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Content / Kazalo

Who spends more: sport-active versus active tourists

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Abstract

This study empirically investigated the influences of gender, age and educational level on the main motive for travel, which then explored the relationship of these influences to travel spending. Furthermore, sports-active tourists were compared with other tourists who are interested in active travel. Active traveling, in this present study, includes tourists with other main motives of traveling, but not those whose main motive is "rest and relaxation". Slovenian tourists traveling within Slovenia and those traveling abroad were compared. We found that men, younger tourists and better educated tourists mainly choose sports related travel. Further research explains the influences of the main motives for travel spending and revealed who tends to spend more between sports-active tourists and other active tourists. For a potential sports-tourism destination is it vital to know the presented data. The implications of the results are discussed in the context of sport tourism marketing.

Key words: sport tourism, active tourists, travel expenses, sports tourism marketing

1 The role of socio-demographic characteristics of tourists

Every tourism destination should be interested in the type of tourism offer and specialization of tourism products which, from the tourism destination, will derive as much as possible, especially when talking about income, employment opportunities, investments and other positive direct and indirect tourism effects. As income increases, the demand for tourism is also likely to increase (Ryan, 1991). Sometimes niche tourism offers will characterize destinations (e.g. ski resort, sea resort), thus creating its competitive advantage (Juvan & Ovsenik, 2008).

Slovenia is a tourism destination with no specifically defined priorities in tourism. The Slovenian Tourism Strategy has no clearly defined type of tourism which the country wants to develop and promote. Which type of tourism destination does Slovenia want to be mostly recognized as? Buhalis warned as early as 1999 that the destination is forced to develop tourism which then evolves into mass tourism as planners either failed to limit development or to implement plans against politicians, industry and developers. However, it is still the case that as of 2012, Slovenia has no clear tourism image.

Furthermore, a tourism destination needs to know the push and pull factors of tourists (Dann, 1981) when preparing a general or specific tourism strategy for a tourism product. On the other hand, factors affecting the decision to go on holiday are composed of different socio-demographic characteristics including different income levels, household size, education, size of the city of origin and opinion regarding going on holiday (Nicolau & Mas, 2005). Many authors have analyzed the socio-demographic characteristics of different types of tourists or rather, tourists with different motives for traveling. Ryan (2003) even affirmed that there is a link between income and motivation for traveling; when material needs are satisfied, experiential needs become important. Nevertheless, successful tourism management and planning will increasingly need to identify the factors changing demand trends (Buhalis, 2001). In other words, the question is whether the age, level of education and gender of a tourist has any effect on choosing the travel activity, which could be sport or any other tourism activity (shopping, culture events, etc.). Collin and Tisdell (2002) found that gender has a major influence on travel demand. They discovered that men tend to travel more often than women for business and work-related travel, but women travel more often for leisure purposes, including traveling to visit friends and relatives. Pizam and Fleischer (2005) added that individuals from masculine cultures preferred more dynamic and sport-active tourist activities than those coming from feminine cultures. Sport-active tourism undoubtedly is one of the types of tourism where experience comes to the front. Gibson (1998) established that a typical sports active tourist is highly educated, male, aged between 25 and 34 with an above-average income. On the other hand in the perception of a typical 'culture' tourist, Slak Valek, Kolar, Jurak and Bednarik (2005) found that a Slovenian 'culture' tourist (which is an individual whose main motive for traveling is to visit museums, churches and other cultural amenities) is older, more educated and spends more than the average Slovenian tourist.

Many socio-demographic characteristics undoubtedly affect the decision to travel, but none as much as household income (Agarwal & Yochum, 1999; Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Cannon & Ford, 2002; Ryan, 2003; Hennessey, Macdonald & Maceachern, 2008). Household income is undoubtedly important when choosing a tourism destination. As assumed, the level of household income is not the only factor which shows what people are prepared to spend. Many individuals have a wish that one day they will travel to some specific place for a specific activity. People with low income have travel wishes, too. For example a fan of the Aiax football team living in China would save money for as long as it takes to one day travel to the Netherlands to visit the Aiax stadium. This is a tourism activity that has a strong motivation even to the individual who does not have a high household income.

From this point of view, the question is how much are people prepared to spend while travelling for a specific reason and an activity to satisfy the push factor. Cannon and Ford (2002) affirmed that the only significant variable related to the increased spending per day among sport event visitors is high income levels and the fact that the visitor was from out-of-state. Education level, marital status, and ethnicity were not significant factors in explaining visitor expenditures. Of course, many authors analyzed the role of household income as the main socio-demographic characteristic and found that greater levels of income are associated with the greater probability of going on a holiday (Nicolau and Mas, 2005). Davies and Mangan (1992) and Cai (1999) added that household income, among other socio-demographic characteristics, has a great effect on the type of travel activity.

It is generally understood that the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics influence the demand of tourists and that many tourism destinations target those with higher household incomes. On the other hand the aim of a tourism economy is not only to attract those tourists with a high household income, but to also convince tourists to spend more on the activity of interest.

Our study question was to see if the demographic characteristics affect the motive for traveling and if the motive for travel affects the amount of money spent while traveling. Past research did reveal some findings. Thrane (2002) studied tourists with the main motive for travel was to assist a jazz festival where the length of stay, respondents' geographical location, household income and household size were found to affect the personal expenditures during the festival. Cai (1998) investigated the relationship between household socio-demographic characteristics and vacation food expenditures. Mills, Couturier & Snepenger (1986) were interested in how money spent by Texas skiers was differentiated by socio-demographic characteristics where the results segmented skiers into two groups, heavy and light spenders, showing differences in spending through the same motivation for travel. People with a low household income are skiers as well, and need to satisfy their motivation for travel. This finding is very important for sports tourism destinations which need to attract skiers with higher and lower incomes.

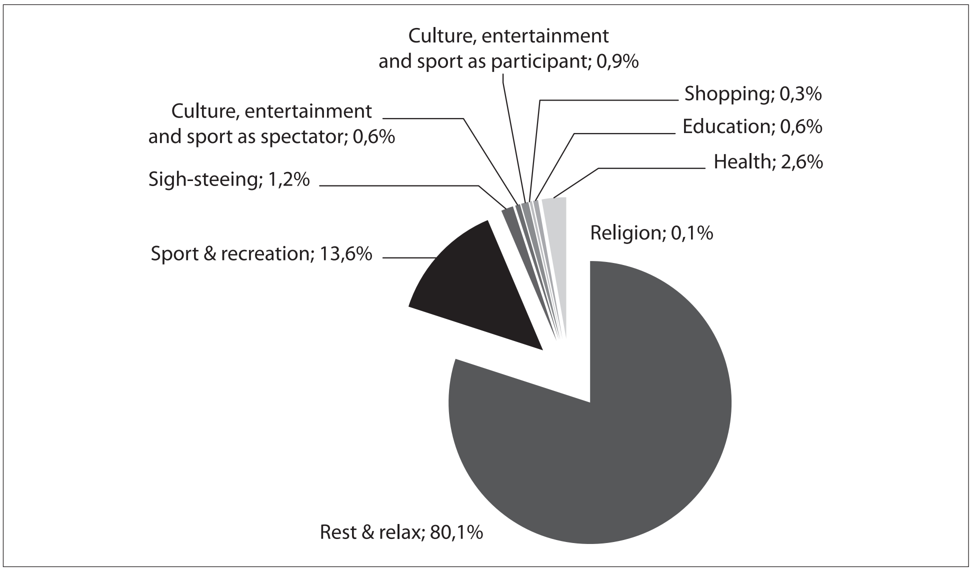
We were interested in active Slovenian tourists and their socio-demographic characteristics and travel spending habits. Several studies support socio-demographic determinants to have an effect on activity, participation and travel behavior (Saayman & Saayman, 2009) and the socio-demographic characteristics (Nicolau & Mas, 2005; Lehto, Cai, O'Leary & Huan, 2004; Thrane, 2002) undoubtedly affect spending during travel. Our research was focused on active travel only and excluded those tourists who are completely non-active on vacation.

2 Passive and active tourists

Even passive travel does not exist by definition (all tourists are active due to travelling), in the present study tourists traveling mostly with the main motive for "rest and relaxation" were defined as passive tourists. Those tourists are called "sea, sun and sand" tourists in most literature, and their main activity is taking sun on the beach or relaxing in spas and health resorts. Data presented by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), is collected to ensure the distribution of Slovenian tourists by their main motivations for travel which are as follows: rest & relaxation; sport & recreation; sight-seeing; culture, entertainment & sport as spectator; culture, entertainment & sport as participant (non-professional), shopping, educational reasons, health reasons, going on a pilgrimage, other. As can be seen, all mentioned motives of travel demand an activity to satisfy the motivation, except the motive for "rest and relax". Tourists with the main motivation to travel being rest and relaxation mainly travel due to a habit behavior, but without a specific desired activity. This is why they were defined as passive tourists.

In Figures 1 and 2, the market share by motives of travel of Slovenian tourists traveling in Slovenia and abroad is shown. We find the biggest market share belongs to passive tourists. Since our study is focused on active tourists only, the passive tourists were excluded (see methodology chapter).

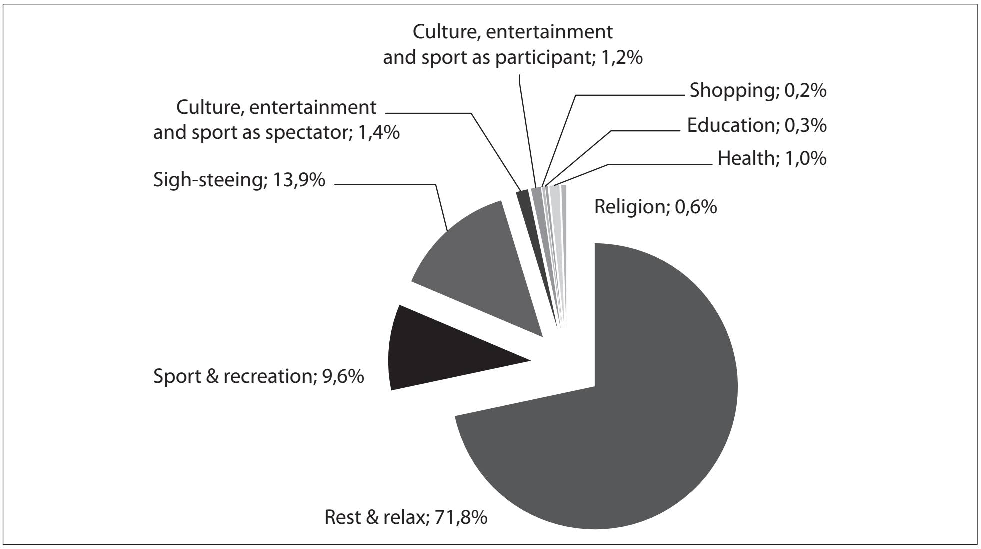
Picture 1: *Market shares of main motive for traveling of Slovenian tourists traveling in Slovenia*



Source: SORS, 2008

According to Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill (1999), typology is a method of sociological research which investigates and classifies tourists by different characteristics, in particular, motivation or behaviors. Cooper et al. (1999) claimed that a definition of type of tourists represents the foundation for the adjustment of products, which exerts a significant influence on the ways in which tourist needs are satisfied. Although a

Picture 2: *Market shares of main motive for traveling of Slovenian tourists traveling abroad*



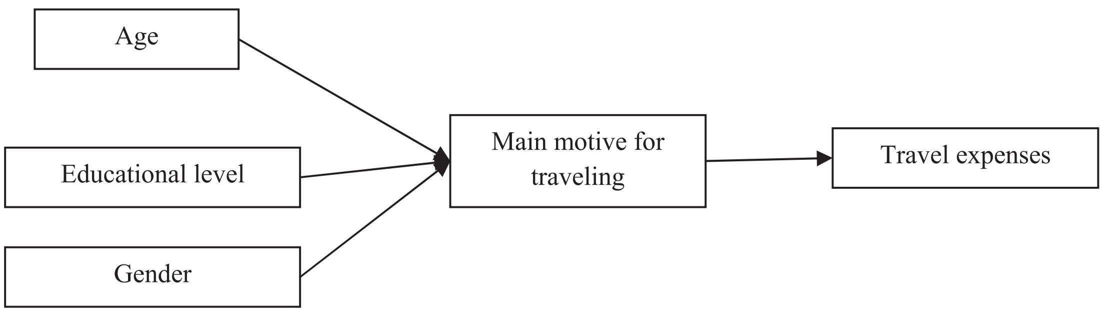
Source: SORS, 2008

large proportion of vacations are spent on international trips especially during the summer season, several other types of tourism demands emerged (Buhalis, 2001). For this reason it is important to know the preference of active tourists, tourist trips focused on an activity.

Passive and active tourists have been researched in the past by many authors. Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer & Patro (1994) described three categories of leisure activities: active leisure, passive leisure, and social entertainment. Before Gibson (1998), sport tourism was divided into active and passive. Gibson (1998) however, suggests there are three main types of sport tourism which include; sport-active tourists, nostalgia sport tourists and event sport tourists. From our point of view the need to divide tourists into passive and active generally exists in tourism. Active tourism is mainly used in articles on sport tourism (Gibson, 2003, 2004; Gibson, Attle & Yiannakis, 1998; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1993; and many other), but there is a need to distinguish between active versus passive tourism activities (De Knop, 1987; Pizam & Fleischer, 2005). Passive tourists prefer vacationing in places near the sea with a lot of sun (De Knop, 1987), 3S or 4S tourists (sea, sun, sand, sex), or relaxing in wellness centers. On the other hand, an active tourist is not an individual who likes sport activities only, but may also be interested in other activities such as a cultural or religious activity, visiting nature attractions and other types of active participation. In the end, creative tourism depends far more on the active involvement of tourists (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Buhalis (in Wahab & Cooper, 2001) even explained that 4S tourists spent more on international trips, especially when people from cooler climates visit warmer destinations to enjoy resorts, but tourists who tend to concentrate on sport and educational activities, hobbies and visiting cultural attractions spend their short-term breaks traveling in their country of origin. Our study analyzes both active tourists traveling in their own country of origin and tourists traveling abroad with active motivation for traveling. Active tourists are more interesting in terms of spending, if comparing them with passive tourists. Theobald (2005) recommended that tourism consumption expenditures be identified by a system of three main categories: travel purpose, travel destination and travel conclusions. From the data of Slak Valek (2008), 70% of Slovenian tourists travel with the main motive for traveling being "relaxation and rest", which as a matter of fact means they do not spend more money than planned. This kind of tourist prefers relaxing on the beach without any involvement in an activity. However, the important number is 70-80% of tourists are non-active tourists, which is a big loss for the Slovenian tourism economy. Based on the assumption that active tourism participation has a higher economic impact on tourism than passive leisure tourism, the tourism industry should focus on attracting active tourists. This activity could be sport, culture, wellness, and/or religion. Due to a deep interest in sport activity, we were interested in finding a type of tourist who spends more – sport active tourists or tourists with other main motives for traveling that led to an additional activity.

Most authors (Gibson, 1998; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Hudson, 2003) dealt with sports tourism from the aspect of the consumer or tourists. Amongst Germans, the average active sports tourist spent 7.5 nights and 580 Euros on his or her holidays. The Dutch spent 11.6 nights and 592 Euros. The average sport active tourist spent 9.4 nights and the most money (UN WTO and IOC 2001). This type of data is very important for preparing plans and strategies to develop sport tourism in any country. Results from Slak Valek (2008) showed that Slovenian sport tourists spent 35 EUR per day in 2003, which is more than the average spending per day of Slovenian tourists. Actually, 70% of Slovenian tourists could be active. While sports play an important role in Slovenia as shown by various studies, both domestically (Petrovič, Ambrožič, Sila & Doupona Topič, 1999; Kovač et al., 2004) and internationally (European commission, 2004, 2009), we are convinced that sports activities are becoming an even more interesting tourism product for attracting Slovenian tourists. The aim of sport tourism marketing should be to persuade a part of the 70-80% of passive tourists to become sport-active tourists. On the other hand, other tourism products are fighting for the same market share.

Fig. 1: *Research model*



Source: Author's own compilation

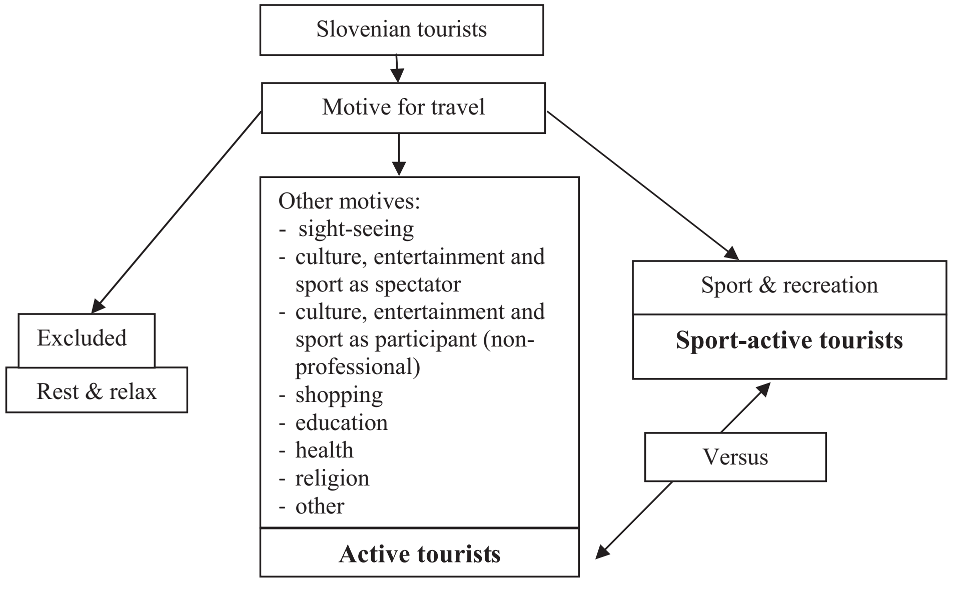
3 Method, data, hypothesis and model of work

Our research methodology was based on quantitative survey data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS). The target populations were Slovenian citizens (aged 15 and above). The data were collected throughout the year 2008.

The sampling frame was the directory of private telephone subscribers in Slovenia. The sample was stratified systematically. Strata were defined with statistical region (12 regions) and type of settlement within the region (6 types). Each stratum was independently sampled.

We received two databases of travelers - the first database of Slovenian traveling to Slovenia (domestic tourists) and the second database with the data of Slovenian travelers abroad.

Fig. 2: *Sample frame*



Source: Author's own compilation

SORS also prepared the necessary weights, according to the population data. In total we received data from 2,346 respondents traveling to Slovenia and 2,282 respondents traveling abroad. After weighing, the obtained data represents 1,795,535 trips made by Slovenians within Slovenia and 1,937,304 trips made by Slovenians abroad in the year 2008. In Figure 1 the research model to the theoretical background is presented accordingly.

Research hypothesis are as follows:

- H1: Socio-demographic determinants influence the main motive for traveling (sports activity versus non-sport activity).
- H2: Main motive for traveling influences travel expenses.

Data preparation and transformation is presented first followed by testing the research hypothesis. All the data was weighed according to weights and methodological implications[1] prepared by SORS. According to the methodological implications and limitations, we were able to conduct bivariate analysis only for testing the research hypothesis. This is why t-test and analysis of variance were used.

The sample is shown in Figure 2. Differences between sport-active tourists and active tourists were analyzed. All tourists with the main motivation for traveling for "rest and relaxation" were excluded. Non-active tourists represent 80.2% of all valid travel in Slovenia and 71.8% of all valid travel abroad. After the exclusion of passive tourists the weighed data represents 291,982 Slovenian domestic trips and 448,059 trips Slovenians made abroad in the year 2008.

In the present paper, "sport-active tourists" represent those with "sport & recreation" being their main motive for traveling, and "active tourists" are those who traveled with all other active motives and activities (culture, health, events), but with a non-sport and recreation motive.

3. 1 Demographic data

The demographic data of the population is presented in Table 1, according to their gender, educational level and age.

The distribution of the highest education level of interviewees is found as follows. The possible answers were: no school education, 1-3 years of school completed; no school education, 4-7 years of school completed; elementary school; 2 years secondary education; 3 years secondary education; 4 years secondary education; 2 years college education; 3 years college education; university education; postgraduate education. The mentioned categories were transformed into 3 groups: completed elementary school or less and completed 2 year high school education; completed 3 or 4 year high school education; completed college, university or postgraduate education.

The age of respondents was obtained by subtracting the obtained variable (the year the interviewee was born) from the year 2008 (when the interviews were taken). The youngest interviewee was aged 15 and the oldest was 89 years. The data was grouped in 3 groups: aged between 15 and 34 years, aged between 35 and 54 years and aged above 55 years.

Of all those who did any kind of active traveling within Slovenia in 2008, 57.8% of voyages were made by males and 42.2% were made by females. Outside of Slovenia, 54.4% of voyages were made by males and 45.6% of voyages were made by females. All the data is representative for Slovenian travelers in 2008.

45.3% of trips to Slovenia made by Slovenians who did or did not complete elementary school or 2 years of high school, 30.5% trips made by Slovenians who have completed 3 or 4 years of high school education and 24.2% of trips made by Slovenians who have completed college, university or postgraduate studies represented the sample. Travel outside of Slovenia by individuals with lower education (non-completion of elementary school or completed elementary school and completed

1 The methodological implications of the obtained data are shown in the representative data. SORS developed the weighing and validation of obtained data. If there are between 0 and 12 units in each cell for non-weighted data is not possible to present representative data. In tables no.1 – no.6 this data is presented with the sign --. If there are between 12 and 75 units in each cell for non-weighed data, we have to report limited representativeness of the obtained data. In tables no.1 – no.6 this data is presented with the sign M. If there are more than 75 units in each cell for non-weighed data we assumed that the obtained results are representative for the Slovenian population.

Table 1: *Distribution of the population according to the demographic data*

Variable	Trips made within Slovenia	Trips made abroad
Gender		
Male	57,8%	54,4%
Female	42,2%	45,6%
Level of Education		
Elementary school or less, 2 years high school education	45,3%	33,6%
3 or 4 years of high school education	30,5%	33,3%
College, university, postgraduate degree	24,2%	33,1%
Age		
15-34 years	39,1%	43,9%
35-54 years	35,2%	34,7%
Above 55 years	25,8%	21,4%

2 years high school) were at 33.6% , while 33.3% of trips taken by Slovenians who had completed 3 or 4 years of high school education and 33.1% of trips taken by Slovenians who had completed college, university or postgraduate education. All the data are representative for Slovenian travelers in 2008.

Among the trips Slovenians made within Slovenia in 2008 there were 39.1% of trips taken by Slovenians aged between 15 and 34 years of age, 35.2% of trips were taken by Slovenians aged between 35 and 54 years of age and 25.8% of trips were taken by Slovenians above 55 years of age. 43.9% of trips taken outside Slovenia were taken by Slovenians aged between 15 and 34 years of age, 34.7% were taken by Slovenians aged between 35 and 54 years and 21.4% of trips taken were done so by Slovenians aged above 55 years. All the data are representative for Slovenian travelers in 2008.

3. 2 Main motive for travel

The interviewees were asked to provide data about their primary motivation for travel. The variables have been recoded into a dummy variable where 1 means sport-active tourists and 2 means active tourists.

68.7% of trips taken by Slovenians within Slovenia were sport-active trips, while 31.3% were active trips within Slovenia. The reverse situation is found between trips taken outside Slovenia: 34.2% of trips were sport-active, while 65.8% of trips were active. All the data are representative for Slovenian travelers in 2008.

3. 3 Spending while traveling

Spending on travel is the dependent variable in our research model. The amount of money spent on travel

Table 2: *Main motive for traveling by highest level of education for the trips made to Slovenia*

			Motive for traveling		Total
			Sport-active	Active	
Highest level of education	Elementary or less, 2 years high school	Count	80716 M	51440 M	132156
		% within motive for traveling	40,2% M	56,3% M	45,3%
	3 or 4 years highs school	Count	65990	23058 M	89048
		% within motive for traveling	32,9%	25,3% M	30,5%
	College, university, postgraduate	Count	53960	16818 M	70778
		% within motive for traveling	26,9%	18,4% M	24,2%
Total		Count	200666	91316	291982
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

Table 3: *Main motive for traveling by highest level of education for the trips made outside Slovenia*

			Motive for traveling		
			Sport-active	Active	Total
Highest level of education	Elementary or less, 2 years high school	Count	53005 M	97528	150533
		% within motive for traveling	34,6% M	33,1%	33,6%
	3 or 4 years highs school	Count	52896 M	96530	149426
		% within motive for traveling	34,5% M	32,7%	33,3%
	College, university, postgraduate	Count	47217	100882	148099
		% within motive for traveling	30,8%	34,2%	33,1%
Total		Count	153118	294940	448058
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

per person per day in Euros was calculated (€/person/day). On average, active Slovenian tourists (both: sport-active and active tourists) spent 44.72 €/person/day for their trip within Slovenia. The minimum amount spent was 4.17 €/person/day, while the maximum was 200 €/person/day. The average amount spent outside the country was 57.8 €/person/day. The minimum amount spent was 1.43 € and the maximum was 500 € per person per day.

4 Results

The two hypotheses were tested and the results are as follows.

4. 1 The influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the main motive for traveling

Hypothesis 1 was tested by using a t-test (in the case of gender) and analysis of variance (in the case of highest level of education and age). The results are shown in Table 2.

