Knowledge pursuance	0.209	0.025	0.155	2.159
Self-management	0.398	0.029	0.314	3.238
Sense of calling	0.319	0.025	0.279	2.868
Customer orientation	0.248	0.024	0.217	2.753

Knowledge pursuance ( $\beta = 0.155$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), Self-management ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), customer orientation ( $\beta = 0.279$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), sense of calling ( $\beta = 0.217$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) significantly predict organizational commitment ( $p=0.000$ ). Therefore, results are sufficient to accept the hypothesis (H2); ‘professionalism has significant influence on employee’s organizational commitment’.

**Table 12. Ridge vs. Least Squares Comparison (k = 0.058623)**

Independent Variable	Regular Ridge Coeff's	Regular L.S. Coeff's	Stand'zed Ridge Coeff's	Stand'zed L.S. Coeff's	Ridge Standard Error	L.S. Standard Error
Knowledge pursuance	0.209	-0.195	0.155	-0.144	0.025	0.107
Self-Management	0.398	0.534	0.314	0.421	0.029	0.055
Sense of Calling	0.319	0.521	0.279	0.456	0.025	0.067
Customer Orientation	0.248	0.284	0.217	0.249	0.024	0.071
R-Squared	0.920	0.937				

Additionally, the correlation test was used to assess the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The result showed that job satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment ( $R = .968$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

**Table 13. Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment**

		Job Sat.	Org. Commit.
Job Satisfaction (Job Sat.)	Pearson Correlation	1	.968**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	503	503
Organizational Commitment (Org. Commit.)	Pearson Correlation	.968**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	503	503

Ridge regression analysis was used to find the effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment. The result indicated that there is a significant effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment ( $F (1,501) = 3418.858$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , with an  $R^2$ ).

**Table 14. Regression of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment**

Predictor	B	se	$\beta$	VIF	R square
Job satisfaction	0.965	0.016	0.901	0.865	0.872

**Table 15. Regression of Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction**

Predictor	B	se	$\beta$	VIF	R square
Organizational Commitment	0.840	0.014	0.901	0.865	0.872

The results supported the hypothesis (H3); 'job satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment'.

#### 4.6 Demographical differences in professionalism, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment

The independent samples t-test was used to compare the professionalism levels of men and women respondents. The result of the analysis showed that there is a significant difference between men and women in professionalism levels ( $t(501) = 20.889$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Female respondents showed a higher professionalism level ( $M = 4.856$ ,  $SD = .136$ ) than males ( $M = 3.608$ ,  $SD = .754$ ). Furthermore, the t-test result showed that there is a significant difference in job satisfaction of participants based on their genders, ( $t(501) = 24.310$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Women's job satisfaction was higher ( $M = 4.896$ ,  $SD = .146$ ) than men ( $M = 3.346$ ,  $SD = .804$ ). In the same direction, higher organizational commitment level was observed for women ( $M = 4.891$ ,  $SD = .141$ ) compared to men ( $M = 3.126$ ,  $SD = .794$ ).

The one-way ANOVA test was used to examine job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professionalism levels of participants based on their education levels (high school, 2-years college degree, 4 years bachelor degree). The results indicated that the respondents gain more job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professionalism as their education level increases. The parallel result was observed for the ages of the respondents.

**Table 16. Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Professionalism Levels based on Education Level**

Education level	Job Satisfaction*		Organizational Commitment**		Professionalism***	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High school	1.477	0.134	1.400	0.346	1.852	0.211
2 years college	2.910	0.556	2.637	0.473	3.178	0.492
4 years university	4.509	0.477	4.431	0.526	4.602	0.333

\*  $F(2,500) = 706.899$ ,  $p = .000$

\*\*  $F(2,500) = 852.819$ ,  $p = .000$

\*\*\*  $F(2,500) = 905.296$ ,  $p = .000$

As regards the relationship between educational level and organizational commitment, many studies suggest that they have a negative relationship (Meyer/Stanley/Herscovitch/Topolnytsky 2002). However, the result of this study proved that the higher educational level, the greater the chances are that employees will be committed to their job especially in the higher level of professionalism demanding jobs.

Although previous studies have shown that the relationship between educational level and job satisfaction is not positive (Gazioglu/Tansel 2002; Clark/Oswald

1996; Grund/Slivka 2001; Sloane/Williams 1996), depending on employee's personal and professional aspirations, the educational level can play a positive role. Accordingly, other studies have shown that level of job satisfaction increases with educational level (Nikolaou/Theodossiou/Vasileiou 2005; Weaver 1980), as Lydon and Chevalier (2002) highlighted the high correlation between job satisfaction and educational level. In this regard, hotel managers can further increase the job satisfaction level by providing opportunities for education and training programs that will improve their employees' abilities, motivation, and effectiveness. Training is one of the crucial factors in enhancing job satisfaction of the employees (Conrade/Woods 1994), especially in 5-star hotels (Chiang/Birtch/Cai 2014).