The analysis of variance showed that the influence of the highest level of education on the main motive for travel to Slovenia is statistically significant at the null level (p=0.000; F=3,405.505). In Table 2 it can be seen that there are more active trips by domestic tourists with a lower level of education (having not completed or completed elementary school and completed 2 years of high school education) and sport-active tourists

Table 4: *Main motive for traveling by age for the trips made to Slovenia*

			motive for traveling		
			Sport-active	Active	Total
Age in groups	15-34	Count	79139 M	34911 M	114050
		% within motive for traveling	39,4% M	38,2% M	39,1%
	35-54	Count	78067	24589 M	102656
		% within motive for traveling	38,9%	26,9% M	35,2%
	55 and above	Count	43460	31816 M	75276
		% within motive for traveling	21,7%	34,8% M	25,8%
Total		Count	200666	91316	291982
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

Table 5: *Main motive for traveling by age for the trips made outside Slovenia*

			Motive for traveling		
			Sport-active	Active	Total
Age in groups	15-34	Count	78471 M	118369	196840
		% within motive for traveling	51,2% M	40,1%	43,9%
	35-54	Count	52520 M	102955	155475
		% within motive for traveling	34,3% M	34,9%	34,7%
	55 and above	Count	22127 M	73617	95744
		% within motive for traveling	14,5% M	25,0%	21,4%
Total		Count	153118	294941	448059
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

traveling in Slovenia with higher education (completed college, university or postgraduate studies) took more sport-active trips to Slovenia. The results are less representative.

The analysis of variance showed a statistically significant (p=0.000; F=259.154) influence of the highest educational level on the main motive for travel for trips made abroad. Table 3 shows more sport-active foreign trips made by tourists with a higher level of education than by tourists with a lower level of education. The results are less representative.

Using analysis of variance we found out a statistically significant difference (p=0.000; F=3,489.020) of age to the main motive for traveling. More sport active trips were made by younger individuals (aged between 15 and 34) and older individuals (aged above 55 years) Slovenians within Slovenia than by those aged between 35 and 54 years. The results are less representative.

Age has a statistically significant (p=0.000; F=4,105.005) influence on the main motive for traveling for Slovenians who traveled abroad. More sport-active trips were made by younger individuals (aged between 15 and 34) and older (aged above 55 years) Slovenians outside Slovenia than by those aged between 35 and 54 years. The results are less representative.

The influence of gender on the main motive for travel was tested with a t-test. The difference was found as a statistically significant (p=0.000; t=-70.99). More sport-active trips to Slovenia were taken by males than females. The results are less representative.

A t-test analysis showed a statistically significant difference (p=0.000; t=-89.149) of gender on the main motive for trips made abroad. More sport-active trips outside Slovenia were taken by males than females. The results are representative for the Slovenian population.

Table 6: *Main motive for traveling by age for the trips made to Slovenia*

			Motive for traveling		
			Sport-active	Active	Total
Gender	Male	Count	124919	43974 M	168893
		% within motive for traveling	62,3%	48,2% M	57,8%
	Female	Count	75747	47341 M	123088
		% within motive for traveling	37,7%	51,8% M	42,2%
Total		Count	200666	91315	291981
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

Table 7: *Main motive for traveling by age for the trips made outside Slovenia*

			Motive for traveling		
			Sport-active	Active	Total
Gender	Male	Count	97157	146586	243743
		% within motive for traveling	63,5%	49,7%	54,4%
	Female	Count	55961	148354	204315
		% within motive for traveling	36,5%	50,3%	45,6%
Total		Count	153118	294940	448058
		% within motive for traveling	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: SORS, 2008

4. 2 The influence of the main motive for traveling on travel spending

The second hypothesis was tested as well. Our second hypothesis is that the main motive for travel subsequently influences travel spending.

The t-test showed a statistically significant influence of the main motive for traveling on travel spent on domestic trips (p=0.000; t=-30.598) and for trips made abroad (p=0.000; t=-209.211). Those who traveled within their own country for sport activities spent on average 43.55 €/person/day, while those who did other tourism activities spent on average 47.29 €/person/day. The tourists traveling abroad spent 71.37 €/person/day for sport-active trips and 107.27 €/person/day for active trips.

5 Discussion of the main findings

In the present study, it was found that the influence of age, gender and level of education to be statistically significant on the motive for traveling. The influence was confirmed in both cases; for domestic Slovenian tourists and for Slovenian tourists traveling abroad. Subsequently the main motive for travel was discovered to be an influence on spending while traveling. In fact, the exact motive for travel is very important information that tourism destinations should know about their tourists; tourists choose a certain destination influenced by the image of that destination in order to engage in a concrete activity. Bigné, Sanchez, & Sanchez (2001) confirmed that the image of a destination influences the tourist's choice processes. *A destination image is commonly accepted as an important aspect in successful tourism development and destination marketing due to its impact on both the supply and demand aspects of marketing* (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). People travel due to the push and pull factors. They are pushed by their internal motives and pulled by external forces of a destination (Dann, 1981; Lam & Hsu, 2005). This is why tourism destinations should be interested in tourist motives and prepare a specific offer for different target groups. Our study also reveals the main motive for traveling as an influence on the amount of money spent while traveling. With this finding it is confirmed that the tourism destination needs to know how much money the tourists is prepared to spend for the appropriate activity. And the emphasis is on "activity". This is why we excluded trips made with the main motive as being "rest & relaxation". People with a concrete motive for traveling (activity) are prepared to spend more for the concrete activity and spending is even higher if the tourism destination has a good image for a concrete activity.

Another interesting finding from the present research is that tourists are prepared to spend more for the same activity in a foreign country. Many authors (Huh & Vogt, 2008; Nicolau, 2008; Hennessey et al., 2008; Ryan, 2003) analyzed the influence of household income when choosing a tourism destination, type of vacations or the main motive for travel. In fact, income has been proven to be highly explicative to tourist behavior (Mergoupis & Steuer, 2003). However, a high income does not always mean a tendency toward higher spending. There are many tourists who do not have a high income, but they are prepared to save money for a concrete activity or a life-wish as in "one day I will (go) ….". From the point of view of such a tourist, the important question is how much he or she is prepared to spend for the desired activity.

Results of Letho et al. (2004) indicated that not just the reason for travel, but age and gender are significant factors in influencing the amount of money travelers spend on shopping and the items that they prefer to buy. Letho et al. (2004) and Fleischer and Pizam (2002) found that older people tend to spend more. Gender, age and level of education were found to be important characteristics which also affect the motive for active and sport-active travel in our research. Mieczkowski (1990) wrote that the age of a tourist is one of the most important demographic characteristics that influence the tourism demand. Our finding confirms this, even in a sport-active demand. Men were found to be more sport-active travelers, as a domestic as a foreign tourists. This finding is alarming for sport-tourism destinations, since many past studies have revealed that when it comes to travel, it usually the woman in a family who decides where the holiday will be spent. An IPC magazine survey undertaken as early as in 1984 found that nearly twice as many women as men had the biggest role in influencing the choice of holiday and later (Holloway & Robinson, 2000) studies show that women are mainly responsible for the planning and organizing of holidays. Besides that, when talking about sport related holidays, the evidence suggests that women play a much more important role than was formerly thought in the process of choosing a destination and sport activities for the family. In the research of Doupona (2002) the results showed that women, although deprived of their own sports activities, play a dominant role in forming the sports life pattern of their family. Thus marketing experts should target women in order to better sell sport tourism products. Slak Valek et al. (2008) added that women obviously are a decisive or at least a dominant factor in choosing a tourism destination for sport activity. The significance of this information is that the sport-tourism enterprises and sport-tourism destinations should target women with the aim of acquiring more sports related tourists. Since trips taken with the idea of rest and relaxation were excluded the results are even more significant. As previous research shows women travelled more often for leisure purposes, including travel to visit friends and relatives (Waters, 1988; Collins & Tisdell, 2002), but men are more active while traveling (Mieczkowski, 1990; Slak Valek, Mihalič & Bednarik, 2008). If we want to develop and push sports-related trips, tourist destinations need to target women.

Not only gender, but the influence of age on the motive for traveling was found to be significant. We found that younger and older tourists tend to be more sport-active, irrespective of traveling abroad or traveling within their country of origin. Those aged between 35 and 54 choose mostly other activities. The explanation could be that nowadays for people around 35 with young children; taking a sport related holiday with young children demands a lot of organization. Over the last few years, there is a tendency among women from EU countries to have their children later in life, the average age for giving birth is moving to after 30 (Eurostat, 2008). Nowadays people between 30 and 50 have young children. An important fact also is that parents are even more protective of their children (Concetta Chiuri & Del Boca, 2008) and the period at which one's children are independent is even longer in Slovenia (Eurostat, 2009). Both facts explained why people between 30 and 50 years old do not have time for themselves and a potential sport activity. However, the problem and the solution could be found right in this point. People should practice sports together with their children and this is why a vacation or travel is needed. Parents and children should spend the vacation together doing sporting activities. This finding is another alarm for sport tourism destinations that need to attract families with young children and keep the demand strong with the education of young generations. In fact there is an interested finding of Nicolau and Mas (2005) who claimed that with younger people there is an increase in holiday spending until they arrive at a threshold age and begin to reduce their spending. This finding, joined with our finding, obviously indicates that tourism destinations need to pay more attention to families with children.

Higher educational levels are associated with greater propensity and more ability to go on holiday (Nicolau & Mas, 2005) and a higher educated tourist tends to be more active while traveling, but tourists with lower levels of education are more passive tourists (Slak Valek, 2008). In the present research passive tourists were excluded due to researching the active tourists only. Is the educational level so important if we exclude "passive" tourists? Our research found more sport-active tourists with higher education and more other-active tourists with lower education, traveling as a domestic or as foreign tourists. Nicolau & Mas (2005) add that people with higher levels of education take a greater number of foreign trips, which is also the reason for higher spending. Even if the passive tourists were excluded in our research, the comparison between different kinds of tourist activities revealed that more highly educated tourists choose sport more often than other tourist activities. More highly educated people are familiar with the positive effects of sports on their life and health and have a higher tendency to educate their children to live a healthy and full social life. On the other hand we found out that many people with a lower level of education did other activities while traveling. The positive point is 'the activity', irrespective of the kind of activity, which could be a sport-activity or any other tourism activity (event, culture etc.). But as it seems, people with a lower level of education still do not recognize the importance of sport activities. This is why sport tourism destinations need to target those individuals with lower levels of education, as well, but not with highly educated and complex advertising. They need to find simple, but effective way to promote a sport-active traveling experience for that particular target group.

Since education, age and gender have an influence on the main motive for travel and the motive has an influence on the amount spent while traveling, tourism destinations need to be very attentive to socio-demographic characteristics when targeting tourists. We may conclude that the tourism socio-demographics indirectly affect the amount of money spent on active and sport-active trips. Mok and Iverson (2000) and Kastenholz (2005) found a positive relationship between age and spending. Other research also confirmed (Cai, 1998, 1999; Kim & Qu, 2003; Dardis et al., 1994) a positive relationship between higher levels of education and greater tourist expenditure. Any kind of activity (culture, sport, spa and other) requires spending, while passive tourists do not spend much with lying on the beach or engaging in other kinds of relaxation. The motive for travel, according to Letho et al. (2004) has a definite impact on expenditure levels. Saayman and Saayman (2009) analyzed the spending in the national park and found that higher spending is associated with people who travel to the park with the main motivation for travel being escape, so as to relax and get away from the normal routine. When Slak Valek (2008) analyzed Slovenian tourists for their main motivation for travel, she found tourists with the intention of taking part in events, culture traveling and education traveling to be the biggest spenders (about 70 € per person per day), while sport active tourists were in the fourth place with an average spending of 30 € per day; but the tourists whose motivation was to »relax« were on the bottom of the scale with a spending of 25 € per person per day.

The interesting findings in our study also include that sport-active tourists spend less than tourists with other main activities. Slak Valek et al. (2005) found that sport-active tourists from Slovenia prefer to pay less for accommodations since they prefer to spend their money on activities. Among other active motives for traveling, we find "shopping", which is, according to Oh, Cheng, Lehto & O'Leary (2004) a popular tourist activity and is often the most significant expenditure category on vacations and traveling. The results showed that sports tourism activities are not the most expansive activity while traveling and tourists choose even more expansive activities. This confirms that a tourism destination should find a way to attract the other 70% to 80% of passive tourists presented in Figure 1 and 2, before other activity offers attract them. Even we expected an opposite results, but we can confirm hypothesis 2, since the motive for traveling has an influence on the travel spending.

Our conclusion suggests that those tourism destinations which would like to enlarge their market share of sport-active tourists, should consider targeting their offer to women, tourists aged between 34 and 54 and those with a lower level of education, as well. On the other hand, trips with the main motive for traveling being sport and recreation seem to be more convenient than other tourist activities. This finding should be treated as a suggestion to entice tourists to become more sport-active, while nowadays a sport related travel experience has still an expansive image.

Kdo potroši več: športno aktivni ali drugače aktivni turisti?

Povzetek

V pripravljenem prispevku smo avtorji raziskali vpliv spola, starosti in izobrazbe na glavni motiv potovanja, ki posledično vpliva na potrošnjo med potovanjem. Primerjali smo športno aktivne turiste in turiste, ki so na potovanju drugače aktivni. Aktivne turiste smo definirali kot turiste, ki so navedli, da je bil njihov glavni motiv potovanja vsak motiv z (aktivno) vsebino, izločeni pa so bili tisti, ki so kot glavni motiv potovanja navedli "počitek in sprostitev". Med seboj smo primerjali slovenske turiste, ki so potovali po Sloveniji, in tiste, ki so potovali v tujino. Glavna ugotovitev predstavljene raziskave je, da športno aktivne počitnice bolj izbirajo moški, mlajši in bolje izobraženi turisti iz Slovenije. Z nadaljnjo analizo pa smo ugotavljali, ali obstaja povezava med motivi potovanja in potrošnjo športno aktivnih in drugače aktivnih turistov. V kolikor se Slovenija želi razviti v priljubljeno športno-turistično destinacijo, predlagamo, da si snovalci turističnega razvoja Slovenije preberejo pridobljene rezultate, saj so rezultati predstavljeni v smislu trženja športnega turizma.

Ključne besede: športni turizem, aktivni turisti, potrošnja, trženje športnega turizma

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Adoption of the euro and catering industry prices: The case of Slovenia

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the Euro adoption in Slovenia and its transmission to catering industry prices. The empirical approach uses three different methodologies: the principal component analysis, factor analysis and regression analysis on the monthly statistical data collected during the period from 2000 to 2007. In the regression analysis the dependent variable is used as the differential between the catering industry price index and the consumer price index. The regression analysis confirmed that the catering industry price index and the differential of the catering industry price index and the consumer price index, respectively, are positively associated with wages, tourist arrivals, and with the Euro adoption, respectively. The two common components are identified by using the principal component analysis: first, the general level of prices and wages in the catering industry and second, the Euro price adoption and later Euro price stabilization, and demand for catering industry services. We also used factor analysis to check the robustness of the principal component method results.

Key words: Euro adoption, catering industry prices, wages, Slovenia

1 Introduction

Slovenia is a small Central European country, located between Eastern and Western Europe, with a population slightly over 2 million. Key milestones for the Slovenian economy are when Slovenia seceded from the former socialist Yugoslavia and became an independent country in 1991, when Slovenia became a European Union (EU) member in 2004, and in 2007 when the Euro was adopted as its currency.

The previous studies (Surti, 2008; IMAD, 2007; Bojnec & Gričar, 2010) have confirmed that the Euro adoption might have a short-run initial impact on the upward catering industry price rouging, but due to a greater international price transparency and competition in the catering industry and tourist markets it is less likely to expect a substantial long-term catering industry price increases for a similar quality of catering industry products and services. This has motivated our research for the case of Slovenia, which introduced the Euro on 1st January 2007. We aim to quantify factors that are associated with price developments in the catering industry. We use price indices from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS, 2008). As has been shown by previous research (Hoblin et al., 2006; Gaioti & Lippi, 2005; Leu, 1998) for some other European countries, the abolishment of the national currencies by the Euro introduction has brought a greater price transparency, which represents an advantage for tourism development (Shackleford, 1998). We expect that the Euro adoption in Slovenia had only an initial impact on the price increases in the catering industry. Therefore, three hypotheses (H) are tested in this paper. H1 and H2 are related to the supply-side determinants:

H1: Among possible factors for a short-term catering industry price increase is the Euro adoption with a short term rouging of the catering industry prices for products and services.

H2: Among possible cost-push factors for catering industry price increases might be the transmission of increases in the catering industry input prices such as the cost of some intermediary inputs and increases in factor inputs such as wages in the catering industry.

The demand-side determinants are tested in the set H3:

H3: Among possible determinants for catering industry prices are increases in the demand for tourist services.

Increases in the demand for tourist services can be due to different reasons, and particularly as a result of the Euro adoption (e.g. Nemec-Rudež & Bojnec, 2008).

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 we present the methodology and data used. Section 3 presents empirical results, while the final section 4 presents the main conclusions.

2 Methodology and data

The methodology applied is based on the time-series data analyses. We employ the following main empirical methodological approaches:

First, we analyse main summary statistics and linear trends for the basic data that are used in the empirical time series data analyses.

Second, we employ the principal component method, which is one of popular methods of multivariate factor analysis (e.g. Kachigan, 1991). The principal component method is the simplest of the true eigenvector-based multivariate analyses. Often, its use can be thought of as revealing the internal structure of the data in a way which best explains the variance in the data. If a multivariate dataset is visualised as a set of coordinates in a high-dimensional data space, the principal component method can supply the user with a lower-dimensional picture from several time series data analyses. This is done by using only the first few principal components so that the dimensionality of the transformed data is reduced in order to establish a smaller number of new common components, which will be used in regression analysis.

The principal component method is closely related to the factor analysis. The factor analysis typically incorporates more domain specific assumptions about the underlying structure and solves eigenvectors of a slightly different matrix. We check the robustness of the principal component method with the factor analysis, where the unweighted least squares method was used.

Third, for further empirical testing we use multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis includes many techniques for modelling and analysing several time series variables, when the focus is on the relationship between a dependent variable and more independent variables. The regression analysis is used to understand which among the independent variables are related to the dependent variable, and to explore the forms of these relationships. In restricted circumstances, regression analysis can be used to infer causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables. However this can lead to illusions or false relationships, so caution is advisable (Gričar & Bojnec, 2012).

A large body of techniques for carrying out regression analysis has been developed. Familiar methods such as linear trend regression, which is used in this paper, and ordinary least squares regression are parametric. The regression function is defined in terms of a finite number of unknown parameters that are estimated from the data. The statistical significance of the obtained regression and empirical results are important for the regression coefficient. The acceptable statistical significance for the regression coefficient is less than or equal to 5% ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) (Bojnec & Gričar, 2010).

In the regression analysis we use an index of prices for the catering industry services (CIPI) as the dependent variable. The CIPI represents the prices in the catering industry in all circumstances – food, beverage, and overnight stays. In, the regression analysis we use several independent variables. The first independent variable is an index of gross wages in the catering industry (GWCII). This variable measures personal income for the employees in the catering industry. The second independent variable is an index of arrivals of domestic and foreign tourists (Tourists), which explains the number of tourist arrivals to Slovenia's tourist destinations over a period of time. Our third explanatory variable is an index of prices for food and non-alcoholic beverages (FAPI). This variable measures the input costs for the catering industry subjects (companies). The general price index in Slovenia is the consumer price index (CPI), which measures domestic inflation. For this survey background we also explain two dummy variables D1 and D2. Dummy variable D1 captures the Euro adoption period, which equals to one for the period December 2006 – February 2007, and zero otherwise; dummy variable D2, which captures the Euro post-adoption price stabilization period, which equals to one for the period March 2007 – December 2007, and zero otherwise. All these variables are also used in the principal component analysis.

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics for scale variables, January 2000=100*

Descriptive Statistics	CPI	FAPI	CIPI	Tourists	GWCII
Mean	127.79	120.81	130.87	182.78	133.47
Median	130.55	123.45	131.95	159.40	136.15
N	96	96	96	96	96
Minimum	100.00	99.70	100.00	99.30	99.80
Maximum	149.50	145.30	165.50	147.40	170.00
Skewness	-0.495	-0.399	-0.059	1.003	-0.148
Kurtosis	-0.833	0.021	-1.058	-0.043	-0.643

Source: SORS, 2008 and own calculations.
Note: CPI – consumer price index; FAPI – food and non-alcoholic beverages price index; CIPI – catering industry price index; Tourists – arrivals of domestic and foreign tourists; GWCII – index of gross wages in the catering industry, and N – number of observations.

3 Empirical results

3.1 Linear trend analysis and descriptive statistics

Except for the linear trend analysis, where original monthly data are used, the monthly data with January 2000 as the base period (January 2000=100) for the period January 2000 – December 2007 are used in the empirical analyses. The SORS (2008) collects data for different catering industry service prices, which are a part of the monthly CPI and the CIPI.

In Table 1 we present mean and median values, the number of observations, minimum and maximum values for scale time-series variables, where January 2000=100. The mean index value for the variable tourists is the highest and smallest for FAPI. The variable for Tourists is also highly volatile. This is confirmed by the large spread between the minimum and maximum vales of the variable Tourists. The number of observations for all variables is 96.

The bottom part of Table 1 presents the distribution of indices in order to be more familiar with the characteristics of the data. At the same time, we checked whether the distribution of indices in relation to height, which are similar to a normal distribution. Based on skewness and kurtosis of distribution of variables and according to their height, they suggest that in most cases it is a quite asymmetric distribution. Yet, only slightly in height, indices for the FAPI and GWCII distribution are still most closely to approximate a normal distribution.

We use a linear trend analysis to identify the CPI increases that are caused by the Euro adoption. Figure 1 presents the CPI during the time of the Euro adoption in Slovenia. We have estimated the regression function: CPI=100.30+0.66*T, where T is time for the four month period from January 2007 to April 2007.

Due to the very small number of observations which are used in this analysis, the regression function shows that the CPI was growing in this period. However, this should be interpreted with care from a statistical point of view. On the average, the monthly CPI in this period suggests a modest increase during the crucial months when the Euro was introduced as the currency in Slovenia.

For the linear trend for CPI which is shown in Figure 1, in Table 2 we represent the descriptive statistics for variable CPI on the original data. The mean of the CPI during the analysed period is 100.43. That confirms that domestic inflation was 0.43% per month when 96 observations were taken. There was also a deflation period, which was recognised by the fourteen frequencies during the observed period. However, inflation which was more than 1.0%, is found out by thirteen observations and leads to 10.4 cumulative percent.

Fig. 1: *Trend in the level of consumer prices (CPI) in time of the Euro adoption in Slovenia from January 2007 to April 2007*

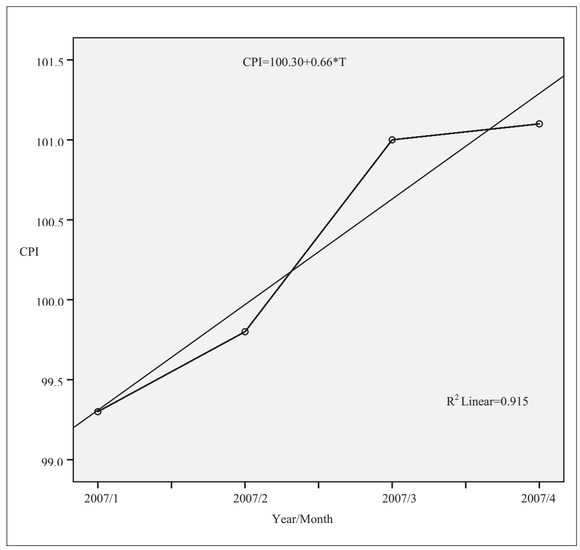


Table 2: *Descriptive statistics for variable CPI, original data*

Descriptive Statistics	CPI
Mean	100.43
Median	100.40
N	96
Minimum	99.20
Maximum	101.60

Source: SORS, 2008 and own calculations.
Note: CPI – consumer price index; N – number of observations.

3.2 Indices of prices, wages, and tourists arrivals

The summary statistics for the main time-series data used for the period from January 2000 to December 2007 are presented in Table 3. As we can see, the greatest increases among the analyzed variables are seen for the index of gross wages in the catering industry (GWCII) and for the catering industry price index (CIPI), and a bit less for the CPI, and except for the year 2007, also for the food and non-alcoholic beverages price index (FAPI).

Table 3: *Indices of prices, wages, and tourists arrivals, January 2000=100*

Year/Month	CPI	FAPI	CIPI	Tourists	GWCII
2000/January	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2004/December	134.5	123.0	138.2	121.8	155.0
2007/December	149.5	145.3	165.5	147.4	170.0

Source: SORS, 2008 and own calculations.

Note: CPI – consumer price index; FAPI – food and non-alcoholic beverages price index; CIPI – catering industry price index; Tourists – arrivals of domestic and foreign tourists; GWCII – index of gross wages in the catering industry.

3.3 Principal component analysis

The principal component analysis confirms two of the most important common components, which explain more than 75% of the variance for the analyzed model with some changes in weights by variables (Bojnec & Gričar, 2010).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy statistic is greater than 0.5. This implies the appropriateness of using multivariate factor analysis. To estimate the factor weights by using the principal component analyses, we use different rotation methods (Table 4).

The weights by variables are rather stable when the different rotation methods are applied, except for the changes in the sign of weights by variables for D1, D2 and Tourists. The first common component captures the general level of prices and wages in the catering industry. The second common component is bipolar with the higher positive weight for the dummy variable D1, the negative weight for the dummy variable D2 and for the variable which measures the demand of tourists for services in the catering industry. The

Table 4: *Component matrices*

Estimated factor weights of variables for the catering industry price index in Slovenia, January 2000 - December 2007 (monthly data)						
Principal component analysis						
	Without factor rotation		Maximum likelihood – Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation		Maximum likelihood – Varimax with Kaiser normalisation	
	Components		Components		Components	
Variables	1	2	1	2	1	2
CPI	0.976	0.056	0.976	-0.043	0.978	0.020
CIPI	0.984	0.065	0.984	-0.034	0.986	0.011
FAPI	0.961	0.038	0.961	-0.059	0.961	0.036
GWCII	0.968	0.088	0.968	-0.010	0.972	-0.013
Tourists	0.316	-0.613	0.315	-0.642	0.268	0.636
D1	0.199	0.814	0.201	0.790	0.261	-0.796
D2	0.627	-0.332	0.626	-0.393	0.600	0.379

Note: CPI – consumer price index; CIPI – catering industry price index; FAPI – food and non-alcoholic beverages price index; GWCII – index of gross wages in the catering industry, Tourists – arrivals of domestic and foreign tourists as a measure of demand of domestic and foreign tourists; D1 – dummy variable for the Euro adoption (D1 = 1 between December 2006 and February 2007, and zero otherwise); D2 – dummy variable for the Euro price stabilization (D2 = 1 between March 2007 and December 2007, and zero otherwise).

Table 5: *Factor matrices*

Estimated factor weights of variables for the catering industry price index in Slovenia, January 2000 - December 2007 (monthly data)						
	Unweighted least squares					
	Without factor rotation		Maximum likelihood – Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation		Maximum likelihood – Varimax with Kaiser normalisation	
	Factor		Factor		Factor	
Variables	1	2	1	2	1	2
CPI	0.976	0.054	0.976	-0.044	0.977	0.020
CIPI	0.986	0.069	0.986	-0.030	0.988	0.006
FAPI	0.962	0.036	0.962	-0.060	0.962	0.037
GWCII	0.968	0.087	0.968	-0.011	0.972	-0.013
Tourists	0.313	-0.615	0.312	-0.643	0.266	0.637
D1	0.199	0.813	0.201	0.789	0.261	-0.795
D2	0.628	-0.333	0.627	-0.394	0.600	0.379

Note: CPI – consumer price index; CIPI – catering industry price index; FAPI – food and non-alcoholic beverages price index; GWCII – index of gross wages in the catering industry, Tourists – arrivals of domestic and foreign tourists as a measure of demand of domestic and foreign tourists; D1 – dummy variable for the Euro adoption (D1 = 1 between December 2006 and February 2007, and zero otherwise); D2 – dummy variable for the Euro price stabilization (D2 = 1 between March 2007 and December 2007, and zero otherwise).

second common component captures the Euro price adoption, and later Euro price stabilization. In this second common component a higher weight is also found for the variable that measures the demand of tourists for services in the catering industry.

Estimates of factor weights are by using the unweighted least squares method, irrespective of the rotation method, more or less of stable signs and weights (Table 5). Given that the weights on the first common component variables are almost the same (Table 5) as the method of principal component analysis (Table 4), we can conclude that the first component is as a general component. We named it as the general level of prices and wages in the catering industry. The second component is bipolar, but it shows a strong positive weight on the variable D1 and negative weights to the variables D2 and Tourists. We called it the Euro adoption, price stability in the Euro period and tourist demand.

3.3 Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis is applied to investigate the association between the dependent variable CIPI and the specified explanatory variables. We expect that the CIPI is positively associated with the Euro adoption and with the increases in tourist demand, respectively. We also expect that the costs of labour (wages) and costs of other inputs are overshooting the catering industry prices. We expect positive association between the CIPI and the explanatory variables in the linear regression equation:

$$CIPI^{``}=a+ b_1*FAPI+ b_2*GWCII+ b_3*Tourists+ b_4*D1+ b_5*D2+u_t$$

where u_t is a stochastic element.

Moreover, we also expect that the specified explanatory variables overshoot catering industry prices (CIPI) vis-à-vis consumer prices (CPI):

$$CIPI-CPI^{``}=c+ c_1*FAPI+ c_2*GWCII+ c_3*Tourists+ c_4*D1+ c_5*D2+u_t.$$

In addition, we specify the regression equation with two additional variables, which are obtained from the two main principal components analysis. These are two additional synthetic variables that are included in the analysis with the regression coefficients R_k1 and R_k2.

Table 6 presents the regression results. The value for F-test is greater than the theoretical value for F distribution at the degree of freedom m_1=k and m_2=n-k-1 at the degree of risk α=0.005.

Under the specification of the regression function, the association that is pertained to FAPI, GWCII, Tourists, and dummy variable D1 is significant. Regression analysis indicates that the rise in the catering industry prices was determined by the rise in the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages as inputs in the catering industry as well as by the rise in gross wages in the catering industry as labour costs in the catering industry. The prices in the catering industry are also related to the developments in the tourist markets by the demands of domestic and foreign tourists (Bojnec & Gričar, 2010).

We have also found that the partial regression coefficients that pertain to FAPI, GWCII, Tourists, and dummy variable D1 in the multiple regression function (1) are also statistically significant. The adjusted determination coefficient indicates that 95.0% of the variance in CIPI is explained by the linear association with FAPI, GWCI, Tourists, and dummy variable D1.

Vork (1998) argues on the basis of regression analysis that in the case of Estonia, the increased demand and increased labour costs are the main factors that are increasing the prices in non-tradable sectors. Hotels and restaurants are included in this group of sectors. He also found a high correlation of the regulated prices with the prices in non-tradable sectors, and the transmission of regulated prices on wage increases. The wage increases and wages payments in the next two quarters have caused the increase in demand for the products and services from the non-tradable sector. Vork (1998) concludes that Estonian inflation is determined by non-tradable sectors with the high significance of regulated prices on non-tradable sectors. Fabiani et al. (2005) found that the costs of labour and of intermediary inputs are the main driving forces for price increases on the basis of the survey analyses.

Table 6: *Regression functions for the catering industry prices*

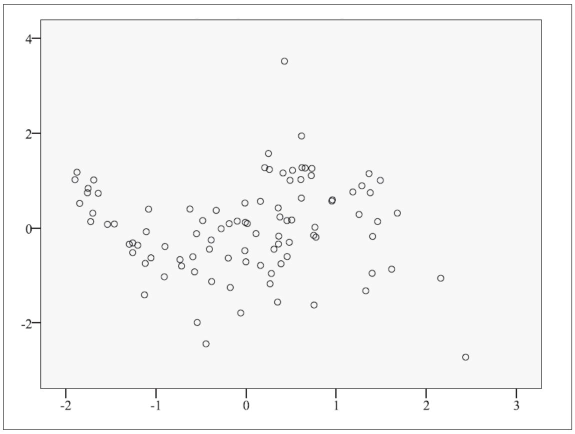
Dependent variable:	CIPI	CIPI-CPI
	(1)	(2)
Constant	-21.588 (-3.268)***	-17.993 (-4.845)***
FAPI	0.391 (3.642)***	-0.158 (-2.616)***
GWCII	0.755 (11.837)***	0.284 (7.929)***
Tourists	0.022 (3.559)***	0.008 (2.198)***
D1	7.023 (2.812)***	7.485 (5.332)***
D2	2,237 (1.338)	6.688 (7.115)***
R^2	0.950	0.836
F test	365.812	97.791

*Note: CPI – consumer price index; CIPI – catering industry price index; FAPI – food and non-alcoholic beverages price index; GWCII – index of gross wages in the catering industry, Tourists – domestic and foreign tourist arrivals, D1 – dummy variable for the Euro adoption (D1 = 1 between December 2006 and February 2007, and zero otherwise); D2 – dummy variable for the Euro price stabilization (D2 = 1 between March 2007 and December 2007, and zero otherwise); R^2 – adjusted determination coefficient; *** significant at 1%; t – statistics in the parentheses. Headings of columns: (1) and (2) – multiple regression functions; N=96.*

The results suggest that there are some common factors, but also some country specific factors that are important for understanding inflation and particularly for understanding price movements in the catering industry sector. World-wide known tourist destinations are largely integrated into the world economy as a tradable sector, but with several direct in indirect causalities with the local economy, which to a different degree is integrated into the world economy.

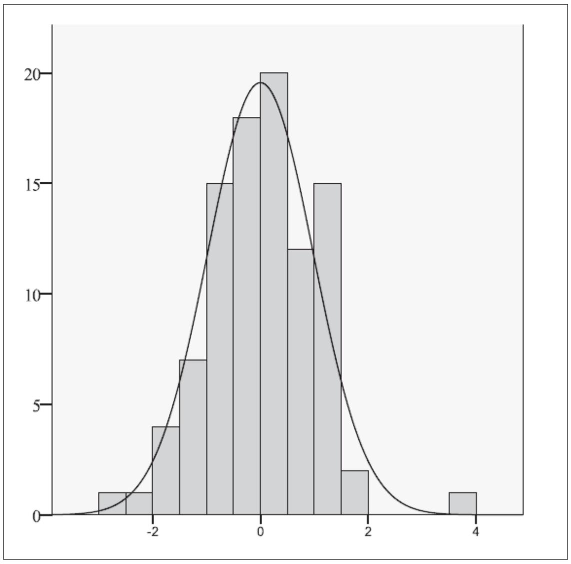
In the multiple regressions function (2) the dependent variable is used as the differential between the CIPI and the CPI. In this way we want to estimate whether there has been the overshooting in the CIPI increases over the CPI increases. Moreover, we want to empirically quantify the variables that might contribute to the fastest CIPI increases vis-à-vis the CPI increases. The comparisons of the regression functions indicate that the FAPI has a positive association with the CIPI in the regression (1), while the FAPI has a negative impact on

Fig. 2: *Plot charts of the residuals, dependent variable CIPI*



Note: axis of ordinates – standardized residuals; axis of abscissas – standardized parameter values of CIPI.

Fig. 3: *Histogram, dependent variable CIPI*



Note: axis of ordinates – frequency; axis of abscissas – standardized residual values.

the differential between the CIPI and the CPI in the regression (2). The CIPI and the differential of the CIPI and the CPI, respectively, are positively associated with the GWCII, tourist arrivals, and with the Euro adoption (dummy variable D1), respectively. The dummy variable D2 indicates also a positive association with both the CIPI and the differential of the CIPI and the CPI, respectively, suggesting that after the Euro adoption there has also been an increase in the CIPI. The positive association of the CIPI and the differential of the CIPI and the CPI respectively are confirmed for the regression coefficient, which is pertained to the GWCII.

To check the assumptions of the linear regression model, we focus on two simple graphical methods. First, we show the distribution of standardized residues with residue analysis estimated regression function (Figure 2), which was adapted with the normal distribution shown by histograms (Figure 3). The chart shows dependence of the standardized residual from the standard estimates of the dependent variable. Items are distributed in a horizontal band, which means that the homoscedasticity is not violated.

4 Conclusion

Catering industry prices in Slovenia increased in the initial stage of the Euro adoption. This finding is similar to some other European tourist destinations with the Euro as a currency. In addition to the rouging of prices a month prior and on the critical days after the Euro adoption, we have analyzed supply-side and demand-side factors that have contributed to the initial Euro price increases and later to the Euro price stabilization by using principal components and regression analyses.

The estimated weights in the common principal components and factors are similar and stable on the rotations which are used with the principal component analysis and factor analyses. The first common principal component is significant by the general price level and wages in the catering industry. The second common principal component is rather bipolar as it shows at the same time high positive weights for the dummy variable D1 for the Euro adoption, but negative weight for the dummy variable D2 for the Euro post-adoption price stabilization, including the impact of demand of tourists for products and services in the catering industry. Principal component analysis is the preferred analysis to the multivariate analyses (Gričar & Bojnec, 2012). The robustness of results was tested by the unweighted least squares method. This is the common method of factor analysis. These results confirmed the set H1, as the Euro adoption has only a temporary, short-term pressures on price increases during the period of its adoption.

Multiple regression analysis confirms that the catering industry prices are statistically significantly associated with wages as the costs of labour in the catering industry. The results are mixed for the impact of the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages as intermediary input costs. They are found to have a positive impact on the catering industry prices, but a negative association is found for the association with the differential between the catering industry prices and all consumer prices. Therefore, the set H2 is only partly confirmed.

The dummy variables D1 for the Euro adoption and D2 for the post-Euro price increases, and demands by tourists are positively and statistically significantly associated with catering industry prices as well with the differential of catering industry prices and consumer prices. These results confirmed set H1 and set H3.

The analysis of time-series with a trend suggests that simple extensions of available methods could be usefully applied to empirical data. In summary, more research is also needed for the analysis of systems of (seasonal) time-series, to exceed possible the spurious regression problems using some additional approaches such as cointegration and Vector Error Correction models. For these, an empirical approach is recommended in order to use a longer time-series, which also includes the time of economic downturn.

Prevzem evra in cene v gostinstvu: primer Slovenije

Povzetek

Prispevek analizira uvedbo evra v Sloveniji in povezavo uvedbe evra s cenami v gostinstvu. Empirični pristop z metodo glavnih komponent, s faktorsko analizo in z regresijsko analizo nam na mesečnih statističnih podatkih v obdobju 2000–2007 poda pomembne ugotovitve razvoja cen v gostinstvu. Z regresijsko analizo, kjer kot odvisno spremenljivko uporabimo razliko indeksa cen v gostinstvu z indeksom cen življenjskih potrebščin, prikažemo, da je razlika pozitivno povezana s plačami, številom turistov in z uvedbo evra. Z metodo glavnih komponent sta bili ugotovljeni dve skupni komponenti: prvič, splošna raven cen in plače v gostinstvu, in drugič uvedba evra in kasnejše stabiliziranje cen v evrih in povpraševanje po gostinskih storitvah. Faktorska analiza je bila uporabljena, da smo preverili stabilnost rezultatov metode glavnih komponent.

Ključne besede: uvedba evra, cene v gostinstvu, plače, Slovenija

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The superior-subordinate relationship and work climate in the Slovenian tourism industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to find out how managers, executives and operational workers evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship and what is the work climate and what infuence does the work climate exert on the quality of work in Slovenian tourism organizations. Based on our empiric quantitative research, conducted as a questionnaire-based survey, some characteristics of the sample organizations and respondents were explained using the descriptive method. For comparison, evaluation and interpretation of individual causal relations, we have applied the correlational-explanatory method. We have identified the relevant factors on the level of the relationship where the employee is placed, his identification with the organization, the involvement of their personal goals with the common goal of the organization, their understanding of their assigned tasks, decision-making and implementation thereof, as well as success in achieving goals. A significant contribution to a good work climate comes from the management team, whose professional correctness in resolving conflicts has a bearing on the motivation of employees to engage in responsible and efficient work. Good relations and a pro-active attitude among the team members is a pre-requisite for the innovative and creative work of an individual.

Key words: human resources management, relationship superior-subordinate, work climate, Slovenia

1 Introduction

This article is based on a doctoral dissertation entitled "Impact of tourism organization's management on the tourism education – example of Slovenia" (Tkalčič, 2009) at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences Kranj, University of Maribor.

The Development Plan and Directives of Slovene Tourism for the term 2007–2011 (Uran et al., 2006) reveals that tourism provides 54,000 jobs and employs 6.4% of the whole workforce who create 10% of the export of goods and services in the Republic of Slovenia (EUR 1.6 billion in 2005). The qualification structure of the employed workers in Slovenian tourism is unfavourable, there is an explicit lack of staff with higher (university or college) education. It is vital to enable and further the professional growth of current employees with a scheme for continuing training programmes. Tourism is an opportunity for progress for less-developed regions, as well as for regions with a strong depopulation process.

According to Jenkins (Potokar & Jug, 2003), tourism is seen as a catalyst of development that generates an increasing demand for a variety of services. That means new jobs. As the author highlights, tourism creates more jobs per unit of investment than other economic sectors. "Tourism is an economic activity capable of generating growth and employment in the EU, while contributing to development and economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence. With some 1.8 million businesses, primarily SMEs, employing approximately 5.2% of the total workforce (approximately 9.7 million jobs, with a significant proportion of young people), the European tourism industry generates over 5% of EU GDP, a figure which is steadily rising. Tourism therefore represents the third largest socioeconomic activity in the EU after the trade and distribution and construction sectors. Taking into account the sectors linked to it, tourism's contribution to GDP is even greater; it is estimated to generate over 10% of the European Union's GDP and provide approximately 12% of all jobs. In this regard, observing the trend over the last ten years, growth in employment in the tourism sector has almost always been more pronounced than in the rest of the economy." (European Commission, 2010)

The quality of services in tourism is largely determined by human resources. According to Ovsenik and Ambrož (2000), management in tourism is a key element that has a vital influence on changing and streamlining the concepts and values, as well as on monitoring the career growth and satisfaction of employees. Understanding of what the term "human resources" and its management encompasses. Baum (2007) argued that "this ambiguity includes the consequences of changes that have taken place at a functional level as the traditionally accepted concept of personnel management has given way to a broader functional application in human resource management, operating as part of a company's wider business and strategic environment." Baum and Szivas (2008) argued that people are vital for the successful delivery of tourism services and, as a consequence, those who work in tourism are widely portrayed as a critical dimension in the successful operation of businesses within the sector. Cheng, Hui, and Wang (2011) argued "that neither personal value for service nor service climate alone affected the quality of employees' service-related behavior. There is, however, an interaction between service climate and employees' personal value for service."

For the entrepreneurial innovative management system, Florjančič (1994) finds that the relationship between leaders and co-workers has essentially changed, which gives space for a different work climate and business spirit. According to Robbin and Coulter (2002) and Jong and Hartog (2007) the leadership style relates to leaders' behavior and actions where they may use their formal influence to establish work groups and affect them to support organizational strategy and goals. In the first period of the industrial era, the organizational leadership style was strongly affected by traditional management theories which support a mechanistic based leadership style in managing organizations (Robbin and Coulter, 2002; Yousef, 2000). Under this leadership style, leaders were focusing on production and on initiating structure, defining group activities, concerned with production, practicing autocratic rule, and prioritizing goal attainment (Bass, 1999; Hartog, Muijen & Koopman, 1997; Bycio, Hacket & Allen, 1995). These styles can help to motivate subordinates to perform their current job, but it is not sufficient to attract, retain and motivate competent subordinates to increase organizational competitiveness in a dynamic marketplace (Bass, 1999; Bycio et al., 1995).

The concurrent processes of globalisation (interdependence in the world) and individualization (personal uniqueness) impose the requirement for a complex (comprehensive) and individualized product, which is all the more true for the tourism industry. Accordingly, the demand for new skills and knowledge is on the rise, in particular the needs for conceptual and integral know-how for various fields and levels. Apart from the knowledge related to high technology, business and organizational aspects, the focus has shifted to social and communication skills. The dynamic changes that occur outside and inside organizations have encouraged leaders to shift the paradigms of their behavior from a traditional mechanistic to a humanistic based leadership style in order to achieve organizational strategies and goals (Bass, 1999; Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Humanistic leadership style is widely implemented in organizations that operate in a dynamic market environment, focus on external competitiveness and emphasize high performing human resource practices (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta and Kramer, 2004; Bass, 1999; Hartog et al., 1997). This leadership style is strongly affected by human relations which emphasizes the quality of the interaction between leaders and subordinates, such as consideration, mutual trust, participatory decision-making, interaction oriented, consultative, democratic and concern for people (Amabile et al., 2004; Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Bartolo & Furlonger, 1999). This leadership style has two substyles: participative style and consultative style (Amabile et al., 2004; Jong and Hartog, 2007). The participative style is broadly seen as leaders often work closer and involve all levels of their followers in making decisions (consultation, empowerment, joint decision-making and power sharing). Whereas, consultative leadership style is viewed as leaders who always request the opinions and ideas of their follower in establishing goals and task assignments (leaders appreciate followers' opinions and ideas in goal settings and task assignments) (Bass, 1999; Amabile et al., 2004; Jong and Hartog, 2007).

According to Dragoni (2005) managers transmit their belief systems to team members through role modeling, providing guidance in the form of direct and indirect feedback, and by reinforcing behavior that supports a manager's favored achievement orientation. Meindl (1995) recognized leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon heavily influenced by intra-team factors. Cole, Bedeian and Bruch (2011) have argued that transformational leadership behavior indirectly influences team performance through team empowerment.

Goleman (2001) finds that "50 to 70 percent of employees' perception of working climate is linked to the characteristics of the leader." For a Watkins (2000) "leaders can sustain performance improvements by creating a climate that motivates, develops, and retains talented people." Stringer (2002) argued that is "the most important determinant of work climate what the boss of a work group does. The boss's behavior drives climate, which arouses motivation. And aroused motivation is a major driver of bottom-line performance." According to Management Sciences for Health (2002) the manager who leads a work group, has to include his employees in his task creating and sustaining a desirable work environment that will motivate his staff. Even as a manager continually scans the external environment for information about clients' needs, competitors, challenges, and opportunities, the findings of his climate assessment can help him strengthen his leadership and management practices to provide his staff with clarity, support, and challenge.

Together, a leader and the other members of his group will create a climate that inspires every member to perform at the highest possible level. An organization can only be successful if it becomes a learning organization. For Burke (2002), a learning organization does not only stand for a sum of learning individuals, but rather an organizational potential for the implementation of change, improving the capabilities of an individual and concurrently changing the organizational structure and culture; it involves a wide participation of employees and consumers, and promotes a systematic thinking and builds up the memory of the organization.

Firm growth is probably the best proxy for performance in the dynamic capabilities framework (Helfat et al., 2007). Denicolai, Cioccarelli, and Zuccella (2010) focus on the research question of how much does inter-firm network activity matter in tourism corecompetence development. It leads to a managerial view based on the appraisal of both firm core-competencies and network-specific assets. Individuals, organisations and firms are not isolated, independent actors separately contributing their piece to the total value created for customers; they are parts of value chains and networks through which value is co-created and co-delivered (March & Wilkinson, 2009). According to Wilkinson (2008) relations and networks enable and constrain what firms and organisations can see, know, think and do play two basic roles in business: a) Here they play a role "in accessing, combining, recombining and coordinating the activities, resources and outputs of people and firms specializing in different parts of the overall process of value creation and delivery"; b) "They are the means by which the knowledge, skills and resources required to develop, exploit and commercialise new ideas are marshalled and coordinated."

Our research perceived the superior-subordinate relationship, work climate and organizational culture in the Slovenian tourism industry both as a challenge and as an outcome. As a challenge for learning and acquiring the skills that will (as a consequence) support the processes of adapting to future changes in the tourism environment. On the influential level, that requires an employee who is aware of the necessity for acquiring new knowledge and willing to dedicate their considerable own initiative, encouraged by good motivational, or motivating leadership respectively, where such employees participate in decision-making and shaping a favourable organizational culture. Such a relationship can be achieved by a personnel structure that interlaces mutual cooperation in networks and is capable of creating new order in the system out of a chaotic interplay of innovative ideas. In their relations, it has a bearing on the self-esteem of each individual, on their self-confidence and trust in the organization and its goals. These goals bring about the identification of each individual with their organization and a high level of commitment to the corporate goals in an organization that welcomes such changes.

We were particularly interested in the next two hypotheses:

H1: Managers and the Executives evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship differently.

H2: The creative work assignment approach primarily concerns the managers and executives.

2 Method

In our study of the superior-subordinate relationship, we relied on the variables: Leader type; Frequency of work-related communication with the superior; Frequency of consultation with the superior about work implementation, the needs of guests, any changes or new requirements; Approach to assigning the tasks (delegating); Mode of execution of work/task assigned; Main decision-maker; The perception of the leader on the part of subordinates; Encouraging cooperation and competition by the leader; The leader's response in the event of error; Frequency of commendation by the leader; What is the climate in your organization; What influence did the climate exert on the quality of work; How did the leadership endeavour to achieve a higher level of organizational culture in companies; Cooperation of leader with subordinates; Approach to conflict resolution.

Based on our empiric quantitative research conducted as a questionnaire-based survey, some characteristics of the sample organizations and respondents were explained with the descriptive method. For the comparison, evaluation and interpretation of individual causal relations, we applied the correlational-explanatory method. The data contributed by the questionnaire were processed in accordance with statistical methods. Statistical processing was performed by the software Statistica of the manufacturer StatSoft and Microsoft Office Excel 2003. Data of attributive type are shown in the form of frequencies and percentages of responses (frequency distribution - hereafter referred to as f. d.). Abbreviations in some tables 'n. a.' or. 'n. d.', stand for 'no answer' or 'no data'. Component analysis was applied for deriving the correlations between the variables, and contingency tables for displaying the correlations. The strength of correlation was tested by the contingency coefficient (CC) (derived from the Chi-square statistic and yielding equal statistic characteristics as Chi-square). Hypotheses were tested by Chi-square statistics. Degrees of freedom are displayed in contingency tables. Data in the form of ranges were normalized as a test. Processing of normalized data did not differ essentially from the analysis of non-normalized values.

The questionnaire-based survey "The Impact of Top Management in Tourist Organizations on Education for Tourism" was comprised of the responses from 161 tourist organizations ranging from the hospitality industry, tourist and travel agencies, other business or trade related to tourism, and organizations of the public sector related to tourism. The sample used in our research is representative for the target case study in tourism, which is an explicitly multidisciplinary activity. Tourism represents not only the conventional or core activities in tourist trade (such as hospitality industry and travel agency which are covered by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, but also numerous economic activities directly related to tourism (spas and natural resorts, gaming, meetings industry, providers of sport-related services, entertainment organizers, economic interest associations for tourism) and public institutions or services (local tourist and organizations for the promotion of tourism and civil societies for tourism). In other words, we can affirm that we have included in our sample of respondents and organizations in which they are employed, both the conventional activities of tourism trade and also the more propulsive players in the Slovenian tourism economy; the latter have already announced, also supported by the results of our research, a more promising and professional attitude to new knowledge that is indispensable for an increased added value of the tourist products of Slovenia and beyond.