## 5. Discussion of the Results

This study set to assess the effects of professionalism on organizational commitment and employees' job satisfaction in selected five-star hotels in Baku. The findings of this study affirm similar results with previous studies. Shafer, Part, and Liao (2002) detected the positive influence of professionalism on job satisfaction. There is a consistent relationship between professionalism and job satisfaction (Norris/Niebuhr 1984); the connection between the two variables is strengthened and gives rise to increased job satisfaction among employees (Kalbers/Fogarty 1995; Boyt et al. 2001; Shafer et al. 2002; Dali/Mas'ud 2014). Furthermore, the correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction is evident in the current study that is in the same direction as previous studies (Allen/Meyer 1990; Lashley/Lee-Ross 2003). In a study on professionalism as a predictor of organizational commitment, Bartol (1979) affirmed that professional attitudes have a significant connection with the amount of commitment an employee will give to their employer.

The elaboration of the findings on job satisfaction revealed that the respondents value their work, but they do not see the work at the same level as their aptitude. The employees, who face an unbalance between their roles/responsibilities and skills/abilities together with low paid positions, are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction. Under these circumstances, over qualification, under qualification/incompetence, and incongruity (Hardy/Conway 1988; Astakhova/Bea/Camp 2017) can be observed in the organizations that are likely to yield further undesirable consequences. The managers can address these issues by adopting the person-job fit philosophy (Edwards 1991) in their human resource management practices with the aim of increasing job satisfaction (Donavan/Brown/Mowen 2004).

The results confirmed the correlation between knowledge pursuance, self-management, sense of calling and customer orientation with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Based on the findings of the current study, there is

clear evidence of the connection between self-management, knowledge pursuance, customer orientation, sense of calling, and job satisfaction respectively.

In the case of enhancing organizational commitment, self-management stands out as the most effective dimension of attitudinal professionalism. The effect of self-management among employees suggests that they have judgment, independence, and control as professional attributes. Thus, pointing to their ability to set goals by themselves, towards actualizing organizations' goals. Furthermore, the sense of calling is also found to be a very significant dimension in the influence of professionalism on organizational commitment. This indicates that the employees, who have passion and attachment to their organization, tend to have a positive effect on their job commitment.

On the other hand, customer orientation and knowledge pursuance dimensions were less significant in the current study than other dimensions in affecting the organizational commitment. The influence of customer orientation as an attitudinal dimension is not high. There is an indication of intention towards prioritizing the needs of customers. The relationship between orientation and employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment is established in Jernigan, Beggs, and Kohut's (2002) study. There is a clear symptom also that knowledge pursuance has less influence on the organizational commitment as for when compared with the other dimensions of attitudinal professionalism.

## 6. Conclusion

This study was conducted to uncover the impact of attitudinal professionalism on employees' satisfaction and organizational commitment at five-star hotels in Baku, Azerbaijan. Based on the findings, there is a clear result that the employees view professionalism as a concept that is of high value towards their success on their job. The results also provide a clear-cut understanding of the necessity to ensure self-managed human resources in the organizations. Therefore, the managers and the future researchers are also responsible for studying the factors that increase self-management of the employees. On the other hand, employees' self-management abilities, skills, and personal characteristics should also be connected to their customer service practices.

The researchers found that professionalism has a significant influence on the job satisfaction of employees. Employees hold strong views that their job sufficiently suits their ability. The existing influence of the professionalism on job satisfaction of the employees is a clear indication that professionalism supports their level of satisfaction with their present job.

The findings also reveal that professionalism has a significant influence on organizational commitment. This influence is justified by the willingness of employees to continue working with their present employers. The employees hold firm

resolve to keep working even if given the freedom to choose other jobs, which is a conviction that can best be achieved by a suitable organization's policy that provides room for the achievement of self-goals and organizational goals.

The last but not the least conclusion is related to the perceptions of the job satisfaction items. The managers need to fill the positions by pursuing the balance between the employees' competencies and the work. This is a critical factor for maintaining the general job satisfaction level of the employees and creating a pleasurable and fair environment in the workplace. Employees, whose skills are compatible with their positions and who are retained in the hotel for many years, will be more satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations.

This empirical study has been completed with some limitations. A methodological limitation of the study was related to the high correlations between the study variables. The limitation has been overcome by applying the ridge regression analysis. In this research study, the ridge regression analysis helped the authors in achieving satisfactory and valid results over the ill effects of multicollinearity. Therefore, further researchers can take advantage of this method in their future studies.

Another limitation encountered in the course of this study was the inability of the researchers to cover all the selected five-star hotels. Initially, the researchers set out to administer questionnaires to thirty-three five-star hotels in Baku. Unfortunately, twenty-four employers agreed to their employees to respond to the survey questions. Nine hotels' managers adopted different barriers for the research in their hotel. Moreover, the sample of the research was limited to the front-line employees at the customer contact departments. Almost no managers allowed the researchers to access the employees of the accounting, human resources, sales and marketing, and engineering departments. Future studies with the back-office employees can bring new insights to the research results.

This study has highlighted that in meeting up with the growing trends of the tourism and hospitality industry, the management of hotels should ensure professionalism among employees to be able to get the desired objectives. By providing their human resources with the deserved value, job satisfaction and commitment can be enhanced; and this will give the opportunity to achieve the organizational goals.

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