The data obtained by questionnaires were collected from October 2004 to March 2005. We used the list of organizations from the database of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS) – the Association of Catering and Tourism, and the Slovenian Chamber of Crafts – Section for Catering and Tourism, and the partner lists of the Slovenian Tourist Board (participating in the Slovenian Incoming Workshop). Respondents entered their responses or chose the appropriate answers in the questionnaire by themselves. We handed out 240 copies of the questionnaire and 161 were returned to us. The highest response (from about 90 respondents) was obtained from the participants of the Slovenian Incoming Workshop, organized by the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO). We acquainted the respondents with the purpose of our research.

3 Research outcomes

3.1 Respondent characteristics

According to the size of business entities from which the respondents came, the structure of the population involved in our survey corresponds to the well-known fragmentation of the Slovenian tourism sector consisting of a number of small entities. Just above one quarter of the sample (26%) were comprised of respondents coming from entities with up to ten employees, which are classified as small organizations. Less than one in four (23%) respondents came from medium-sized entities (relative for tourist industry) with 11 to 50 employees, and another quarter from large entities (relative for tourist industry) with more than 50 employees. More than one in four respondents or 28% did not provide an answer to this question. The size-related structure of entities from which our respondents came corresponded to the structure of entities in Slovenian tourist trade, in which small entities prevail; large organizations are few in number and their profile usually reflects a diversified scope of business - tourism is just added to their core business (e.g. transportation, trade, etc.).

More than two thirds of the population surveyed has had up to five years of service, and less than one in four has had longer working experience - from 6 to 20 years. The share of respondents with more than twenty years of work experience is negligible. The results show that the young segment of respondents was the highest, which is typical of the age structure in tourist industry offering a lot of first-job opportunities due to its labour-intensive profile and higher fluctuation rates. The number of respondents who did not answer this question was negligible. We also obtained similar results to the question on their service period in tourist trade.

The service period in a concrete tourist organization is low: more than one half of respondents had been employed there for 2 years or less. Although tourism is a dynamic activity and the work is demanding, the advanced tourist countries show a tendency for people to remain in their workplaces for a longer period for two reasons: remuneration and the communicative character of the jobs.

Slightly more than one half of the surveyed population (55%) works in operational workplaces and is concerned with implementation; nearly three in ten respondents (29%) are executives, and only one in ten has a managerial position. The results reflect the classic pyramidal structure of our tourist organizations, with the least staff in managerial, slightly more in executive positions and the majority of staff in operational jobs. Compared with the situation in the Slovenian tourist economy, these data show that we have captured a slightly broader sample in the segment of executive and managerial staff, which is favourable for the needs of our research.

3.2 Superior-subordinate relationship

We have identified the superior-subordinate relationship through next variables: Leader type; Frequency of consultation with superiors about operational execution of work, needs of guests, changes and new requirements; Approach to delegating the work assignment; Mode of execution of work assigned; Who decides on important issues in organization; Perception of the leader on the part of subordinates; Encouraging cooperation and competition by the leader; Leader's response to error; Does your superior give commendations for work well done.

About one half of our respondents have assessed their leaders (Table 1) as average professionals and accessible (38.5%), and unprofessional and inaccessible (11.2%); slightly more than one third of respondents views them as highly professional and committed to the career development of employees (13%), and as

Table 1: *Leader type (f. d.)*

Your leader is:	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
Highly professional and committed to employee career development	21	13,0
Highly professional and cooperative	37	23,0
Highly professional, but inaccessible	8	5,0
Average professional and accessible	62	38,5
Unprofessional and inaccessible	18	11,2
No answer	15	9,3
Σ	161	100,0

Table 2: *Correlation between the variables 'Your leader is' and 'Managers and executives'*

	Your leader is						
Job/ Position	n. d.	highly professional, but inaccessible	unprofessional and inaccessible	average professional and accessible	highly professional and cooperative	highly profess. and committed to employee career develop.	Σ
No data	0	0	0	5	2	2	9
Operational	2	3	10	34	22	14	85
Managerial / executive	5	5	8	23	21	5	67
Σ	7	8	18	62	45	21	161

Table 3: *Frequency of consultation with superiors about operational execution of work, needs of guests, changes and new requirements (f.d.)*

	Frequency of consultation with superiors about							
	Operational execution		Needs of guests		Changes		New requirements	
	f_i	$f_{i\%}$	f_i	$f_{i\%}$	f_i	$f_{i\%}$	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
Frequently	86	53,4	77	47,8	98	60,9	98	60,9
Rarely	57	35,4	55	34,1	51	31,7	49	30,4
Never	13	8,1	17	10,6	5	3,1	8	5,0
No answer	5	3,1	12	7,5	7	4,3	6	3,7
Σ	161	100,0	161	100,0	161	100,0	161	100,0

highly professional and cooperative (23%), only 5% of leaders were assessed as highly professional and inaccessible, and less than one in ten respondents did not provide an answer.

We wondered whether there is any correlation between the role of respondents at work and their responses in Table 1 on: 'Leader type'. The correlation between 'Leader type' and 'Managers and executives' was checked by the χ^2 test (based on data from the Contingency Table 2). To satisfy the requirements of the test, we structured the classes [1-2], [3], [4], [5]. The result (ρ=0,396) shows no existing correlation between them. Accordingly, we confirm hypothesis 1: The managers and executives did evaluate the superior-subordinate relationship differently.

The results of research (Table 3) display the frequency of consultations in surveyed organizations as appropriate (slightly less than two thirds of responses) when it comes to changes to the work environment and introducing new requirements to a workplace, however, it is viewed as slightly weaker in addressing the changes in the operational execution of work and the needs of guests. The latter of the findings raises concern in particular with regards to the focus of employees that should be placed on the guests and their needs, which is the underlying characteristic for quality-level hospitality service.

Responses from Table 3 reveal:

- More than one half of respondents frequently consult their superior about the operational execution of work. Slightly more than one third rarely consult their superior about their work; less than one in ten never seeks consultation with his superior.
- Similar results were also obtained in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about the needs of their guests. Despite the fact that almost one half of respondents frequently consult their superiors, it worries us that almost one in two respondents never or only occasionally consults his superiors about the needs of the guests.
- We obtained more favourable results in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about changes in the work environment. Nearly two in three respondents frequently consult their superiors, while the remaining one does it only occasionally. We view the share of respondents, who deny consulting their superiors about the changes, as negligible.
- Similar are the results obtained in surveying the frequency of consultation with the superiors about

Table 4: *Approach to delegating the work assignment (f. d.)*

Approach to delegating the work assignment	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own	68	42,2
You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you	33	20,5
The criterion for performance is explained to you	8	5,0
You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas	50	31,1
No answer	2	1,2
Σ	161	100,0

Table 5: *Identifying the correlation between the variables 'Approach to delegating the work assignment' and 'Role of respondents in their organization'*

Approach to delegating the work assignment	Role at work			Σ
	No data	Operational	Managerial, executive	
No data	0	1	1	2
Task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.	3	41	24	68
You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you.	4	22	7	33
The criterion for performance is explained to you.	0	4	4	8
You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas.	2	17	31	50
Σ	9	85	67	161

new requirements in their work environment. Slightly less than two thirds of respondents often consult their superior about new requirements for a correct execution of their work. Only one in three practices that very rarely. Again, the share of respondents who never consult their superiors about the new requirements imposed on their work is viewed as negligible.

Slightly more than two fifths of surveyed population (Table 4) believe that their superiors delegate tasks to them and expect the employees to execute the work independently. About one in five respondents says that (s)he gets a detailed explanation on what is expected from employees. A negligible share of respondents explain that they only get an explanation on the criterion to be met for the required performance in executing particular work assignments, all the rest is left over to the employee. The resulting number of responses to the assertion 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas' is surprising (almost one third). We presume that these respondents are very creative in their work.

We were interested in how the Managers and Executives responded to this question. Based on Table 5 we conclude that as many as 31 of 67 Managers and Executives mostly marked the answer 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas', fewer (24 of 67) responded 'The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.' These responses are quite logical in the light of the role of respondents in organizations.

The responses by the operational workers were grouped logically: 41 of 85 respondents answered 'Task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own.', and 22 of 85 answered 'You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you.', which reflects the fact that operational workers often find themselves in a position when they have to be 'resourceful' and act independently, which points to the fact that independence and a responsible approach to work is often required (expected) from operational workers, too.

We were in particular interested in the correlation between 'Managers and Executives' and 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas', which was checked by the χ^2 test in the Contingency Table 6. The calculated ρ=0.0018 reveals that there is a characteristic correlation between both these groups

Table 6: *Identifying the correlation between the variables 'Role at work' and 'Contributing own ideas to the assignment'*

	You are expected to contribute your ideas to the assignment			
Role at work	No data	This reply was not chosen	The chosen reply was	Σ
No data	0	7	2	9
Operational	1	67	17	85
Managerial, executive	1	35	31	67
Σ	2	109	50	161

Table 7: *Mode of execution of work assigned*

Mode of execution of work assigned	Yes	No	No ans.	Σ
According to instructions	75%	23%	2%	100%
As a team	85%	14%	1%	100%
Independently	70%	27%	3%	100%

and thus it affirms the hypothesis 2 that such 'creative work assignment approach' primarily concerns the Managers and Executives.

Among data listed in Table 7 we were quite surprised by the highest share of positive responses to the assertion about performing their 'as a team' (85%), followed by the assertion 'according to instructions' (75%) and 'independently' (70% of positive responses). Considering that smaller organizations prevail, the result is not that surprising because also bigger organizations in tourist trade and businesses related to tourism are structured into smaller units in which we can observe team-work dynamics to a certain extent.

To our question on 'Who decides on important issues in your organization?' almost one half of respondents (44%) answered that the leader decides on his or her own after consulting with the employees. One in three respondents (33%) answered that team members take part in decision-making with leaders. One in five (20%) responded that the leader decides on his/her own, without consulting the employees. These responses reveal that respondents understand team work as work done in a group regardless of how decisions are made.

Table 8: *Perception of the leader by subordinates (f. d.)*

Perception of the leader by subordinates	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
First among equals (primus inter pares)	65	40,4
Superior in the hierarchy, conveying decisions verbally	80	49,7
Does not talk to subordinates, has no time, is inaccessible	10	6,2
No answer	6	3,7
Σ	161	100,0

According to Table 8, we can see that more than two in five respondents believe that the leader is just the first among equals (Primus inter pares). Slightly less than one half of the surveyed view their leaders as their superiors in corporate hierarchy, who convey their decisions verbally. Only a very small number of them is extremely authoritarian, i.e. never talk to their subordinates and have no time for them, or are inaccessible for employees.

The share of responses to the question 'Encouraging the cooperation and competition by the leader' reveals that superiors in nearly two thirds of organizations (65%) encourage cooperation, and in one tenth (11%) of organizations surveyed they encourage positive competition. Nevertheless we have to point to nearly one fifth (17%) of respondents who believe that the leaders spur negative competition in their subordinates, and 7% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question. When speaking about fostering or encouraging cooperation, we primarily refer to the cooperation among co-workers, not the cooperation between superiors and subordinates. We could say that spurring negative competition is too frequently found in our economy, which reveals a relatively low level of organizational culture and rather unsound personal relations in such organizations.

According to the results in Table 9, 'Leader's response to error', more than one half of respondents stated that when an error occurs, the leader would choose to discuss with employees and analyse the reasons for such error, and they find a solution together. Slightly less than three in ten respondents say that the leader would remind the employees of an error and leave it to them to resolve the problem or make good for it. An explicitly authoritarian approach in which the leader decides on how to remedy the error is represented only in 6.8% of responses, and even lower number of responses (5.6%) point to an explicitly liberal approach (dealing with and solving the problem is entirely left over to employees).

Table 9: *Leader's response to error (f. d.)*

Leader's response to error	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
Reminds you and leaves it over to you to solve the problem	46	28,6
Discusses with you to and analyses the reasons for such error, and you find a solution together	88	54,7
Decides on how to remedy the error	11	6,8
Leaves it to you	9	5,6
No answer	7	4,3
Σ	161	100,0

The question 'Does your superior express a commendation for you?' was answered by more than one half (54%) with 'rarely', and almost three in ten respondents (29%) answered 'frequently', which proves that an encouraging attitude of Managers and executives to their subordinates is present in these organizations, but still not sufficiently practised.

3.3 Work climate and organizational culture

We have identified the problematic issues relating to work climate in the organizations surveyed through the eyes of respondents who conveyed their considerations on the climate in their organization and the culture of decision-making. We wondered what influence did the climate exert on the quality of work; how did the leadership endeavour to achieve a higher level of organizational culture in companies, how they resolved conflicts in the organizations.

The responses to the question 'What is the climate in your organization?' reveal that working, friendly and motivating climate prevails (43%) in the organizations surveyed. One in three respondents (33%) believe that the climate in their organization is primarily of a hard-working character. One in seven (14%) finds her/his work environment as 'working but cold' climate, only 4% reveal to be working in an extremely unpleasant work environment. If we highlight a fairly high share of responses proving that the work climate in their organization is friendly, working and motivating (almost one half of respondents), we may conclude that work climate in catering and tourist trade is good, in general. People working in this service industry are usually more extraverted and communicative persons who easily establish contacts with guests and co-workers too.

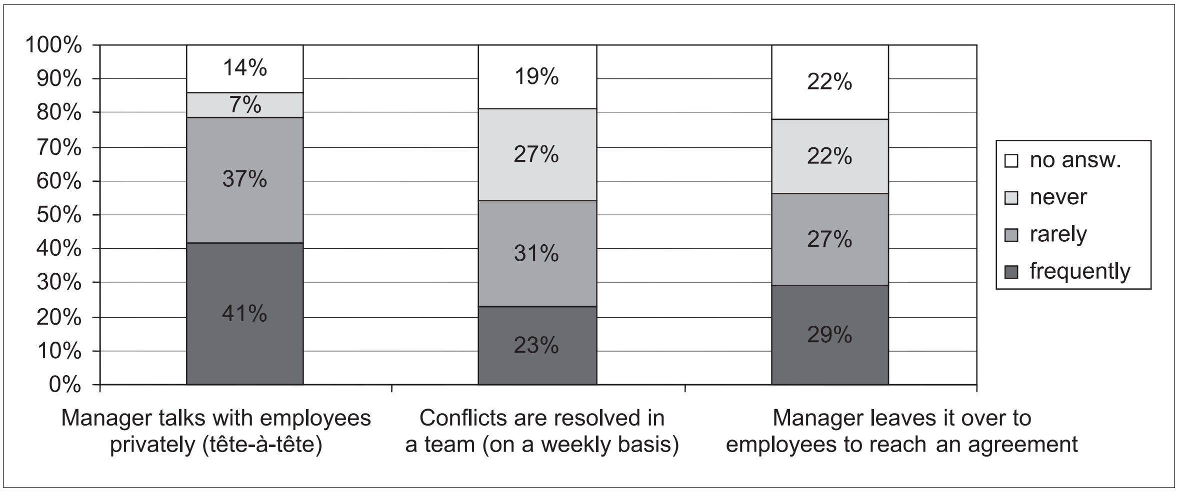
The impact of 'climate in the organization on the quality of work' has been proved with numerous practical cases, both home and abroad. We wondered if the respondents involved in our survey would share this opinion with us. According to data from our research, as many as two in three respondents (67%) believe that the impact of (bad or good) climate on the quality of work is quite strong. One in four (26%) believes that this impact is moderate only. Only a negligible number of employees view such an impact as unfavourable, or as irrelevant (non-existing).

As regards the 'culture in the organization', we find that project-based approach to work prevails in more than one in three organizations (35%) surveyed. Almost one third (30%) of respondents believes that the culture of roles prevails in their organization, which is in fact a modified autocratic leadership style. Despite that, one in six (16%) respondents still sees an authoritar-

Table 10: *Cooperation of leader with subordinates (f. d.)*

Cooperation of leader with subordinates	f_i	$f_{i\%}$
Envisions better terms to improve organizational climate and culture	46	29
Endeavours for problem solving	73	45
For supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress	6	4
No answer	36	22
Σ	161	100

Fig. 1: *Approach to conflict resolving (N=161)*



ian culture of power as a prevailing culture in their organization. The least share of respondents (13%) believes that the culture of personality prevails in their organization, in which every individual is important. Only 6% of respondents have not provided an answer to this question.

It appears from the answers to the question in Table 10 whether the superiors 'envision and plan jointly with employees to improve organizational climate and culture', or 'endeavour for problem solving' and organize 'supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress' that slightly less than one half (45%) of organizations surveyed endeavour to resolve the problems together with employees. Less than three in ten (29%) leaders plans/ envisions better terms to improve working climate and organizational culture. The very low share (4%) of respondents who believe that their superiors 'take part together with employees in supervision meetings as a support to cope with stress' raises concern. Even more worrying is the information that one in five respondents has not answered this question.

The authoritarian leadership style in the approach to conflict resolving (Figure 1) is slightly more present in tourist organizations than in other branches of economic sector; time for dealing with conflict is scarce, therefore leaders often take the right to urge the employee to do the work without unnecessary negotiations. Employees in catering are quite used to such modus operandi; we could assume that such communication style in resolving the conflicts has resulted from the broad HR pyramid, with too few of executives and a large number of operational staff.

Comment to results in Figure 1 according to columns:

a) These results show that in two conflict situations out of five the Manager approaches the respective employees and talks to them privately (tête-à-tête), using his/her authority to resolve the problem optimally and settle the tensions among employees. In one third of the organizations surveyed, leaders only rarely decide to discuss with their employees in private in order to resolve a conflict. In nearly one in ten organizations surveyed, the superiors never talk to their subordinates tête-à-tête.
b) Quite balanced scores were obtained in the answers to the question whether the conflicts are resolved in a team (on a weekly basis). This is frequently done in less than one quarter of organizations involved in the survey; only rarely are conflicts resolved in this way in slightly less than one third, and never in one quarter of organizations. A comparison of the share of organizations that frequently (23%) practise such approach to conflicts with those that never practise it (27%) shows that the latter prevail. Evidently team work is not gaining ground in most Slovenian tourist

organizations yet, in fact the findings from section a) about the prevailing authoritarian approach to conflict situations have been confirmed. Also the medium response (Conflicts are resolved in a team only rarely 27%) in fact means a lack of team-based approach.

c) Similar situation as under section b) was also obtained for the variable 'the leader leaves it over to employees to reach an agreement'. The results are evenly distributed, in quarterly shares. The responses to this question additionally confirm the conclusive finding regarding the authoritarian approach under section a) and b). It is notable that a very high share - almost one in four respondents - have not provided an answer to this question.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The results of our empiric research (high fluctuation of workforce) have confirmed the assertion of Nemec Rudež (2005) that the Slovenian tourism leadership has a rather low awareness of the know-how dedicated to tourism trade and is still hesitant about the eligibility of investing in knowledge and HR development. These results also indicate that Slovenian tourism leadership is still far from Burke's idea of 'learning society' (Burke, 2002).

With regards to professionalism, almost one half of our respondents view their leaders as average professional or unprofessional; only slightly more than two fifths (41%) of respondents assess their superiors as highly professional. The results on the attitude to subordinates are even more disappointing. More than one half of respondents (55%) assess their leaders as average accessible or inaccessible; slightly more than one in three (36%) respondents view their superiors as cooperative and committed to the career development of employees. If we generalise these findings, the resulting data raise concern: Of the leaders in Slovenian tourist industry, nearly one half is scored as average or below-average professionals, and more than one half as average accessible or inaccessible. It is obvious that about one in two of Slovenian tourist organizations does not have highly professional and motivating leadership staff.

We found a characteristic correlation in assigning (delegating) the work between 'Managers and Executives' segment and 'You are expected to contribute to the assignment with your ideas' answer, which affirms the presumption that such 'creative work assignment approach' primarily relates to delegating the tasks to Managers and Executives. In the operational staff segment the concrete delegating of work prevails: 'The task is assigned to you and you are expected to do it on your own' and 'You receive detailed instructions on what is expected from you'. It is clear that independent acting and responsible approach to work is sometimes required (expected) also from operational staff members in tourism. On that basis we can presume that in future, the level of complexity of tourist professions will be increasing and the expected educational / qualification profile will rise also in operational segment of staff (also corresponding to higher average educational profile of tourists – especially of more demanding, individuals). Similar findings are also listed by the RNUST 2007-2011 (Uran et al., 2006): The Slovenian offer for tourists must become integrated, quality-based, specialized, innovative and based on knowledge and information.

We were surprised by the result that 'team-based' work was found in 85% of organizations involved in the survey; however, it should be noted that such a large share is attributable to the nature of work in tourism. Additional study will be needed to find out whether the true team work is meant, or just work groups with a hierarchy structure and management concept. Considering the remaining results of our survey (in particular the responses in Table 9), we tend to believe the second variant. Nevertheless we can conclude that true team work does occur in about one third of organizations comprised in our survey, which is quite favourable for the personnel structure of Slovenian tourism and its (presently still) labour-intensive character.

It is interesting to find that our conviction has been confirmed, namely that first signs of a shift toward democratisation of relations in the organizations surveyed (two fifths of responses 'first among equals') have occurred, however, the former authoritarian approach is still deeply rooted (approximately one half of answers to the assertion 'Superior in the hierarchy, conveying decisions verbally'), which is merely supplemented by a modest number of answers to the third assertion 'the superior does not talk to subordinates, has no time, is inaccessible' (6%).

Although the responses show that working, friendly and motivating climate prevails in the organizations surveyed (43%), one third of respondents believe that the climate in their organization is only of a working character. The fact that the climate in almost one fifth of organizations surveyed is negative (working but cold, unpleasant) raises concern despite the prevailing positive climate in the majority of sample.

We further find that the modern, democratic concept of the organizational culture - the culture of tasks and the culture of personality - prevails (48%) in our tourist organizations, however, the autocratic concept – the culture of power and roles - (46%) is not overcome yet. Therefore, the culture of power and roles is still important in the Slovenian tourism organizations, while the modern, democratic culture of tasks and culture of personality (every individual is important) is gradually gaining ground and taking the lead.

The authoritarian leadership style in the approach to conflict resolving is slightly more present in tourism organizations than in other branches of economic sector; time for dealing with conflict is scarce, therefore leaders often take the right to urge the employee to do the work without unnecessary negotiations.

Our sample of tourism organizations surveyed obviously comprises a group of organizations that is dynamic in its physical growth and development, but still lagging behind in terms of qualitative growth. We have identified the relevant factors on the level of the relationship where the employee is placed, his identification with the organization, the involvement of their personal goals with the common goal of the organization, their understanding of the task, decision-making and implementation thereof, as well as the success in achieving the goals. At this level, the employee is creating communicative relations with others, be it with the superior or with his co-workers, and thus participating in shaping the Organization's climate and culture. A favourable climate is also an outcome of professional resolving of conflicts that adds to the motivation of employees for responsible and efficient work. Good relations and favourable climate are indispensable for innovative and creative work of an individual. On the process-based level, that means well done work, effectively delegated tasks and a cooperation with co-workers that leads to synergy.

Odnos nadrejeni – podrejeni v slovenskem turizmu

Povzetek

Namen članka je ugotoviti, kako vodilni in vodstveni ter ostali delavci ocenjujejo odnos nadrejeni-podrejeni ter kakšna je delovna klima in njen vpliv na kakovost dela v slovenskih turističnih organizacijah. Na osnovi empirične kvantitativne raziskave, izpeljane s pomočjo anketnega merskega instrumenta, so z deskriptivno metodo pojasnjene nekatere značilnosti vzorca organizacij in respondentov. Za ustrezno primerjanje, vrednotenje in interpretiranje posameznih vzročnih odnosov je uporabljena korelacijska eksplanativna metoda. Identificirali smo pomembne dejavnike na odnosni ravni, kjer srečamo zaposlenega, njegovo identificiranost z organizacijo, vpletanje osebnih ciljev v skupni cilj organizacije, razumevanje, odločanje in izvedbo njegovih nalog ter uspešnost pri doseganju ciljev. Ugodno klimo pomembno sooblikuje vodilni tim, ki s profesionalnim in korektnim reševanjem konfliktov (problemov) vpliva na motivacijo zaposlenih za dobro delo. Dobri odnosi in ugodna klima so osnovni pogoj za inovativno in ustvarjalno delovanje posameznika.

Ključne besede: management človeških virov, odnos nadrejeni-podrejeni, delovna klima, Slovenija

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Service quality measurement in Croatian wellness tourism: An application of the SERVQUAL scale

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the conceptual and empirical knowledge of service quality in wellness settings. The aim is to provide a theoretical background of the main concepts of interest and to empirically assess customer expectations and perceptions, as well as to determine the overall quality of wellness services.

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, based on the dimensions of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). The questionnaire was divided into three parts. First, the respondents' expectations regarding service quality in wellness settings in general were measured. The second part examined the respondents' perceptions of service quality in wellness centers in Croatian hotels. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions. Factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted to identify key factors of wellness service quality and to test the reliability and consistency of the measurement scale.

The results revealed high customer expectations and perceptions of wellness service quality. Moreover, three factors were identified that best explained expected wellness service quality and all were highly reliable. On the other hand, two highly reliable factors were identified regarding the perceived quality of wellness services.

Keywords: service quality, SERVQUAL, statistical analysis, wellness tourism, Croatia

1 Introduction

Over recent years, the health tourism sector has spread its framework from a solely curative purpose to a variety of preventive programs, known as wellness services. This relatively new concept in the tourism segment is immanent in practice. However, despite its emerging popularity, it lacks a clear and widely understood definition, standard classifications or complete, up-to date market information.

Wellness is a complex and multidisciplinary concept. The term is a combination of the words "well-being" and "fitness" and was developed by the American physician Halbert Dunn in 1959. Wellness is a special state of health comprising an overall sense of well-being and sees a person as a combination of body, spirit and mind (Dunn, 1959). Myers, Sweeney and Witmer (2005) defined wellness as a way of life oriented towards optimal health and well-being, integrating body, mind and spirit. These definitions imply that wellness is a holistic philosophy, and it can be viewed as a way of life. According to Müller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001), the principal elements of wellness are self-responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, mental activity/education and environmental sensitivity/social contacts.

Generally, wellness tourism is classified as a subcategory of health tourism. Although the terms are related, they differ in their applications and target groups, and should be viewed as different tourism segments. Wellness tourism is the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health. They stay in a specialized hotel that provides the appropriate professional know-how and individual care. They require a comprehensive service package comprising physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/diet, relaxation/meditation and mental activity/education (Müller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001).

Wellness tourism has several important advantages over other tourism segments (Mintel International Group, 2004). Essentially, there is no off-season for wellness tourism, the average length of stay is longer, tourist expenditure per day is higher than average, it provides comprehensive service packages, and it attracts all age groups. These features are some of the reasons why many hotels redesign their offer and turn to wellness tourists as a very lucrative segment of the tourist population.

Given the variety of products and services that are part of wellness tourism, it is difficult to develop a meaningful profile of wellness tourists. However, in general, wellness customers are middle-aged, educated and hold jobs with higher incomes. They are demanding and expect a high quality of services (Mintel International Group, 2004). A recently observed trend is that the average age of this target group is becoming younger. Smith and Kelly (2006) stated that the majority of wellness tourists are already active at home in some form of wellness activity (yoga, meditation, massage). Further, the predominant population is made up of females who are self-aware and are active seekers of enhanced well-being, health and happiness. Müller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001) identified four segments of health and wellness customers: demanding health guests, independent infrastructure users, care-intensive cure guests and undemanding recreation guests. In this context, the characteristics of health and wellness customers vary from traditional guests receiving health treatments, to business people and conference participants, to young families on holiday (Snoj & Mumel, 2002).

According to the Croatian Chamber of Economy, there has been a notable growth of the Croatian wellness tourism market in the past few years. However, statistics related to this tourism segment are rather limited. There are 68 hotel settings (both in the inland and the coastal region) offering wellness programs. A pilot study of the additional offering in 3-, 4- and 5-star hotels was conducted in August of 2009 (Croatian Chamber of Economy and Horwath Consulting Zagreb, 2009). Based on the findings, the following was concluded: 48,754 guests, spending approximately EUR 16 per person, visited hotel wellness centers in 2008. Average annual wellness-related revenue per hotel was EUR 211,473 and the average share of the annual wellness-related revenue in the total hotel revenue was 6 per cent. Furthermore, in 3-star hotels the share of wellness customer overnights accounted for 94 per cent in the number of total hotel overnight stays.

2 Service quality – concept and measurement

2.1 Defining wellness service quality

Due to the increased importance of the service sector, researchers are defining quality from the customers' perspective. Among service marketing literature, the most commonly used definition of service quality is to meet customer expectations, as defined by Parasuraman et al. (1985). They conceptualized service quality as a form of attitude which results from a comparison of customer expectations with their perceptions of service performance.

Expectations are defined as beliefs about service process and form the standards against which actual performance will be assessed (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). On the other hand, perceived service quality is the extent to which a firm successfully serves the purpose of customers (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990).

Customers assess quality based on a number of factors. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) defined three dimensions of service quality, namely, physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Similarly, Grönroos (1984) argued that service quality comprises technical quality, functional quality and corporate image. Parasuraman et al. (1988) stated that service quality includes five major dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Wellness service quality attributes are usually defined by international and national wellness associations. The International Spa Association (ISPA) has proposed the following service quality standards: professional employees, safety and security, customer relations, service performance and ethics. Similarly, the German Wellness Federation (Deutscher Wellness Verband - DWV) has developed standards which relate to the atmosphere of well-being and wellness ambience, cleanliness and security, facilities and programs, customer-oriented services, friendliness and information, and price-performance ratio.

According to Müller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001), a prerequisite for comprehensive wellness quality are wellness infrastructure, corresponding services and qualified staff. These basic requirements include a variety of relaxation and physical activities, as well as the presence of wellness professionals who will provide individual care and advice.

It can be concluded that service quality in wellness settings depends on both tangible and intangible attributes that are part of the overall wellness experience.

2.2 Service quality measurement in health and wellness tourism

Measuring service quality is difficult due to the intangible, heterogenic, inseparable and perishable nature of services. In order to provide a quantifiable measure of service quality that embraces all the characteristics of services, Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) developed a measurement instrument called the SERVQUAL scale. The SERVQUAL is a multi-item scale for quantifying the service expectation-perception gap. It is divided into two parts, each containing 22 items. The first part is designed to measure the level of expected service, while the second part measures the level of actual service as perceived by the customer. The expected and perceived levels of service quality are assessed using the Likert-type scale.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1991) SERVQUAL is a generic instrument with good reliability and validity and broad applicability. In accordance with this view, the instrument has been used to measure service quality in a variety of service industries and has also been applied in several countries (Ladhari, 2008; 2009).

Despite its wide usage, the scale has been criticized by a number of academics (Carman, 1990; Babakus &

Boller, 1992; Teas, 1994). Criticism was regarding the conceptual and operational base of the model, mostly its validity, reliability, operationalization of expectations, and dimensional structure. However, there is general agreement that SERVQUAL items are reliable predictors of overall service quality (Khan, 2003).

Consequently, many researchers have modified the scale to fit the features of a specific service. In the tourism and hospitality industry, Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert and Patton (1991) developed LODGSERV, a model utilized to measure service quality in the lodging industry. Getty and Thompson (1994) introduced another specific model for hotel settings, called LODGQUAL, as did Wong Ooi Mei, Dean and White (1999) who developed a HOLSERV model. Furthermore, DINESERV is a model used for measuring restaurant service quality (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995). O'Neill, Williams, MacCarthy and Grovers (2000) developed the DIVEPERF model for assessing perceptions of diving services, while Frochot and Hughes (2000) measured service quality in historic houses using HISTOQUAL. ECOSERV was introduced by Khan (2003) and was utilized to measure service quality expectations in eco-tourism. All of these models represent modifications of the SERVQUAL instrument, aiming to improve its original methodology.

Moreover, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed a performance-only scale called SERVPERF and tested it in four industries. The results indicated that SERVPERF scale has better psychometric characteristics than SERVQUAL. This approach was used to measure customer perceptions of service quality in hotel settings as well (Choi & Chu, 2001; Juwaheer, 2004; Poon & Lock-Teng Low, 2005).

Empirical studies related to service quality measurement in health and wellness tourism sector are rare. Snoj and Mumel (2002) measured perceived service quality in Slovenian health spas. Marković, Horvat and Raspor (2004) investigated the service quality expectations and perceptions in Croatian health tourism. Alén González, Comesana and Brea (2007) assessed perceived quality in Spanish spa resorts.

3 Study objectives and methodology

The main objective of the study was to empirically assess wellness customer expectations and perceptions, as well as to determine overall wellness service quality. Moreover, the objective was to determine the significance of difference between perceived and expected service quality in wellness settings. Finally, the study attempted to identify what factors best explain customer expectations and perceptions regarding wellness service quality.

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on dimensions of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and was adapted to the specific features of a hotel wellness center. Despite several criticism of the SERVQUAL scale (as discussed previously in the literature review), it has been demonstrated that the instrument is useful for diagnostic purposes (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Therefore, it is justified to employ the instrument in this study.

The level of expected and perceived wellness service quality was measured on the basis of 17 attributes. The selected attributes were modified according to the previous studies conducted in the hospitality industry (Marković, 2003) and in the health spa tourism sector (Snoj & Ogorelc, 1998; Marković et al., 2004). The number of attributes was limited to 17 in order not to overwhelm the respondents with a too long questionnaire and to avoid potential non-response bias. The relevance of given statements was assessed using a seven-point Likert-type scale, with anchors "strongly disagree" as 1 and "strongly agree" as 7. Thus, the higher the score, the greater the expectation (perception) of wellness service quality.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. First, the respondents' expectations regarding service quality in wellness settings in general were measured. The second part examined the respondents' perceptions of service quality in wellness centers in Croatian hotels. The third part of questionnaire consisted of demographic questions.

The survey instrument was prepared in Croatian and was additionally translated into English, Italian and German in order to capture both domestic and international wellness customers. Data were gathered during March and April of 2009 in three hotel wellness centers in the Opatija Riviera (Croatia). Questionnaires were randomly distributed to the customers at the reception desk, after their wellness experience (e.g. after the service was performed). Finally, 169 valid questionnaires were collected.

Data were analyzed using descriptive, bivariate (paired sample t-test) and multivariate (exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis) statistical analyses. Descriptive and bivariate analyses were performed to evaluate customer expectations and perceptions of wellness service quality, as well as to establish any significant difference between mean scores of perceived and expected service.

Moreover, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to gain a better understanding of the service attribute structure. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used. In order to adequately apply this technique, several conditions should be respected. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure (KMO) should be greater than 0.7 and is inadequate if it is less than 0.5 (Stewart, 1981). The KMO measure indicates whether or not enough items are predicted by each factor. Further, Bartlett's sphericity test should be significant (i.e. a significance value should be less than 0.05) (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005). This means that the variables are correlated highly enough to provide a reasonable basis for factor analysis. Finally, items with

Table 1: *Customer expectations and perceptions of service quality in hotel wellness centers*

Attributes	Expectations		Perceptions		Gap	t-value	Sig. 2-tailed
	Mean[a]	SD	Mean[b]	SD			
Modern-looking equipment	6.67	0.55	6.63	0.66	-0.04	0.706	0.481
Visually appealing physical facilities	6.64	0.55	6.67	0.61	0.03	-0.650	0.517
Clean and neat staff	6.75	0.47	6.73	0.53	-0.02	0.576	0.565
Clean equipment	6.79	0.49	6.71	0.52	-0.08	2.000	0.047
Performing service when promised	6.67	0.56	6.60	0.65	-0.07	1.821	0.070
Reliable and error-free service	6.76	0.45	6.62	0.59	-0.14	3.667	0.000
Promptly solving problems	6.60	0.60	6.63	0.62	0.03	-0.507	0.613
Willingness to help customers	6.67	0.53	6.64	0.62	-0.03	0.713	0.477
Staff has time to answer customers' questions	6.60	0.66	6.54	0.77	-0.06	1.054	0.294
Staff professionalism	6.76	0.48	6.72	0.51	-0.04	1.208	0.229
Courteous staff	6.82	0.42	6.76	0.49	-0.06	1.839	0.068
Feeling safe and secure	6.76	0.49	6.63	0.60	-0.13	3.340	0.001
Instilling confidence	6.66	0.58	6.62	0.59	-0.04	0.696	0.487
Staff has knowledge to answer questions	6.56	0.62	6.57	0.64	0.01	-0.213	0.832
Providing individual attention	6.53	0.72	6.47	0.64	-0.06	0.953	0.342
Having customers' best interests at heart	6.53	0.62	6.52	0.64	-0.01	0.242	0.809
Understanding customers' specific needs	6.43	0.75	6.38	0.75	-0.05	0.676	0.500
Overall mean for 17 attributes	6.66		6.61		-0.05		

Source: Authors' own compilation
Note: [a] Expectations mean ranges from 1 to 7; [b] Perceptions mean ranges from 1 to 7; SD – standard deviation; $p < 0.05$

eigenvalues equal or greater than 1, factor loadings above 0.4, and factors, which contain at least three items, were retained (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006).

To test the reliability of the scale and to assess the internal consistency of each extracted factor, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated. The closer the coefficient is to 1, the better. Coefficients higher than 0.6 were considered acceptable, indicating reasonable internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2006).

4 Study results

The study results are presented as follows. First, the respondents' demographic characteristics are provided. Next, the results of descriptive and bivariate analyses are presented. Third, the results of factor and reliability analyses are interpreted.

The analysis was conducted on 169 valid questionnaires. The sample included domestic (45.0 per cent) and international customers (55.0 per cent). Most of the respondents were females (60.4 per cent) and the majority of them (57.9 per cent) were older than 36. More than half of the respondents had university or college qualifications, and slightly more than 40 per cent of wellness customers had visited a particular wellness center two or more times.

4.1 Descriptive and bivariate analyses

The results of descriptive and bivariate analyses are presented in Table 1. The table reports respondents' expectations and perceptions of the wellness service quality, as well as an analysis of service quality gaps.

The mean scores of customer expectations ranged from 6.43 to 6.82. The lowest expectation item was "understanding customers' specific needs" and the highest ones were the "courteous staff" and "clean equipment". The overall mean score for service quality expectation items was 6.66. This score indicates high customer expectations regarding the wellness service quality.

The mean scores of customer perceptions ranged from 6.38 to 6.76. The lowest perception item was "understanding customers' specific needs" which indicates a lack of personalized service. On the other hand, the highest perception was regarding the "courteous staff", indicating highly polite staff in hotel wellness centers. The overall mean score for service quality perceptions items was 6.61, showing rather high perceptions of wellness service quality.

The gap analysis provides a good indication of the overall service quality evaluated by wellness customers. As shown in Table 1, the majority of service attributes (14 items) had negative gaps, meaning that for these items customer perceptions were lower than their expectations. The results imply that there is room for improving service quality provided by hotel wellness centers since these service attributes fell below the customer expectations. On the other hand, three positive gaps were identified: "visually appealing physical facilities", "promptly solving problems" and "staff has knowledge to answer questions". For these service attributes, customer perceptions exceeded their expectations, indicating acceptable service quality.

The largest service quality gaps were "reliable and error-free service" and "feeling safe and secure". This means that wellness customers expected more reliable

Table 2: *KMO and Bartlett's Tests for expectations and perceptions scales*

Tests		Expectations scale	Perceptions scale
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's Test (KMO)		0.897	0.902
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Chi-Square	2370.920	2748.920
	Degrees of freedom (df)	136	136
	Sig.	0.000	0.000

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 3: *Factor analysis and reliability analysis results of wellness customers' expectations*

Items (n = 17)	Factors			Communa-Lities
	F1	F2	F3	
Staff professionalism	0.785			0.729
Feeling safe and secure	0.771			0.729
Courteous staff	0.743			0.730
Performing service when promised	0.699			0.637
Clean equipment	0.656			0.776
Reliable and error-free service	0.644			0.548
Willingness to help customers	0.633			0.685
Instilling confidence	0.511			0.535
Understanding customers' specific needs		0.841		0.780
Providing an individual attention		0.822		0.726
Staff has knowledge to answer questions		0.817		0.730
Having customers' best interests at heart		0.716		0.782
Promptly solving problems		0.595		0.702
Staff has time to answer customers' questions		0.562		0.610
Modern-looking equipment			0.888	0.859
Visually appealing physical facilities			0.830	0.831
Clean and neat staff			0.635	0.783
				Overall
Eigenvalue	5.160	4.161	2.850	12.171
% of Variance	30.351	24.479	16.765	71.595
Cronbach alpha	0.914	0.906	0.866	0.943
Factor mean	6.74	6.54	6.68	
Number of items	8	6	3	

Source: Authors' own compilation

and error-free service as well as a better provision of safety and security than was actually provided. Finally, the overall service quality gap was -0.05. Although the score is negative, the result can be evaluated as a narrow negative gap, implying that there is a small difference between perceived and expected wellness service quality. Thus, this overall service quality score suggests that perceived service attributes are close to the expected wellness service quality.

However, results of paired samples t-test showed only three significant differences between perceived and expected scores of service attributes, namely for items "clean equipment", "reliable and error-free service" and "feeling safe and secure" (Sig. 0.047, Sig. 0.000 and Sig. 0.001, respectively). Hence, the widest identified gaps are statistically significant.

4.2 Factor and reliability analyses

The 17 service attributes were factor analyzed using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The purpose was to identify the main dimensions of service quality expectations and perceptions in wellness settings.

As shown in Table 2, KMO values for both scales were high, indicating sufficient items for each extracted factor. The Bartlett's Test was significant ($p < 0.05$) meaning that there are strong correlations between the items in each factor. Hence, it was justified to conduct exploratory factor analysis.

The results of factor and reliability analyses of customer expectations are presented in Table 3. The analysis for expectations scale extracted three factors that explained 71.6 per cent of the total variance in the data.

Table 4: *Factor analysis and reliability analysis results of wellness customers' perceptions*

Items (n = 17)	Factors		Communalities
	F1	F2	
Staff has knowledge to answer questions	0.871		0.799
Instilling confidence	0.846		0.772
Providing an individual attention	0.834		0.699
Promptly solving problems	0.811		0.765
Having customers' best interests at heart	0.809		0.730
Understanding customers' specific needs	0.801		0.642
Feeling safe and secure	0.767		0.739
Performing service when promised	0.753		0.724
Willingness to help customers	0.728		0.649
Reliable and error-free service	0.722		0.754
Staff has time to answer customers' questions	0.700		0.582
Staff professionalism	0.695		0.646
Courteous staff	0.654		0.571
Modern-looking equipment		0.890	0.796
Visually appealing physical facilities		0.882	0.800
Clean and neat staff		0.719	0.713
Clean equipment		0.716	0.657
			Overall
Eigenvalue	8.099	3.938	12.037
% of Variance	47.641	23.167	70.808
Cronbach alpha	0.958	0.877	0.955
Factor mean	6.593	6.685	
Number of items	13	4	

Source: Authors' own compilation

Most of the factor loadings were greater than 0.6, implying a reasonably high correlation between extracted factors and their individual items. The communalities of all 17 items are above the value of 0.5, as suggested by Hair et al. (2006). The values ranged from 0.535 to 0.859 indicating that a large amount of variance has been extracted by the factor solution. Further, the results of the reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the extracted factors ranged from 0.866 to 0.914. The findings are considered reliable, since they are well above 0.6, which is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Hair et al., 2006). For the overall expectations scale, Cronbach's alpha totals 0.943 and indicates its high reliability. The expectations scale factors are labeled as follows.

Factor 1 – "staff quality and service reliability": contains eight items and explained 30.4 per cent of the variance with an eigenvalue of 5.2. The items included in this factor related to the staff competence, politeness and willingness to help, as well as to error-free, safe and confident service.

Factor 2 – "empathy and assurance": is loaded with six items and explained 24.5 per cent of the variance with an eigenvalue of 4.2. This factor contained items reflecting staff readiness to answer questions and solve problems as well as providing personal attention to the customers.

Factor 3 – "appearance of facilities and staff": includes three items and represented 16.8 per cent of the variance with eigenvalue of 2.9. Gathered items referred to appealing appearance of facilities and staff.

Factors' mean scores also show the relative importance of the extracted factors. The first factor, "staff quality and reliable service", has the highest mean score, while the second factor, "empathy and assurance", has the lowest one.

Next, the results of factor and reliability analyses of customer perceptions are shown. As noted in Table 4, two factors representing 70.8 per cent of the total variance were extracted from perceptions variables. All items had factor loadings greater than 0.6, meaning that correlation of the items with the factors on which they were loaded is high. The communalities ranged from 0.582 to 0.800 indicating that a large amount of variance has been extracted by the factor solution. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the extracted factors varied between 0.877 and 0.958. These values suggest good internal consistency of the factors. Cronbach's alpha value for the overall perceptions scale is 0.955 and indicates its high reliability. The two-factor solution for perceptions scale is interpreted as follows.

Factor 1 – "service performance": contains 13 items and is the most important factor as it explained 47.6 per cent of the total variance. It had an eigenvalue of 8.1. The factor comprised the intangible aspect of wellness service, including staff knowledge and courtesy, ability of performing error-free service at the promised time, providing individual attention, and taking into consideration customer safety.

Factor 2 – "appearance of facilities and staff": included four items explaining 23.2 per cent of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 3.9. This factor deals with the tangible aspect of wellness service, referring to appealing appearance of facilities and cleanliness of equipment and staff.

Factors' mean scores for the perceptions scale suggest that the tangible aspect of performed wellness services was assessed as being better than the intangible one.

5 Conclusion

Wellness customers are a heterogenic population, seeking diversity, high service quality and an individualized service offer. Due to the increased importance of one's health and well-being, the health and wellness tourism market has grown over the past decade. In such a competitive environment, it is important to know and meet customer expectations in order to provide service quality and consequently achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

This study investigated expectations and perceptions of wellness customers. Through statistical analysis, expectations and perceptions levels, overall wellness service quality, as well as dimensions of expected and perceived wellness service quality were empirically examined.

The results of descriptive analysis suggested that wellness customers have high overall expectations of service quality (mean = 6.66). The most important expectations items were "courteous staff" and "clean equipment". Thus, wellness customers expect polite staff and cleanliness. It can be seen that employees have important role in meeting wellness customer expectations and providing service of a high quality. Further, overall perceived service quality was also assessed with high score (mean = 6.61). The highest perception item was "courteous staff", indicating that highly polite employees work in wellness settings in the sample.

The results of gap analysis indicated negative gaps for the majority of wellness service attributes, including the overall gap (- 0.05). Thus, for these items customer perceptions were lower than their expectations, indicating poor service quality. However, the findings of t-test analysis showed significant differences between expected and perceived wellness service quality only for three wellness attributes, namely for "clean equipment", "reliable and error-free service" and "feeling safe and secure". All of these gaps were negative implying that in these cases there is still room for improvement in wellness service quality.

In addition, wellness service attributes were subjected to the exploratory factor analysis. As a result, a three-factor structure for customer expectations and a two-factor structure for customer perceptions were obtained. The main dimensions concerning customer expectations are "staff quality and service reliability", "empathy and assurance" and "appearance of facilities and staff". On the other hand, wellness customer perceptions can be best explained with two service features, namely "service performance" and "appearance of facilities and staff". These results confirm that wellness service quality evaluations comprise both tangible and intangible aspects of provided service. Thus, wellness service providers should be committed to performance improvement. Although tangible elements, such as modern-looking equipment and visually appealing facilities and staff are important part of wellness offer, intangible service attributes also evoke positive emotions and shape memorable wellness experience. Therefore, aspects such as employee attitude, competence, courtesy as well as service reliability should be considered.

Finally, results of reliability analysis indicated that the modified SERVQUAL scale employed in this study is highly reliable and is suitable for gaining quantifiable, easily interpretable and reliable data about customer expectations and perceptions of wellness service quality. What is more, by implementing this methodology, wellness managers can easily identify potential problems that occur because the service provider failed to meet or understand customer wants and needs.

The present study has several limitations. The findings may not be generalized because of the small sample size of wellness settings and limited geographic area. Moreover, the study included a relatively small number of service attributes that may not represent all relevant features of wellness service.

Nevertheless, the study provides important implications for theory and practice. The results reveal important insights for wellness service providers about customer wants, needs and attitudes regarding wellness offer. Further, the SERVQUAL methodology was tested in a specific and rapidly growing tourism segment in Croatia. Although this methodology has been widely used to measure service quality in a variety of industries, there is an evident lack of academic research regarding the wellness service quality. Thus, this study contributed to the conceptualization and operationalization of service quality in wellness tourism.

Future research may expand the current study. Similar studies should be conducted in other wellness destinations in Croatia. Other relevant wellness service attributes that are likely to influence customer's overall wellness experience could be included in the questionnaire. The researchers and practitioners might be also interested in testing the difference in service quality expectations and perceptions regarding the different demographic characteristics of wellness customers.

Merjenje storitvene kakovosti v hrvaškem wellness turizmu: primer uporabe lestvice SERVQUAL

Povzetek

Namen raziskave je teoretično in empirično proučiti kakovost wellness storitev. Cilj je teoretično opredeliti glavne raziskovalne koncepte, empirično oceniti pričakovanja in zaznave odjemalcev ter ugotoviti kakovost wellness storitev. Podatki so zbrani s pomočjo anketnega vprašalnika, ki temelji na dimenzijah SERVQUAL lestvice (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berr., 1988). Vprašalnik ima tri dele. V prvem delu so merjena pričakovanja odjemalcev glede kakovosti storitev v wellness centrih nasploh. V drugem delu so se ugotavljale zaznave odje-

malcev o kakovosti storitev v wellness centrih v hrvaških hotelih. V tretjem delu so bili zajeti demografski podatki anketirancev. Za ugotavljanje glavnih faktorjev kakovosti wellness storitev in testiranje zanesljivosti uporabljene lestvice sta bili uporabljeni faktorska analiza in analiza zanesljivosti. Rezultati so pokazali, da imajo odjemalci visoka pričakovanja in zaznave glede kakovosti wellness storitev. Identificirani so bili trije faktorji, ki najboljše opisujejo pričakovano kakovost wellness storitev in so visoko zanesljivi. Poleg tega sta bila izpostavljena še dva visoko zanesljiva dejavnika za zaznano kakovost wellnes storitev.

Ključne besede: kakovost storitev, SERVQUAL, statistična analiza, wellness turizem, Hrvaška.

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Evaluating the relationship between the role of promotional tools in MICE Tourism and the formation of the touristic image of Jordan

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Abstract

Several factors have been shown to have a vital role in the formation of the touristic image of a destination. Promotional tools are considered a critical factor in destination image formation. This study aims to evaluate the role of promotional tools utilized to promote MICE tourism on the formation of the touristic image of Jordan. The differences in the perceptions of local and international MICE participants on the importance of promotional tools in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics were also examined. The T-test, ANOVA and simple regression analysis are used to test the hypotheses. Results show the significant differences among MICE participants' perceptions on the importance of promotional tools and the role of promotional tools to influence the touristic image of Jordan. The results of the study could be assessed by event planners, event organizers, and other MICE event stakeholders, as well as enriching the limited research in MICE tourism in developing countries.

Key words: MICE tourism, promotion, destination image, cognitive image, affective image

1 Introduction

MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) is a fast growing segment of the tourism industry; it is a new segment arising out of the increase in the number of conferences and exhibition enterprises. Meetings refer fewer than 50 participants gathering in hotels, resorts, or convention enterprises. Incentives are a reward trip offered to a participant which includes attending a meeting or a conference. Conferences refer to annual meetings with a large number of delegates. Exhibitions are of two types: Trade shows and consumer shows (Leong, 2007; Ruzic, Turkalj & Racic, 2003). MICE tourism is the most lucrative segment of the tourism industry, one that could take place any time of the year. It is the first segment of the tourism industry in Jordan. Jordan has emerged as a unique destination for hosting MICE events in the Middle East. Khammash and Alkhas (2009) asserted that Jordan realized the importance of MICE tourism for its economy and on promoting its touristic image. Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) devoted more than half of its budget to promoting MICE tourism. Both public and private sectors are sharing the effort and responsibility of promoting MICE tourism regionally and internationally. MoTA and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) have launched two informative and interactive websites (www.visitjordan.com and www.tourism.jo) to provide information about tourism products and services and to promote these services and events all over the world. In addition to this, through its offices in Europe, North America and the Middle East, the JTB has been promoting Jordan as a boutique tourism destination (JTB, 2010). Recently, Jordan Inbound Tour Operator Association (JITOA) has launched a website (www.micejordan.org) devoted to promoting MICE tourism in Jordan. As such, Jordan plans to enhance and develop the MICE tourism industry so that it earns economic returns in the future in addition to promoting its touristic image internationally.

Despite the support and cooperation of Jordan's public and private sectors in developing and promoting MICE tourism, the research on MICE tourism in Jordan or its touristic image is still dearth. According to Sharpley (2002), research on MICE tourism in Middle East countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon is rare.

1.1 The study objectives

This study has two main objectives which are as follows: To evaluate the role of promotional tools used in MICE tourism in Jordan on its touristic image formation, and to identify the relative importance of promotional tools as perceived by MICE event participants in Jordan in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. Generally, the study highlights the importance of promotional tools and their role on the formation of the destination image from the perspective of domestic and international MICE event participants.

2 Literature review

2.1 Destination image formation concepts, importance and measurements

Destination image have been the core of research in recent years. Countries compete to host MICE events as they consider it as an image-enhancement tool or as the image maker of their modern tourism, in addition to its lucrative benefits (Richard & Wilson, 2004). Yuan and Chong (2007) indicated the role of destination image in destination choice and in the travel decision of potential visitors. Others relate the success or failure of the tourism sector in many countries around the world to the image of the destination (McCartney, Butler & Bennett, 2009). Originally, the concept of image has long been used in marketing and communication science to describe people's perception of tangible products or a corporate identity. Later on, the concept of image has been applied in tourism to refer to the perception or evaluation of a destination (Li, Pan, Smith & Zhang, 2008). Several definitions can be found in the literature for the concept of destination image. Crompton (1979) defined it as a person's beliefs, ideas, or evaluations of a destination. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) defined it as mental representation of the individual's knowledge, feelings, and global impression about a destination.

Gunn (1972) conceptualized tourist destination image into the organic image stage that is formed as a result of exposure to non-commercial promotion, such as newspaper reports, TV reports, school courses, etc. and the induced image stage which is formed through exposure to direct touristic promotion. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) postulated that since organic image is formed through the exposure to non-tourism commercial sources, and the exposure to tourist organizations' commercial promotion form the induced image. Therefore, they introduced a third stage: "complex image" which is formed when a tourist has actually experienced the destination. Furthermore, they also indicated that each stage of image formation is connected to a type of promotion: The informative promotion which provides tourists with information of a destination is effective at the organic image stage. Persuasive promotion is utilized to persuade tourists to buy which is effective at the induced image stage, and finally the reminding promotion focuses on those tourists who have experienced the destination to repeat the visit and promote the destination by word of mouth is an effective at complex image stage. Accordingly, the flood of information produced by promotional tools affects the person's decision to travel and the selection of a destination. Thus, promotional literature (posters, travel brochure), WOM from friends and families, and the general media form the image of a destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Lawton & Page, 1997). Meanwhile, the image formation process is defined as a mental construct developed through a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions (San Martin & Bosque, 2008).

Gartner (1993) introduced three components of destination image: Cognitive image which is formulated from external stimuli and refers to the person's knowledge of a destination attributes, the affective image refers to the person's feeling about a destination, and the conative image refers to the person's behavior resulted from cognitive and affective components.

Tasci and Gartner (2007) emphasized the responsibility of destination marketers and other stakeholders to promote, through their promotion techniques, a positive image of their destination and to enhance the existing image. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) exposed the importance of promoting destination images; images of destinations have a critical role in tourist travel decisions and on their selection of a destination. Therefore, the main goal in promoting a destination image is to project the destination image to potential tourists to attract them and also to increase attendance of MICE events. Jayswal (2008) asserted that the destinations that have stronger images have a higher possibility of being chosen by tourists.

San Martin and Bosque (2008) pointed out to the importance of assessing a destination image as perceived by potential tourists, first-time tourists, and repeat tourists to identify the strengths attributes of the image and implement strategies to develop and enhance the weaknesses. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) asserted that most quantitative research methods were utilized in examining the cognitive and affective image components. Pike (2002) reviewed 142 papers on destination image, 80 percent of these papers used structured (quantitative) techniques to measure the destination image. Crompton (1979) stated that many studies on destination image are performed on site and based on a structured method (e.g. the Likert scale or semantic differential scale). Abdul Rashid and Ismail (2008) stated that the combination of cognitive and affective components is strongly related to producing the global image of the destination. Therefore, this study will utilize cognitive image and affective image to evaluate the influence of promotional tools utilized to promote MICE events on the formation of the Touristic Image of Jordan from the perception of MICE participants.

Other researchers have pointed out the factors that influence the perception of the destination image. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) stated that stimulus factors (information sources, previous experience, and distribution), and personal factors form the destination image. Beerli and Martin (2004a, 2004b) assumed that information sources and personal factors or individual characteristics have a significant role on the perception of destination image formation. Baloglu (1997) stated that most research and models on destination image formation have incorporated information sources as an element which influences destination image formation.

2.2 MICE promotional tools

There is a general agreement that sources of information, also known as image forming agents or stimulus factors, are the forces which influence the formation of a destination image (Beerli & Martin, 2004a). MICE promotional tools are seen as essential for both tourism enterprises and destinations to get the competitive advantages in delivering quality services and creating destination image (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). Gun (1972) explained the role of nontourism information such as magazines, books, and articles formed the organic image of destination, and the role of direct promotional tools of a destination such as public relations, brochures, travel agents, and advertisements formed the induced image of a destination. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) discussed the influence of promotional tools on the cognitive evaluation of a destination. They hypothesized that cognitive image is formed by external factors such as TV/Radio, brochures, newspapers, and other types of media and social stimuli such as the recommendations of friends and relatives or WOM.

Ruzic, et al. (2003) referred to the idea that MICE tourism promoters should identify the best promotional tools that could be used to attract MICE events and participants. Molina and Esteban (2006) asserted that promotional tools form the basis for images and level of tourist satisfaction. Tasci and Gartner (2007) claimed that non-commercial information sources and promotional tools are the main determinants of destination image. Meanwhile, Harahsheh et al (2010) proposed that positive word of mouth (WOM) recommendations have a substantial impact upon organic images of destinations and consumer decisions to visit a destination while negative WOM recommendations affect tourists in their decision making to select that destination. Govers, Go and Kumar, (2007) concluded that the media in general have a significant influence on destination image formation.

Tangible products are moved to the consumers, while tourism is characterized as an intangible as well as a perishable service. Therefore, the image of that product or service is moved to consumers. Consequently, promotional tools are important to market that service to the consumers. The failure of some destinations to fulfil their tourism potential is related to their promotional strategies. Promotion is the process of communicating between suppliers of tourism product and the potential tourists; it enhances their demand for travel (Crouch, 2000; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Bojanic (1991) emphasized the importance of promotional tools for MICE events in conveying and managing the image of the country to potential tourists. Moreover, promoting MICE events could be done through printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, or brochures, or could be through flyers and announcements (direct mail), or broadcast media, such as TV commercials, internet, and advertisements on the radio, or could be done through public relations (Bhatt & Badan, 2005; Pan, 2011; Wicks & Schuett, 1991). Jayswal (2008) asserted the role of printed newspapers, magazines, TV/Radio, WOM, and Internet on promoting MICE events or the image of the host destination. These tools of promotion should cover the activities taken place before the event, during the event and after the event. Miller (1993) stated the critical role of media representatives in promoting MICE events and forming the image of the host destination. Further, Pizam (1990) pointed out the importance of sales-promotional techniques in increasing participation and promoting the image of destinations.

Murphy, Mascardo, and Benckendorff (2007) stressed the importance of the role of WOM in travel decisions, event participation, and in destination selection. The findings of their study revealed that 80 percent of the respondents depend on traditional WOM more than any other source of information. Meanwhile, Zhu and Lai (2009) revealed that the electronic word of mouth (EWOM) has enhanced the source of information for travelers.

Other researchers pointed out the critical role of the Internet in promoting MICE events and images of destinations. Nowadays, the Internet is widely used because it is an inexpensive communication tool presented in multiple languages to provide the delegates with adequate information and could greatly affect consumers' perceived image through creating a virtual experience of a destination. It also connects the three section of tourism contact; travelers, travel agents, and travel suppliers (Bell, 2008; Law & Wong, 2003; MacKay & Smith, 2006; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999; Pavlovic & Belullo, 2007; Wei, Ruys, Hoof, & Combrink, 2001). In addition, several studies examined the differences between the perceptions of the importance of promotional tools between tourists in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., Boo et al., 2008; Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Louvieris & Oppewal, 2004; Molina, Gomez & Martin-Consuegra, 2010; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). They assumed that tourists have the same perceptions of the importance of tourism promotional tools. The results of their studies were contrasting.

Evidently, existing studies mainly focus on developed countries around the world. However, little research effort on destination image formation or MICE tourism has been given in the developing countries (Sharpley, 2002; Schneider & Sonmez, 1999). Few studies examined the touristic image of Jordan from different perspectives. For example, Schneider and Sonmez (1999) investigated the the Touristic Image of Jordan formation from the perspective of interregional and intraregional of festival attendees. Harahsheh, Morgan, and Edwards (2010) examined the role of religious belief on the formation of the the Touristic Image of Jordan from the perspective of British and Swedish leisure tourists. However, the role of promotional tools in MICE tourism on the formation of the the Touristic Image of Jordan has not been evaluated. Several researchers have investigated the importance of promotional tools from the perspective of MICE event organizers, event planners, or event participants (Boo, Koh & Jones, 2008; Cheung & Law, 2002; Jayswal, 2008; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). Apparently, these previous studies indicated that researchers did not place emphasis on the perceptions of domestic MICE participants. In addition, the perceptions of participants on the importance of promotional tools in terms of their socio-demographic factors such as age, educational level, gender, and income have not been explored in previous studies particularly in regards to MICE tourism. Therefore, this study was conducted to evaluate the role of MICE promotional tools on the Touristic Image of Jordan formation from the perception of domestic and international MICE attendees. Consequently, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: There is no difference in MICE participants' perception on the importance of promotional tools in MICE tourism in terms of their gender, nationality, age, income, and educational levels.

H2: The role of promotional tools in MICE tourism positively influences the destination image formation of Jordan.

3 Method

3.1 Study site

Two cities, Amman, the Capital City, and the Dead Sea, were chosen as the sites of this study because Amman has the majority of hotels in addition to large convention enterprises such as Zara Expo Amman, Royal Culture Center, and Amman International Motor Show. Meanwhile, The Dead Sea has a range of high-class hotels in addition to the biggest convention center in Jordan (King Hussien Bin Talal Convention Center) which is famous for hosting the World Economic Forum for the fifth time.

3.2 Research design, sample, and procedure

This research utilized correlational design by using a quantitative approach; a personal survey method through a structured questionnaire was conducted to assess the role of promotional tools of MICE tourism on the formation of the Touristic Image of Jordan More specifically, this research attempted to determine the relationships among the promotional tools and image formation that were perceived by MICE tourism participants, and to highlight the importance of each promotional tools as perceived by participants in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics. The self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the selected respondents.

The survey instrument was a three-page questionnaire. To ensure the content validity, the researcher discussed the items in the questionnaire with eight experts in tourism field in Jordan. The questionnaire was pilot tested on a sample of MICE participants to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument.

The study was conducted between May 2011 and October 2011. The questionnaire was personally administered to each subject during the events. Subjects were selected using cluster random sampling techniques. MICE events were divided into four clusters: Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. Twelve MICE events were chosen. 1060 questionnaires were distributed; finally, 857 questionnaires were valid after deleting outliers. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS, version 16.0. *T-test* and ANOVA were used to test the first hypothesis. Simple linear regression was employed to test the second hypothesis.

3.3 Measurement

The first section of the questionnaire was composed of two questions. The first question was designed to evaluate the importance of each promotional tool on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important). In the second question, respondents were asked to identify the role of the promotional tools that they use in general to get information about Jordan. Eleven items, a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were chosen after revising previous studies (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Molina et al., 2010)

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of two questions which were utilized to measure the Touristic Image of Jordan formation from the per-

Table1: *Profile of Respondents*

Variable f %				**f %**	
Gender			Marital status		
Female	351	41.0	Single	230	26.8
Male	506	59.0	Married	557	65.0
Nationality		59.0	Divorced	49	5.7
National	310	36.2	Widow	21	2.5
International	547	63.8			
Age			Occupation		
< 30	134	15.6	Student	40	4.7
31-40	235	27.4	Homemakers	30	3.5
41-50	258	30.1	Clerical worker	58	6.8
51-60	139	16.2	Salesperson	111	13.0
>60	91	10.6	Professional	90	10.0
Educational level			Executive/ Manager	135	15.8
High School Education	74	8.6	Unemployed	29	3.4
College Diploma	166	19.4	Self-employed worker	105	12.3
Bachelor Degree	380	44.3	Worker	62	7.2
Master Degree	124	14.5	Retired	47	5.5
Doctoral Degree	113	13.2	Civil servant	110	12.8
			Others	40	4.7
Monthly income					
<$1000	178	20.8			
$1001-$2000	317	37.0			
$2001-$3000	134	15.6			
$3001-$4000	123	14.4			
>$4000	105	12.3			

spective of MICE participants. The cognitive image consisted of 30-items developed after reviewing other measurement scales on destination image formation (Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993, 2003; McCartney et al., 2009; Molina et al., 2010; Schneider & Sonmez, 1999). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To measure the affective component of image, a 5-bipolar scale, four emotional attributes: arousing-sleepy, unpleasant-pleasant, boring-exciting, and distressing-relaxing were adapted from previous studies (Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Baloglu & Love, 2005; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The third section included sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, nationality, income, and level of education.

4 Results

4.1 Profile of respondents

Table 1 lists the demographic profile of respondents which includes gender, nationality, age, income, and level of education. The total number of respondents was 857, 41% were females and 59% were males. The nationality of respondents was almost distributed with 36.2% local and 63.8% international. Most of the respondents had bachelor's degrees (44.3%) and 37% of participants have a monthly income which ranged between \$1001 - \$2000. The respondents who participated in this study represent all age groups, the largest age groups were between 41-50 (30.1%).

4.2 Principal component analysis and reliabilities

Coefficient Alpha procedure was used to examine the internal consistency of the instrument. Table 2 exhibits the overall Coefficient Alpha for the role of MICE promotional tools which is 0.809. Item-total correlation for the items of the scales shows relationship from moderate to high, which is 0.453 to 0.603. The role of MICE promotional tools scale used in this study contains seven items. Four original items were ignored in this study because the item-total correlation value of these items was less than 0.45.

Table 2: *Pilot Study Subscale for Coefficient Alpha of the roles of MICE promotional tools*

Item/factor	Item-total Correlation	Total items	Coefficient Alpha
MICE promotional tools			
Provide necessary information about Jordan	0.516	7	0.809
Provide information agree with the actual reality of Jordan	0.582		
Meet the expectative image of Jordan	0.603		
Generate positive image of the destination	0.515		
Increase tourists' intention to revisit the destination	0.453		
Influence tourists on choosing the destination	0.498		
Influence tourists on travel decision	0.477		

To reduce the scales' dimension and identify their determinant factors, an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was also applied on the scales referring to the cognitive and affective image. The factor analysis of cognitive items, through the principal component method using the varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization, shows that there are six factors extracted. All 30 items had been allocated to the six factors of cognitive image attributes (atmosphere, political and social factor, tourist facilitation, natural resources, general infrastructure, and economic and cultural factor) and explained 61.9% of the variance. Four original items were ignored in this study because either the item-total correlation of these items was less than 0.45 or the factor loading value of these items was less than 0.40. Twenty-six items were retained to measure the cognitive image. One affective image factor extracted which explained 62.5% of the variance. The results of these analyses in addition to the results of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scales are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

4.3 Hypotheses testing, discussion and conclusion

The results in Table 5 showed the international respondents perceived magazine, brochure, WOM, travel agents, tourist information center, guidebooks, and

Table 3: *Summary of factor analysis of cognitive image*

Items/Factor s	Factor Loading	Eigenvalues	Variance Explained
Factor 1: Atmosphere (0.877) [a]			
Jordan is a fashionable location	0.797	10.297	34.325
Jordan is an exotic destination	0.778		
Jordan is a luxury location	0.693		
Jordan offers many facilities to get touristic information	0.615		
Jordan is a well known location with a good reputation	0.599		
Factor 2: Political and Social Factors (0.861) [a]			
Jordan enjoys political stability	0.821	2.447	8.158
The people in Jordan are friendly and hospitable	0.802		
Jordan is a safe place to visit	0.698		
Factor 3: Tourist Facilitation (0.772) [a]			
There is wide variety of products on offer to buy in Jordan	0.772	1.788	5.961
There are good facilities for families in Jordan	0.652		
There is a good quality of life in Jordan	0.594		
Jordan has places to do business	0.592		
Jordan is a clean location	0.468		
Factor 4: Natural Resources (0.816) [a]			
Jordan has nice weather	0.736	1.552	5.174
Jordan has a great variety of flora and fauna	0.716		
Jordan has a lovely landscape	0.595		
Factor 5: General Infrastructure (0.837) [a]			
Jordan has good substructure of hotels and apartments	0.803		
There are well developed infrastructures in Jordan	0.759	1.362	4.538
There are facilities for training sports, leisure and amusement activities (golf, diving, tennis, etc.)	0.701		
Jordan has places to have meetings/ exhibitions	0.556		
Factor 6: Economic and Cultural Factor (0.774) [a]			
Jordan offers different ways of living	0.619		
Jordan offers many cultural events	0.572	1.150	3.833
Jordan is a rich location with great economic development	0.560		
The food in Jordan is good	0.528		
Jordan is a good place to go shopping	0.452		
Jordan has many interesting historic and cultural venues	0.425		
Total Variance Explained	61.989		

[a] *Reliability score (Cronbach alpha) for each factor grouping is shown in parentheses.*

public relations higher than local respondents, whereas local respondent had higher means for TV/Radio, and newspaper. Female respondents had higher means on Internet and newspaper while Male respondents rated magazine, brochures, and travel agents higher than female respondents.

Results of ANOVA revealed that the group aged 61 years and above perceived the Internet and magazines, significantly highly, while the group age 30 and below showed significant differences regarding TV/Radio and magazines. Furthermore, groups with a monthly income of less than $1000 and $1001-$2000 perceived TV/Radio to be significantly high. The group of more than $4000 perceived Internet, magazines, and public relations as significantly high compared to other monthly income groups. In addition, respondents with a doctoral degree significantly perceived promotional tools more highly than other educational

Table 4: *Summary of factor analysis of affective image*

Items/Factor s	Factor Loading	Eigenvalues	Variance Explained
Factor: Affective Image (0.853) [a]			
Arousing/ sleepy	0.870	2.501	62.530
Unpleasant/pleasant	0.815		
Boring/exciting	0.854		
Distressing/relaxing	0.860		
Total Variance Explained	62.530		

[a] *Reliability score (Cronbach alpha) for the factor is shown in parentheses.*

level groups regarding the Internet, magazines, travel agents, guidebooks, and public relations compared to other groups, although, they placed less significance on WOM. Meanwhile, the high school education level group perceived TV/Radio and on newspaper as significantly high. Based on these findings, the first hypothesis was rejected.

A simple linear regression method was employed to explore the role of promotional tools on the formation of the touristic image of Jordan. A simple linear regression is used as a statistical technique to predict the relationship between a single dependent variable and one independent variable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). Several assumptions should be met when utilizing multiple regression analysis such as linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity of the residuals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Normality probability plot of the regression and residual scatterplot grid were employed to examine the assumption of normality. Results showed the normality probability plots of residuals suggesting no major deviation from normality. Linearity was also checked through examining the residual plots of linear regression and no nonlinear pattern was found between the independent and dependent variables. The residual scatterplot grid was utilized to check the assumption of normality. This grid shows that if 95% of residuals have fallen between -2 and + 2, then the errors are normally distributed. The results revealed that the normality distribution of data was not violated and there was no multicollinearity in this analysis. Therefore, the data were considered adequate for regression analysis.

The influence of the role of promotional tools on cognitive and affective image was tested to support the influence of MICE destination attributes on the overall destination image of Jordan (cognitive and affective components) as the hypothesis required. Results of simple linear regressions are presented in Table 7. Thus, the third hypothesis was accepted.

4.4 Discussion and conclusion

This study sought to explore the role of promotional tools on the Touristic Image of Jordan formation; how the participants of MICE events perceived the importance of each promotional tool. Therefore, the results of this study revealed that significant differences existed between the locals' perception of promotional tools and the international participants' perceptions except for the Internet which showed no significant differences in the perception between local and international respondents. The Internet was rated as the most important promotional tool in searching and promoting information about MICE tourism (Boo et al., 2008; Molina et al., 2010).

Local respondents perceived newspaper and TV/Radio higher than the international respondents. TV/Radio and newspaper are national media using Arabic language during their publishing and transmission. Meanwhile, international respondents rated public relations, WOM, magazine, travel agents, guidebooks, brochures, and tourist information center higher than local respondents did.

Furthermore, females viewed the internet and newspaper highly, while males had positive perceptions

Table 5: *Analyses of difference among participants on MICE promotional tools*

Participants Profile	Promotional tools									
	Internet	Magazines	Brochures	Word of Mouth (WOM)	Travel Agents	T.V/Radio	Newspaper	Tourist Information Center	Guidebooks	Public Relations
Nationality										
Local(n=310)	4.72	3.84	3.90	4.34	4.06	4.48	4.60	3.71	3.97	4.39
International(n=547)	4.78	4.39	4.09	4.48	4.23	3.06	3.34	3.95	4.12	4.50
Mean Differences	-.056	-.553	-.186	-.137	-.169	1.425	1.256	-.232	-.151	-.161
t	1.714	12.753	2.699	2.749	2.913	25.369	24.865	3.663	.003*	2.433
Sig.	.087	.000*	.007*	.006*	.004*	.000*	.000*	.000*	2.638	.015 *
Gender										
Female	4.80	4.13	3.94	4.41	4.09	3.65	3.91	3.88	4.05	4.44
Male	4.73	4.24	4.07	4.44	4.23	3.52	3.72	3.85	4.07	4.48
Mean Differences	.076	.107	.128	.028	.138	.128	.183	.037	.022	.038
t	2.539	2.262	2.056	.580	2.425	1.664	2.629	.612	.371	.806
Sig.	.011*	.024*	.040*	.552	.016*	.097	.009*	.541	.711	.421
Age										
Below 30	4.67	3.99	4.00	4.41	4.14	4.01	4.12	3.88	4.11	4.44
31-40	4.73	4.19	3.98	4.41	4.22	3.65	3.83	3.97	4.01	4.44
41-50	4.79	4.25	4.03	4.50	4.21	3.39	3.72	3.81	4.01	4.47
51-60	4.77	4.22	3.96	4.40	4.07	3.37	3.56	3.79	4.06	4.45
Over 60	4.85	4.29	4.20	4.34	4.14	3.56	3.84	3.79	4.22	4.55
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
F	2.759	3.818	1.145	1.345	.926	8.602	5.963	1.531	1.397	.501
sig	.027*	.004*	.334	.252	.448	.000*	.000*	.191	.233	.142
Monthly income										
Less than $1000	4.69	4.03	4.01	4.41	4.19	3.88	4.11	3.92	4.03	4.48
$1001-$2000	4.72	4.09	3.98	4.50	4.26	3.74	3.95	3.90	4.05	4.37
$2001-$3000	4.81	4.37	4.12	4.57	4.25	3.37	3.69	4.04	4.17	4.57
$3001-$4000	4.80	4.23	3.93	4.20	3.92	3.39	3.58	3.61	3.98	4.37
More than $4000	4.89	4.50	4.14	4.33	4.09	3.04	3.23	3.71	4.06	4.68
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
F	4.479	12.644	1.418	6.624	4.513	13.956	17.558	5.331	.954	5.830
sig	.001*	.000*	.226	.000*	.001*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.432	.000*
Educational levels										
High School Education	4.70	3.76	3.61	4.64	4.28	4.05	4.23	3.54	3.84	4.48
College Diploma	4.73	4.07	3.89	4.37	4.19	3.63	3.78	3.77	3.88	4.37
Bachelor Degree	4.73	4.17	4.05	4.47	4.21	3.64	3.93	3.94	4.13	4.57
Master Degree	4.70	4.33	4.20	4.50	4.22	3.28	3.53	3.85	3.94	4.37
Doctoral Degree	4.97	4.58	4.17	4.19	4.88	3.28	3.41	3.96	4.35	4.68
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
F	8.070	21.009	7.171	6.667	4.209	8.275	12.047	4.278	8.000	2.858
Sig.	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.002*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.023*

**Significant at 0.05 level.*

Table 6: *Regression analyses for the prediction of Jordan touristic image from the role of promotional tools*

Promotional tools	Cognitive Image			Affective Image			Overall Image		
	β	t	p	β	t	p	β	t	p
The role of promotional tools	.719	30.212	.000	.428	13.831	.000	.668	26.252	.000
	F=912.715, $p<.000$, adjusted R^2 =.516			F=191.284, $p<.000$, adjusted R^2 =.182			F=689.160, $p<.000$, adjusted R^2=.446		

regarding magazines, brochures, and travel agents. The group aged above 60 viewed the Internet as a very important promotional tool that they utilized to search and access information about MICE events compared to the group aged 30 year and below who rated TV/Radio and newspaper higher than the other age groups.

The study findings also revealed that the Internet, magazines, and public relations were rated as very important by the monthly income group of more than $4000, while WOM and tourist information center were highly rated by the monthly income groups of $2001-$3000. TV/Radio and newspaper were important for the monthly income groups of less than $1000 and $1001-$2000. Furthermore, the Internet, magazines, travel agents, guidebooks, and public relations were rated highly by MICE participants who had doctoral degrees. WOM was mostly a very important promotional tool for both high school level and master's degree holders. TV/Radio were important promotional tools for those participants who had a high school education.

Meeting planners, organizers, stakeholders and other destination marketers should realize that these tools can play an effective role in reaching important tourist groups. Therefore, to target the local and international delegates, the best use of these promotional tools should be achieved. They need to target first-time meeting attendees and encourage them to become regular attendees for future meetings held in that destination.

In addition, the results indicated that the role of promotional tools did influence the cognitive image formation of Jordan as it explained about 51.6% of the variance and accounted for 18.3% of the variation in the affective image. Based on the mean scores of the cognitive image and affective image, it explained about 44.6% of the variance in the overall image formation. The results revealed that it influenced the overall image and. Govers et al., (2007) asserted that the role of promotion in tourism is the critical component of destination image formation.

The study findings provided insight into promotional tools and their role on the formation of destination image from the perspective of MICE event participants. The study has added improved assessment of the promotional tools on destination image components (cognitive and affective). Furthermore, the study has contributed to the understanding of the most beneficial promotional tools in MICE industry from the perspective of MICE participants. The research findings revealed the differences between the participants in terms of their gender, nationality, age, educational level, and monthly income. Therefore, based on the findings of this study, the preferences of participants in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics should be considered while planning a MICE event in order to attract more attendees and successfully meet their expectations.

This study was a part of a wider doctoral research into the role of MICE tourism on the Touristic Image of Jordan formation. The results of this study provide theoretical contributions which enables an exploration and understanding of the relationships among the role of MICE promotional tools, socio-demographic characteristics, and destination image. Another theoretical contribution of this study is the development of an instrument which can be used for future studies related to MICE tourism and destination image based on studies in the context of Jordan. The instrument was developed based on relevant previous studies and was refined through a pilot study. The validity and reliability of the instrument were insured and thus could be utilized for future related studies.

Managerial contributions have been provided. The study findings of the statistical analysis are considered effective for event planners, event organizers, event managers, and host destinations by addressing the perceptions and attitudes of MICE participants in their marketing strategies. Thus, it is hoped that the information obtained in this study is beneficial and useful in developing Jordan's MICE destination attributes, and promoting and enhancing its touristic image in the competitive MICE industry internationally.

The findings of this study have paved the way for government and private tourism sectors to set out their strategies of planning, developing, and marketing MICE industry as well as a promotional strategy of the touristic image of Jordan.

However, as expected in any research, several limitations were involved in this study; the lack of academic attention to MICE tourism in Jordan; secondary data concerning this important sector were scant. It is therefore recommended that all bodies involved in the tourism industry document information related specially to the demographic characteristics of tourists, the purpose of their visit, number of meetings, conferences, etc., to be able to recognize the target market and set future plans and strategies. Another limitation involved in this study was the language used in the research instrument of the study; the questionnaire was written in English and translated into Arabic. English and Arabic versions were distributed to the participants. Due to the translation into Arabic, deeper meanings of the questions might not be parallel to that of the English version. However, taking into consideration the limitations of this study, the suggestion is to encourage scholars' inquiries to further the body of knowledge contributed by this study. Future research should explore the role of promotional tools on each segment of MICE industry; Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, or Exhibitions.

Povezava med vlogo promocijskih orodij v segmentu MICE turizma in oblikovanjem turistične podobe Jordanije

Povzetek

Pri oblikovanju podobe turistične destinacije igrajo pomembno vlogo številni dejavniki. Eden izmed ključnih dejavnikov so promocijska orodja. Namen pričujoče študije je opredeliti vlogo promocijskih orodij, ki se uporabljajo za promocijo segmenta MICE, pri oblikovanju turistične podobe Jordanije. Analizirali smo tudi, kakšen pomen pripisujejo promocijskim orodjem lokalni in mednarodni udeleženci MICE dogodkov z vidika njihovih družbeno-demografskih značilnosti. Pri preverjanju hipotez smo uporabili metode T-test, ANOVA in enostavno regresijsko analizo. Rezultati so pokazali, da obstajajo med udeleženci MICE dogodkov bistvene razlike pri dojemanju pomena promocijskih orodij in njihove vloge pri oblikovanju turistične podobe Jordanije. Rezultati študije bi lahko koristili načrtovalcem in organizatorjem dogodkov in ostalim deležnikom MICE dogodkov, predstavljajo pa tudi pomemben prispevek k sicer slabo raziskanemu področju MICE turizma v državah v razvoju.

Ključne besede: MICE turizem, promocija, podoba destinacije, kognitivna podoba, afektivna podoba

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How do guests choose a hotel?

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Abstract

Predicting consumers' hotel choice is influenced by several different factors. The consumer decision-making process in hotel choice selection is influenced by hotel product, received information, and personal preferences. This study focuses on different factors which represent the reasons for consumer's decision making in hotel selection and market segmentation with regards to the analysis of hotel attributes (factors) sought by international consumers. The findings of the study indicate that hotel guests can be divided into four different segments (clusters) with similar characteristics based on the reasons why customers choose a particular hotel. The results of the study can be applicable in defining an appropriate mix of marketing strategies on the part of hotel management.

Key words: hospitality industry, consumer decision process, hotel selection, consumer segmentation, cluster analysis

1 Introduction

In the highly competitive marketing environment in the hospitality industry, it is essential that companies understand consumers and their decision- making as they seek to gain a competitive advantage. Those hoteliers with a clear vision of consumer (guests) needs will survive and progress. Unfortunately, marketing research in hotels is still mainly limited to the analysis of guest related data, based on socio-demographic and geographic data collected while the guest is making the reservation or upon registration. This simply cannot be sufficient in an attempt to better understand the guest's decision-making behaviour. Understanding consumers in their decision-making processes in order to predict their future intentions is vital to their business success. In this regard, Niininen et al. (2006) consider a relatively new trend in marketing - consumer-centric marketing, which can be incorporated into customer relationship marketing. For companies it is important to have an insight into the general characteristics of their clients and allows them to understand the motivations, attitudes and values that shape consumer opinions (Niininen et al., 2006). How and why they choose a particular hotel, what the motives and reasons in the purchase decision are – these are some of the questions that are of interest to marketing management, as well as of psychology, marketing, and consumer-behaviour theories (Han & Kim, 2010). In recent research into the hospitality industry, researchers have showed the use of product attributes in predicting consumer preferences and segmenting markets (Bell & Morey, 1997). Researchers have frequently used motivational and emotional elements to accurately predict a wide range of customer intentions and behaviours (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Industry researches tend to focus on motivation or product attributes in the hospitality industry which are relevant to the consumers' decision-making process. In the context of segmentation, these approaches are referred to as psychologically-based and attribute-based benefit segmentation (Frochot & Morrison, 2000). More traditionally investigated consumer characteristics are socio-demographic and geographic patterns that might potentially influence the purchase decision. They use criteria such as age, family life cycle and more traditional geographic criteria (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). For example, Lepisto & McCleary (1992) segmented the hotel markets based on age. McClear et al. (1994) investigated the gender-based differences in business travellers. A "combination of multiple variables" in market segmentation has often been recommended in several major hospitality and tourism studies (Kotler et al., 1998). For instance, other dimensions which influenced consumers' decision-making behaviour and segmentation studies include activities, values, involvement, psychographic factors and other similar factors.

A generation of consumer research has used the theories and techniques of social sciences in order to understand consumer behaviour (Foxall et al., 2005). Hotel choice behaviour involves a decision-making process consisting of a number of separate but interlinked stages and choice criteria are central to the process. Past studies investigated the most important choice criteria in hotel selection. For instance, Yavas & Babacus (2005) determined the baseline of hotel choice criteria for the business and leisure segments. They attempted to ascertain the extent of consistency between the segments while the general amenities dimension was the most important factor for both groups, the other factor demonstrating core service was the third most important for the business and second most important for the leisure traveller. On the other hand, Rivers et al. (1991) showed that a hotel's location is an essential factor which strongly influences a tourist's hotel selection decision. For instance, studies by Clow et al. (1994) indicated that the important attributes influencing leisure travellers' hotel choices were security, personal interactions, and room rates. On the other hand, is branding growing in importance for a consumer while making a decision about which hotel to choose? Lamey et al. (2007) in their research concluded that the branded hotel could have a significant effect on consumer decisions, as well as marketing activities in the advertising offer.

A review of these writings suggests that different individual attributes and factors are used while choosing a hotel. The consumer decision-making process while choosing a hotel is under the influence of important factors related to the characteristics of the hotel product, received information and personal preferences. With this in mind, this study focuses on different factors which represent the reasons for consumers decision-making in hotel selection and market segmentation regarding the analysis of hotel attributes (factors) sought by international consumers. The fundamental question addressed in this study is if it is possible to form segments (clusters) based on reasons for choosing hotels and socio-demographic elements. This paper is based on guests' decision-making behaviour where guests can be divided into segments (clusters) with similar characteristics based on socio-demographic variables and reasons (factors) for choosing the hotel.

2 Consumer decision-making process

The range of the psychological processes by which an individual chooses to buy a product or a service is complex and difficult to measure. The mind of the consumer has been described as a black box, which shows the interaction of stimuli, consumer characteristics, decision-making processes and consumer responses (Sandhusen, 2000). This means that it can observe what goes in and what comes out, but what actually happens inside the consumers' minds remains a mystery. Consumers are exposed to two kinds of stimuli: a) the marketing stimuli which are under control, planned and processed by marketing managers and b) the environmental stimuli, which are beyond marketing control, and based on the economic, political and cultural circumstances of a society. In the content of the black box are the consumer's characteristics, such as attitudes, motivation, perceptions, personality, lifestyle, and the decision-making process, which determines the consumer's response. Sproles & Kendall (1986 in Decrop & Snelders, 2005) define a consumer's decision-making process as 'a mental orientation characterizing the consumer's approach to making choices' and consider it to be a basic aspect of the consumer's personality. They also provide empirical support that decision-making processes are largely independent of culture. Solomon et al. (1999) considers that consumers constantly face decisions regarding the selection of products and services. Ule & Kline (1996) defined selection between alternatives important to consumers because they have to choose between two or more alternatives; otherwise, they are forced to buy a particular product or service. Consumers seek and use information on products and services as part of their rational problem-solving in the decision-making process. Traditionally, these purchases needed brochures and contacts with a travel agent, however, today all the required information can be found on the internet and consumers can compare the information relatively easily. Belch & Belch (2007) explained that consumers undertake both an internal (memory) and an external search. Sources of information include personal, commercial, public, and personal experience. Bargeman & Poel (2006) pointed out that tourists are looking for information in four basic sources, such as neutral sources (tourist office in the destination), business (travel agencies, tour operators), social and welfare (friends, relatives, acquaintances) and promotional resources (print, radio, television, internet). The informative and persuasive functions of advertising are thus of immense importance, but so are interpersonal influences. Indeed, several studies indicate that informal, word-of-mouth communication may be much more effective than formal advertising in moulding consumer decisions (Engel et al., 1995; Kotler et al., 1998; Foxal et al., 1998). The consumer's personal experiences have an impact on decisions not to seek additional information (Engel et al., 1995). Before the final purchase decision, consumers evaluate various alternatives based on information received. The evaluation process becomes particularly difficult when the product is hotel accommodation, as hospitality service is intangible in nature (Levitt, 1981). In case of hotel choice selection, this information is based on the characteristics of a product or service, quality, price, facilities, location, reputation etc. In making a genuine purchase decision, the consumers weigh which of these attributes give them more relevance and attention related to their own personal values, needs, and preferences. Therefore, they evaluate the worthiness of each attribute of each multi-attribute product alternative, sum up all these attribute values for each product and then select the one with the highest net value.

3 Consumer decision under the influence of various factors

Predicting consumers' hotel choice is influenced by several different factors. These are composed in dimensions which are linked to the attributes of the hotel product, marketing activities and personal characteristics of consumers. Hotel products can be viewed as bundles of various attributes which directly influence choice and they may arouse the consumers' purchase intentions and differentiate themselves from their competitors' offers (Alpert, 1971). Important elements which create the competitive advantage of the hotel are: *product, location*, *product offers and services*, *quality, price* and *reputation*. Wuest et al. (1996) defined perceptions of hotel attributes as the degree to which travellers find various services important and to the customers' satisfaction. Bull (1998) stresses the importance of location for product differentiation in the hospitality industry which produces "place-sensitive products". In the marketing literature there is a rising level of importance placed upon hotel branding and brand is treated as part of the firm's intangible asset value (O'Neill & Belfrage, 2005) which also has an important influence on consumer decision-making in choosing a hotel.

Given the complicated nature of different attributes, various marketing activities and strategies can be launched based on an understanding of consumers' perceptions of important attributes.

Furthermore, other different types of variables may also influence the consumer's decision-making process. These dimensions include socio-demographics, behavioural characteristic, motivation and geographical factors, (Lamb et al., 2002). Socio-demographic dimension, for example, refers to the reference group, family members, acquaintances, friends etc. Among demographic factors which influence decision-making, are age, gender, education, lifestyle, personality and income (Saha et al., 2010). However, marketing managers realize that they have certain power and influence on the purchase choice decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001).

The key activities of hotel marketing communication may prove relevant in the consumer decision-making process. Among the factors that influence the choice of hotel, we highlight some competitive advantages in the present study such as location, hotel facilities, the recommendations of friends/tourist agency, personal experiences, price and advertising. Wilkins (2005) points out that marketers with a better understanding of researched links and impacts can perform more targeted marketing activities designed to persuade guests.

4 Methodology

The purpose of this study is to define different segments of guests based on different factors which represent the reasons for guest decision-making in choosing a hotel, as well as socio-demographic data.

The research objectives are to:
- determine the reasons for choosing a hotel,
- determine the socio-demographic characteristics of hotel guests,
- define segments (clusters) of guests based on the reasons for choosing a hotel,
- statistically test the given hypothesis.

The fundamental question addressed in this study is if it is possible to form segments (clusters) based on reasons for choosing hotels and socio-demographic elements. In accordance with the purpose, objectives and research question, we formed the following hypothesis:

Hotel guests can be divided into different segments (clusters) with similar characteristics based on the reasons (factors) for choosing a hotel and socio-demographic variables.

In order to test the hypothesis, a quantitative study was conducted using the survey method. In the next section, instruments and sampling are described, as well as the analysis and results of the study.

Table 1: *Nationality and gender*

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage	Gender	Frequencies	Percentage
Slovenians	733	48.2	Ž	885	58.2
Italians	203	13.4	M	635	41.8
English	19	1.3	Together	1520	100 %
Germans, Austrians, Swiss	246	16.2			
Others	203	13.4			
Together	1534	100 %			

4.2 Instrument

Within quantitative research, we used a questionnaire which was developed for the use of hotels on the Slovenian coast.

However, for the purpose of this study, we used only two sets of questions in order to evaluate the reasons for choosing a hotel and socio-demographic data. Hotel guests were invited by a front-line employee in the hotel reception to anonymously participate in the survey. The questionnaire regarding segmentation contained questions about the reasons for choosing the hotel that were measured with the multiple-choice questions: location, price, hotel facilities, promotion, recommendation of an acquaintance or a travel agency and prior personal experiences in this hotel. These questions were developed by Medlick (1996), other relevant literature and often exposed hotels competitive advantages as these are the key factors which are relevant for marketing management. At the end, socio-demographic data were collected (gender, age and nationality).

4.3 Sample

Data collection took place between March 2009 and November 2009. 1,520 hotel guests from 10 different hotels on the Slovenian coast participated in the study. The hotel sample represents medium-category hotels (3 and 4 stars).

The survey sample is based on probability sampling. There were guests from more than seven different states involved in the research: Slovenia (N=733), German speaking (246), Italy (203), Great Britain (N=19) and others (N=203). Our basis for national segmentation was the language area. Of the 1520 participants, 58.2% were male and 41.8% female. The average age was 52.33 years. Table 1 shows data with frequency division of the participants according to nationality and gender.

4.4 Analyses

The descriptive and multivariate statistical analyses were performed using the software SPSS 19.0.

Reasons for choosing a hotel

The participants were asked to choose the reasons which influenced their choice of hotel. Multiple answers were possible. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Reasons for choosing the hotel*

Reasons for choosing the hotel	N	%
Location	479	31.5
Recommendation of friends/ tourist agency	438	28.8
Price	384	25.3
Personal experiences	367	24
Promotion	335	22
Hotel facilities	242	15.9

Most respondents have chosen the hotel because of the location (31.5%), followed by other reasons for choosing the hotel: recommendation of an acquaintance or travel agency (28.8%), price (25.3%), personal experience with the hotel (24%), promotion (22%) and facilities (15.9%). Two reasons for choosing the hotel (image of the hotel and other) were eliminated from the analysis, as the value of skewness and kurtosis were

Table 3: *Results of ANOVA and cluster analyses*

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	ANOVA F	ANOVA Sig.
Reasons for choosing the hotel - N (%)							
Location	80 (27,2)	252 (25.1)	42 (68.9)	105 (66.5)	5 (100)	42.21	0.000
Recommendation	0 (0)	417 (41.6)	61 (100)	16 (10.1)	5 (100)	72.24	0.000
Price	111 (37.8)	95 (9.5)	24 (39.3)	154 (97.5)	5 (100)	247.59	0.000
Personal experience	45 (15.3)	255 (25.4)	61 (100)	1 (0.6)	5 (100)	81.26	0.000
Promotion	294 (100)	36 (3.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (100)	2471	0.000
	50 (17)	65 (6.5)	61 (100)	64 (40.5)	2 (40)	165.66	0.000
Gender – N (%)							
Male	118 (40.1)	425 (42.2)	24 (39.3)	67 (42.4)	1 (20.0)		
Female	176 (59.9)	577 (57.6)	37 (60.7)	91 (57.6)	4 (80.0)		
Total (100 %)	294	1002	61	158	5		
Age in years (SD) – N (%)							
18-35 years	43 (14,6)	141 (14,1)	9 (14,8)	33 (20,9)	2 (40)		
36-53 years	99 (33,7)	334 (33,3)	21 (34,4)	63 (39,9)	1 (20)		
54-71 years	86 (29,3)	283 (28,2)	20 (32,8)	34 (21,5)	1 (20)		
72-89 years	32 (10,9)	97 (9,7)	6 (9,8)	5 (3,2)	4 (80)		
Nationality – N (%)							
Slovene	147 (50)	505 (50.4)	51 (83.6)	82 (51.9)	2 (40)		
German speaking	53 (18)	174 (17.4)	3 (4.9)	15 (9.5)	1 (20.0)		
Italian	38 (12.9)	131 (13.1)	2 (3.3)	31 (19.6)	1 (20.0)		
British	6 (2 %)	11 (1.1)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	5 (100)		
Other	42 (14.3)	133 (13.3)	2 (3.3)	25 (15.8)	1 (20)		
Total (100 %)	294	1002	61	158	5		

above |2| and therefore their distribution is not similar to a normal one.

5 Results

To test the research hypothesis, cluster analysis was conducted using the Wards Method. Firstly, a hierarchical cluster analysis was done based on six reasons for choosing a hotel, in order to find the appropriate number of clusters. Afterwards, five clusters were chosen for further analysis, where 14 outlays were eliminated.

The results of ANOVA established significant differences between five clusters. Having identified the clusters, the descriptive statistics were done (Table 3).

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of reasons for choosing the hotel, gender, age groups and nationality for 5 identified clusters/segments. The main purpose of this was to characterize those segments which demonstrate a significantly important link between reasons for choosing the hotel and socio-demographic data. Each cluster is described below.

Cluster 1 includes 294 guests in total and most of them are Slovene guests (50%) and German speaking guests (18%), women (59.9%), mostly in the age group 36–53 years (33,7%) and 54–71 years (29,3%). They chose the hotel because of the promotion (100%), price (37.8%) and location (27.2%). These guests can be named as *representatives of the market (they trust the market).*

Cluster 2 includes 1,002 guests in total and most of them are Slovene (57.6%) and German speaking (17.4%) women (57.6%), mostly in the age group 36–53 (33,3%) and 54–71 (28.2%). They chose the hotel because of a recommendation (41.6%), personal experience with the hotel (25.4%) and location (25.1%). These guests can be named as *representatives of self and others' opinions (they trust what people or an agency say and themselves).*

Cluster 3 includes 61 guests in total and most of them are Slovene (83.6%), women (60.7%), mostly in the age group 36–53 (34,4%) and 54–71 (32,8%). They choose the hotel mostly because of a recommendation (100%), personal experience with the hotel (100%), hotel facilities (100%), location (68.9%) and price (39.3%). This segment of guest can be named as *representatives of "verify".*

Cluster 4 includes 158 guests in total and most of them are Slovene guests (51.9%) and Italian guests (19.6%), women (57.6%) mostly in the age group 18–35 (20,9), 36–53 (33,3%) and 54–71 (28,2%). They chose the hotel because of the price (97.5%) and location (66.5%) and hotel facilities (40.5%). This segment of guests can be named as *representatives of product oriented (they trust the hotel).*

Cluster 5: as this cluster contains only five guests, it is not useful to include it in further analysis.

Based on the results of the cluster analysis, we partially confirm our hypothesis as the socio-demographic data in all identified clusters are almost completely the same (e.g. mostly Slovene guests, women in age groups from 36 to 71 years old). However, four different clusters can be identified based on different priorities of guests concerning their reasons for choosing a hotel.

6 Conclusion

To be successful in the hospitality business, one must understand how consumers perceive the product or service attributes and their importance and performance when compared with other competitors. Choosing a hotel is an important decision for a consumer, who is also associated with the expectations and risks to which the consumer is exposed.

Research findings have shown that guests, based on selected factors that have an influence on the choice of hotel, can be divided into four segments.

The results of the cluster analysis show that the first and the largest cluster includes the guests who choose a hotel based on the personal experience and recommendation of friends and tourist agencies. Before the final purchase, consumers evaluate various alternatives based on the informal information they have received. These guests can be identified *as representatives of self and others' opinion.* Upon that, we can deduce that positive experiences are the key factor of a hotel's success. The second most important segments of the guests are the ones *who trust advertising.* Marketing communication with attractive prices and hotel location is very important to them. The third segment represents *guests who all verify.* They check all sources of information to be sure they get a good price for good hotel facilities and they need some recommendations. The most important are recommendations, hotel facilities and good location and price. They are very demanding and not easy target consumers. The fourth segment of guests is *hotel product oriented.* They have to be sure to get the best value for money. Hotel facilities, price and location are very important to them. Location of the hotel is important as well as post-purchase marketing activities, such as news-letter information about new product offers, services, renovations, development plans etc.

The segments proposed by this research are valuable for practical purposes. Based on the study findings, various identified guest segments based on hotel selection, provide useful suggestions for marketing planning. On the other hand, in consumer decision-making process in hotel selection, our study defines typical attributes in all identified segments, such as recommendations, personal experiences and location. Firstly, recommendations and personal experiences are made according to the most important interpersonal influences through informal, word-of-mouth communication or personal experiences, which are much more effective than other factors. Finally, a very important decision-making factor is also the location of the hotel. "Location, location, location ..." as Hilton said, still remains a very appealing and sought after factor. Specifically, the analysis of a large sample of coastal hotels in Catalonia shows that location on the beach increases hotels' prices on average between 13–17% (Rigall et al., 2011).

Finally, several limitations of the study should be highlighted. Firstly, the study is limited to Slovenian coastal hotels. Another limitation of the study is the sample of the survey, which represents the typical national structure of the guests in the hotels, with more than 50% of Slovenes, which affected the results of the research. Additionally, the sample mostly represents guests whose purpose of visit was leisure and who usually search for hotel information from the travel agencies. Of socio-graphic characteristics, only gender, age and nationality were included. Another limitation is also the given reasons for choosing a hotel. Researchers have limited information on how hotels position themselves, which is critical to consumer perception and hotel success. Future research should include also non-Slovenian hotel locations and could compare the results within different countries. In the further research regarding consumer hotel choice, other factors should be included such as hotel category, quality, hotel brand, satisfaction, loyalty of guests, etc.

Kako gostje izbirajo hotele?

Povzetek

Predvidevanje glede izbire hotela s strani potrošnikov je podvrženo različnim dejavnikom. Na izbiro hotela v procesu odločanja potrošnika vplivajo hotelski produkt, prejete informacije in osebne preference. Raziskava se osredotoča na različne dejavnike, ki predstavljajo razloge za odločitev potrošnika pri izbiri hotela in segmentacijo trga na podlagi analize dejavnikov, ki jih zahtevajo mednarodni gostje. Ugotovitve študije kažejo, da lahko hotelske goste razdelimo v štiri različne segmente s posebnimi lastnostmi glede na razloge za izbiro hotela. Rezultati raziskave so lahko uporabni za hotelski management pri določanju ustreznega marketinškega spleta.

Ključne besede: turizem, proces odločanja potrošnika, izbira hotela, segmentacija trga, klastrska analiza

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Challenges of tourism education: Conformity of tourism curriculum to business needs

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Abstract

This study was conducted in the fourth largest tertiary education institution in Latvia, which also provides higher education in the field of tourism. The purpose of the research is to study stakeholder needs and to evaluate the knowledge of tourism students, as well as the level of skills and abilities necessary for work in tourism business and to determine opportunities for curriculum development. The study is comprised of three stages: context analysis; a survey of 262 tourism students and 192 employers applying a similar Likert Scale questionnaire; comparing findings with the findings obtained in similar studies in other countries and elaborating conclusions and suggestions regarding curriculum improvement. A quantitative approach conducting primary data analysis (descriptive statistics) and secondary data analysis (Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, Anova test) is applied to study stakeholder opinion. Findings of the study reveal the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in tourism business. It indicates that the present curriculum corresponds to the requirements of the industry and student needs. Students highly value the knowledge acquired and the skills and abilities developed during their studies. The employers' high evaluation of student knowledge, skills, and abilities verifies this fact. The curriculum might be improved by creating modules of related courses, applying a cross-disciplinary approach to studies, using corresponding teaching-learning methods and creating a supportive learning environment, initiating autonomous learning for the students and motivating them for studies.

Key words: tourism curriculum, knowledge, skills, abilities

1 Introduction

Over the last decades, discussion regarding the quality of education and its correspondence to the needs of industry has been on the agenda worldwide. Under the influence of globalization and the world-wide economic downturn, it is especially important to create or update curricula so that they would correspond to rapidly changing market needs and would help educate employees who will be working in situations that are currently difficult to predict.

The strategic EU document *Europe 2020* points to three priorities in order to overcome the problems and face the future: smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. This means the development of 'economy based on knowledge and innovation', promoting a green, efficient and competitive economy and 'fostering a high-employment economy' (Europe 2020, 2010, 3). In order to attain this goal it is necessary to create new curricula and adapt the existing ones so that they would ensure social cohesion and be innovative and develop creative personalities.

To do this, higher education institutions try to establish close contacts with the industry to follow all changes and development. The UN World Tourism Organisation TedQual programme, whose objective is to improve the quality of tourism education, training and research programmes, has defined evaluation criteria for tourism curricula. Among other components the degree of incorporation of stakeholder needs, both the needs of the tourism industry and its students, into the programmes are evaluated.

In this respect, Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) (2009) has formulated a set of five values-based principles that tourism students should embody upon graduation in order to become responsible leaders and stewards in their field: ethics, stewardship, knowledge, professionalism, and mutuality. According to the principle of ethics, students should be able to identify sources of power, provide ethical leadership and initiate changes for the better. Knowledge includes creativity, critical thinking and networking through complex of reasoning, learning, communication, association and application. Describing stewardship, TEFI emphasizes that students should be encouraged to question everything, including what their professors say. Professionalism is defined as a complex of leadership skills, practicality, reflexivity, team working and partnership building skills, and pro-activity. It means not only the skills, competences or standards, but also attitude and behaviour. Mutuality is characterized as self-respect and respect for others, which could be developed through open interactions, constructive communication and discussions, conflict avoidance and management, empathy and acceptance. To conform to the requirements of the five aforementioned principles, improvements are needed in the spheres of the learning and teaching environments, curricula revision and development. Tourism curricula have to be 'updated, reflecting a more realistic view of the industry' (Lee, Lee & Kim, 2009, 62).

The studies regarding curricula improvement have been conducted in different regions of the world. Recently, several such studies have been conducted in Australia, Korea and China (Wang et al., 2010; Lee, Lee & Kim, 2009; Lu & Adler, 2009) in which the focus was laid on the analysis of the courses to be included in the curriculum. Phelan et al. (2009) compare the top 25 ranked hospitality management undergraduate programmes of the USA, placing emphasis on objectives, assessment and teaching methods. In Europe studies dealing with curricula evaluation and assessment of student and graduate learning outcomes are popular. Some examples providing an analysis of tourism curricula are as follows: the studies conducted in Spain (Munar & Montaño, 2009; Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008; Boni & Lozano, 2007), Lithuania (Pukelis & Pileicikiene, 2009), and the United Kingdom (Nield, 2011) that focus on the assessment of student and graduate learning outcomes. Several studies have been conducted to analyze certain curricula aspects. The study conducted in Cyprus (Orphanidou & Nachimas, 2011) analyzes the curriculum objectives and their compliance with industry needs and the studies conducted in Estonia (Tooman, Müristaja & Holleran, 2007) and Austria (Ring, Dickinger & Wöber 2009) focus on the courses to be included in the curriculum.

There have also been discussions as to whether higher education tourism curricula should contain basic business courses with a tourism speciality or specific tourism curricula need to be designed (Wang, Huyton, Gao & Ayres, 2010). Various countries and universities have selected different approaches. The School of Business Administration Turiba (BAT) follows the second line and has designed a specific tourism curriculum, the core of which is formed by tourism and business courses. The study programme observes the balance between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and development of practical skills. The scope of the Bachelor's programme is 240 ECTS and the content is comprised of general education courses (30 ECTS), field theoretical basic courses and information technology courses (54 ECTS), field professional specialization courses (90 ECTS), electives (9 ECTS), internship in the industry (39 ECTS) and State examination (18 ECTS). In developing the *Tourism and Hospitality Management* curriculum, the following influence and interests were taken into account: 1) the needs of the industry (external actor), 2) the interests of students (internal actor), and 3) the guidelines of the World Tourism Organisation. To collect data and analyze information and the opinions of external actors the following approach has been applied:

1) The opinion of the industry is expressed regularly in the highest collegial body – the Council of the Faculty. The Council is responsible for the quality assurance of studies, research and methodological work. BAT regulations state that 50% of the Council's members are representatives of the industry, which ensures permanent feedback from the industry regarding the curriculum, and 20% are students representing the respective study programme.
2) The staff of the Faculty includes both academic lecturers and industry representative lecturers. Industry representative lecturers represent tourism and hospitality companies, state and municipal institutions, different professional associations. Besides lecturing, academic staff members are also involved in consulting the industry and are elected to the boards of professional associations. It allows for the academic staff to be involved in the daily issues of tourism business and to acquire firsthand experience thus initiating changes in curricula following the developments in the industry.
3) Using the results of special surveys carried out regularly by the Faculty. Findings of the studies are analyzed and incorporated into the curriculum providing there is such a need.

However, it is essential to reconsider both the content of the studies and the methodologies used in order to develop a curriculum that would correspond to the 'new paradigm for values-based tourism education' (Sheldon, Fesenmaier, Woeber, Cooper & Antonioli, 2008, 62) and comply with stakeholder needs.

Widdowson (1986) points to two different approaches to the term *student needs*. The first approach is result-oriented. In this respect student needs are connected with their long-term goals. For example, a long-term goal might be to have work or study opportunities. The second approach to the aforementioned term is process-oriented. It is connected with the whole study process and it is comprised of definite tasks (e.g., attending lectures, working on home assignments, participating in seminars, passing tests and examinations, undergoing internship training, collaborating with peers and professors, etc.) students have to fulfil in order to become professionals in the field.

However, it has to be marked that in practice there is often observed a contradiction between the aims of students and those of professors as the professor's aim is often result-oriented, but the students' aim is process-oriented. As students and professors work for the same aim – to develop professional competence, both these aims are closely linked and significant.

The role of stakeholders in curriculum design and implementation can be seen in two aspects: to influence the creation of the curriculum and to evaluate it, thus contributing to its development. Stakeholders indicate the core areas, courses/modules that should be included in the curriculum (Lewis, 2005).

As tourism graduates work in multicultural organisations and are in contact with international tourists of various nationalities and ethnic groups, they must acquire knowledge and develop skills that will enhance their ability to adapt to different unpredictable situations (Sangpikul, 2009).

Special attention in the studies has to be paid to enhancing students' team work skills, innovation capabilities, strategic approach to entrepreneurship (Kallioinen, 2010), creativity, ability to think logically and strategically, as well as professional language competence and intercultural communication skills. 'Students must be prepared to work *in* tourism and *for* tourism' (Lewis, 2005, 12).

The updated curriculum should ensure the development of student knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as special attention has to be paid to enhancing of attitude. Attitude is developing in all study courses, including internship training. It can be developed by the enhancing of student responsibility, capabilities of analyzing and synthesizing information, mutuality, collaboration skills, team work, tolerance and empathy.

This paper addresses the issue of evaluating the tourism curriculum and making improvements in order to create a curriculum that would enable the development of knowledgeable, innovative, creative personalities who are able to efficiently manage their own and other employees' work and can operate in a modern multicultural environment.

2 Methods and methodologies

2.1 Purpose of the research

This study was conducted from May to September of 2009 in the fourth largest tertiary education institution in Latvia, which among other programmes provides well-acknowledged internationally accredited higher education in tourism.

The purpose of the research is to study stakeholder needs and to evaluate tourism students' knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for work in tourism business and determine opportunities for curriculum development.

2.2 Research questions

1) What knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude are important to work in the tourism business?
2) How do employers and students evaluate student knowledge in tourism courses and how are skills and abilities developed?
3) How can tourism curriculum be improved in order to enable students to acquire an up-to-date tourism education?

2.3 Research design

The authors have chosen a quantitative approach to the study as it is connected with cause and provides greater objectivity, data reliability and validity, and representation of reality (Turner, 2007; Denzin & Ryan, 2007). Another reason for applying the quantitative approach to the study was the possibility to better reveal the number of differences (Hunter & Brewer, 2003; Kardoff, 2004). The study was comprised of 3 stages: 1) context analysis, 2) empirical study (tourism students and tourism employers survey), and 3) comparing findings with the findings obtained in similar studies in other European countries and elaborating suggestions and conclusions.

2.4 Survey

A survey was conducted by questioning 192 tourism employers and 262 tourism students applying a similar Likert scale questionnaire (where 1 was *not at all significant/very bad* and 6 – *extremely significant/very good*) consisting of 5 parts:

1) the knowledge necessary to operate in tourism industry;
2) evaluation of student knowledge in this field;
3) the skills, abilities and attitude necessary to operate in tourism industry;
4) evaluation of these skills and abilities;
5) general information (the type of the enterprise, represented tourism sectors, the post, the number of employees in the enterprise, etc).

The questionnaire revealed employers' and students' opinions following the students' internship in the industry. The questionnaires were developed comprising all compulsory tourism courses included in the curriculum reflected in the questionnaire as knowledge. Questions regarding skills and abilities were selected taking into account generic and subject specific competences for business oriented curricula (González & Wagenaar, 2003; 2009). The developed questionnaires were discussed and approved at the Faculty Council comprising tourism educators, industry representatives and students. Next, the questionnaires were tested with two groups – 12 students and 9 employers. After having made the necessary amendments, the survey of the selected sample of students and employers was conducted.

Quantitative data analysis software SPSS Statistics 17.0 was applied for data processing. Data analysis was done based on the approach of Raščevska and Kristapsone (2000) and it included primary data analysis (frequencies, means) to obtain descriptive statistics and secondary data analysis (Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, Anova test) to reveal the differences and similarities. Data validity and reliability was verified by applying Cronbach's Alpha test.

2.5 Sample

The sample of the study was composed based on the approach of Geske and Grīnfelds (2006) and Trochim and Donelly (2007).

A simple random sample of 262 tourism students of the Faculty of International Tourism (FIT) of the School of Business Administration Turiba (BAT) was made: 93 were first year students (35.50%), 80 second year students (30.53%), 56 third year students (21.37%), 13 foreign students, 5 students belonged to other groups and 15 students did not indicated to which group they belonged. Three tourism sectors were targeted: the lodging sector – 168 students (64.12%), the catering sector – 69 students (26.34%), and the state and municipality sector, including travel agencies and tourism information centres (TIC) – 25 students (9.54%).

An intentional sample of 192 tourism employers of the enterprises, in which the participating students had done an internship, was made: 84 (43.75%) represented top-level management, 57 (29.69%) – mid-level, 42 (21.88%) had marked the choice *other* and 9 respondents (4.69%) did not indicate their post. One hundred twenty three employers represented the lodging sector, 65 employers – the catering sector. 32 respondents (16.66%) represented small tourism establishments, 48 (25%) – medium sized tourism establishments, 49 (25.52%) – large tourism establishments and 51 (26.56%) – very large tourism establishments. An intentional sample was formed to compare findings of both surveys to introduce curriculum improvements considering all stakeholder needs.

3 Findings of the research

The research consisted of two empirical parts – a student survey and a tourism industry employer survey, which allowed for comparing the results and therefore gives a comprehensive view regarding correspondence of the curriculum to the employers' needs, and thereof the respective needs and wishes of the industry. First, students and employers had to evaluate knowledge and skills necessary for work in the tourism industry. Second, the students performed their self-evaluation in these aspects, and the employers evaluated competence of the students undergoing internship in their enterprises. Items under evaluation corresponded to the study courses included in the curriculum. Thus the results enabled finding information on the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude necessary to succeed in the tourism business, as well as reflected in student opinions of the curriculum and the competence acquired during studies at BAT.

Data regarding student knowledge indicating the options *significant*, *very significant* and *extremely significant* as well as evaluation *very good*, *good* and *nearly good* are summarized in *Table 1 and Table 2* (refer to *Table 1* and *Table 2*). Both, the students and the employers found the knowledge in *Communication Psychology* (means 5.29 and 5.49 respectively), *Personnel Management* (means 5.17 and 4.97 respectively) and *Commercial Activity in Tourism* (means 4.96 and 4.80 respectively) as the most significant issues for success-

Table 1: *Students' opinion on the knowledge necessary to succeed in the tourism business and its evaluation (n=262)*

Knowledge	Evaluation of the significance of knowledge			Students' self-evaluation of knowledge		
	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank
Communication Psychology	251	95.80	1	252	96.18	1
Personnel Management	247	94.27	2	230	87.79	3
Commercial Activity in Tourism	243	92.75	3	212	80.92	4
Hotel Operations and Management	226	86.26	4	194	74.05	6
Hotel Reservation Systems	224	85.50	5-6	171	65.27	9
Marketing	224	85.50	5-6	197	75.19	5
Latvia and World Tourism Geography	222	84.73	7	232	88.55	2
Management of Catering Establishments	217	82.82	8	182	69.47	8
Travel Organization and Management	214	81.68	9	189	72.14	7
Financial Management and Accounting	208	79.39	10	156	59.54	10
Economics	199	75.95	11	146	55.73	11

ful work in the tourism industry. The employers evaluated knowledge in *Marketing* (mean 4.92) as especially important as well.

Additionally, students emphasized the importance of specific subjects related to work in hotels: *Hotel Reservation Systems* (mean 4.71) and *Hotel Operations and Management* (4.73). They gave a lower ranking to subjects related with branches of economics and finances: *Economics* (mean 4.32) and *Financial Management and Accounting* (mean 4.53).

In analyzing the skills, abilities and attitude required for successful work in the tourism industry, the opinions of students and employers are similar – both gave high priority to skills of official language (Latvian) (means 5.73 and 5.79 respectively), communication skills with clients (means 5.75 and 5.76 respectively) and colleagues (means 5.66 and 5.73 respectively), English language skills (means 5.69 and 5.62 respectively), a positive attitude to work (means 5.66 and 5.74 respectively) indicating these as the most important (refer to *Table 3* and *Table 4*).

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances pointed to several significant differences between the student and the employer opinions regarding the significance of the knowledge and skills necessary for

Table 2: *Employers' opinion on the knowledge necessary to succeed in the tourism business and its evaluation (n=192)*

Knowledge	Evaluation of the significance of knowledge			Evaluation of students' knowledge		
	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank
Communication Psychology	188	97.92	1	184	95.83	1
Personnel Management	176	91.67	2	166	86.46	3
Commercial Activity in Tourism	173	90.10	3-4	162	84.34	4-5
Hotel Operations and Management	147	76.56	11	144	75	8
Hotel Reservation Systems	150	78.13	10	143	74.48	9
Marketing	173	90.10	3-4	162	84.38	4-5
Latvia and World Tourism Geography	164	85.42	5	170	88.54	2
Management of Catering Establishments	154	80.21	7-9	152	79.17	6
Travel Organization and Management	154	80.21	7-9	151	78.65	7
Financial Management and Accounting	156	81.25	6	134	69.79	10
Economics	154	80.21	7-9	133	69.27	11

Table 3: *Students' opinion on the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the tourism business and their evaluation (n=262)*

Skills and abilities	Evaluation of the significance of skills, abilities, attitude			Students' self-evaluation of skills, abilities, attitude		
	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank
Abilities to communicate with clients	262	100	1-2	255	97.33	4-5
Abilities to communicate with colleagues	262	100	1-2	260	99.24	1
English language skills	261	99.62	3	255	97.33	4-5
Ability to work in a multicultural team	260	99.24	4-5	252	96.18	8
Positive attitude to work	260	99.24	4-5	256	97.71	3
Organizational skills	259	98.85	6-7	245	93.51	10
Ability to apply theoretical knowledge into practice	259	98.85	6-7	254	96.95	6-7
Official language skills	258	98.47	8	258	98.47	2
IT skills	256	97.71	9	254	96.95	6-7
Initiative	255	97.33	10	251	95.80	9
Russian language skills	253	96.56	11	222	84.73	13
Strategic approach to entrepreneurship	252	96.18	12	227	86.64	12
Creativity	249	95.04	13	236	90.07	11
Skills to work with different computerised reservation systems	243	92.74	14	191	72.90	14
German/French language skills	224	85.50	15	146	55.73	15

Table 4: *Employers' opinion on the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the tourism business and their evaluation (n=192)*

Skills and abilities	Evaluation of the significance of skills, abilities, attitude			Evaluation of students' skills, abilities, attitude		
	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank
Abilities to communicate with clients	190	98.96	3-5	186	96.88	4-5
Abilities to communicate with colleagues	191	99.48	1-2	190	98.96	1-2
English language skills	190	98.96	3-5	184	95.83	7
Ability to work in a multicultural team	191	99.48	1-2	188	97.92	3
Positive attitude to work	190	98.96	3-5	186	96.88	4-5
Organizational skills	187	97.40	11	183	95.31	8-10
Ability to apply theoretical knowledge into practice	189	98.44	6-9	183	95.31	8-10
Official language skills	189	98.44	6-9	190	98.96	1-2
IT skills	186	96.88	12	183	95.31	8-10
Initiative	188	97.92	10	185	96.35	6
Russian language skills	189	98.44	6-9	171	89.06	12
Strategic approach to entrepreneurship	184	95.83	13	168	87.5	13
Creativity	189	98.44	6-9	177	92.19	11
Skills to work with different computerised reservation systems	169	88.02	15	145	75.52	14
German/French language skills	171	89.06	14	121	63.0	15

successful operation in the tourism business: understanding the work of tourism business (F=5.193, p-value=0.023), *Commercial Activity in Tourism* (F=5.751, p-value=0.017), *Hotel Reservation Systems* (F=7.201, p-value=0.006), *Hotel Operations and Management* (F=14.691, p-value=0.000), Russian language skills (F=4.893, p-value=0.027), information technology skills (F=6.156, p-value=0.013), skills to work with different computerised reservation systems (F=4.736, p-value=0.030), and the ability to work in a team (F=4.031, p-value=0.045). Students evaluated them higher than the employers, except the Russian language skills and an ability to work in a multicultural team.

Cronbach's Alpha test verifies a high data reliability and validity (α=0.849 for significance of knowledge; α=0.834 for significance of skills and abilities).

Both students and employers highly evaluated student knowledge, skills and abilities developed during their studies at BAT. In the student survey the means ranged from 5.69 (official language skills) to 3.57 (knowledge in economics) and in the employer survey – from 5.78 (official language skills) to 3.92 (knowledge in *Financial Management and Accounting*). As demonstrated, the highest evaluation is similar in both surveys. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed significant differences in the following issues: evaluation of student knowledge of *Commercial Activity in Tourism* (F=11.874, p-value=0.001), knowledge in *Hotel Operations and Management* (F=17.975, p-value=0.000), knowledge in *Management of Catering Establishments* (F=9.527, p-value=0.002), knowledge in *Latvia and World Tourism Geography* (F=5.908, p-value=0.015), knowledge in *Travel Organization and Management* (F=7.256, p-value=0.007), official language skills (F=5.037, p-value=0.025), English language skills (F=7.387, p-value=0.007), third language (German/French) skills (F=10.673, p-value=0.001), information technology skills (F=4.449, p-value=0.035), skills to work with different computerised reservation systems (F=6.069, p-value=0.014), initiative (F=3.948, p-value=0.048), and a strategic approach to entrepreneurship (F=4.470, p-value=0.035). In all cases, except the English language and IT skills, the students' self-evaluation is lower than the evaluation performed by the employers.

Cronbach's Alpha test verifies a high data reliability and validity (α=0.865 for evaluation of student knowledge; α=0.822 for evaluation of student skills and abilities).

Findings of the students' and the employers' surveys were analyzed as a whole, by sectors and the posts occupied. In research 3 different sectors were singled out during the study: the lodging sector (hotels, guest houses, farmhouses, campsites, youth hostels, other), the catering sector (restaurants, cafes, bistros, other) and state and municipality sectors (TIC, state agencies, municipality offices, other).

When analyzing the importance of knowledge, differences between the sectors appear when evaluating knowledge/study courses related to one particular sector; for example, hotel management systems, work of hotel departments etc. At the same time there are no differences regarding the necessity of knowledge in management of catering enterprises. The aforementioned knowledge is evaluated significantly lower by employers working at TIC (for example, management of catering enterprises mean=2.40 cf. the corresponding total mean=4.45). The student survey showed a similar pattern – students, who were working in companies of other sector than lodging, evaluated lower the necessity of such knowledge as hotel management systems and work of hotel departments.

The Anova test revealed differences within the sector. Most of these differences were observed in the catering sector. When evaluating the knowledge, significant differences were discovered in the following issues: importance of the knowledge of *Hotel Reservation Systems* (F=4.123 p-value=0.003), *Hotel Operations and Management* (F=2.445, p-value=0.047), *Management of Catering Establishments* (F=4.824, p-value=0.001), *Latvia and World Tourism Geography* (F=3.311, p-value=0.011), *Travel Organization and Management* (F=5.213, p-value=0.000). On average higher means were demonstrated by the students having done internship in restaurants. For example, the total mean for evaluation of the knowledge of *Latvia and World Tourism Geography* is 4.65. The students working in the restaurants had a mean of 4.13, but those working in bistros – 3.86.

When applying the Anova test to analyzing students' self-evaluation of their knowledge by the post students had occupied during internship, significant differences were observed in all courses (refer to *Table 5*). The work specifics also influenced student knowledge. For

Table 5: *Results of Anova test on students' self-evaluation of knowledge by their post during the internship*

Knowledge	Means (max=6.0000)											ANOVA results	
	Waiter/ waitress (N=44)	Bartender (N=8)	Receptionist (N=86)	Maid (N=17)	Housekeeper (N=8)	Travel consultant (N=34)	Director (N=13)	Cook (N=1)	Manager (N=8)	Marketing specialist (N=10)	Bellboy/ busser (N=5)	F	Sig.
Commercial Activity in Tourism	3.9091	4.5000	4.4767	4.0000	3.7500	4.1765	4.3846	3.0000	4.3750	4.4000	4.6000	2.037	.026
Financial Management and Accounting	3.6591	3.5000	3.7907	2.6471	3.3750	3.6765	3.5385	4.0000	4.1250	4.2000	4.2000	2.259	.012
Economics	3.4545	3.8750	3.8140	2.7647	3.2500	3.4412	3.6154	4.0000	3.8750	4.0000	4.6000	2.172	.016
Communication Psychology	4.9091	4.5000	5.2326	5.2353	4.2500	5.3235	5.0769	4.0000	5.5000	5.2000	5.6000	1.953	.034
Personnel Management	4.1818	4.3750	4.7674	3.4706	4.0000	4.5588	4.8462	5.0000	4.5000	4.8000	4.4000	2.319	.010
Hotel Reservation Systems	2.9545	3.5000	4.6977	3.4118	3.3750	3.7353	3.2308	3.000	3.3750	4.6000	3.0000	4.847	.000
Hotel Operations and Management	3.5227	3.6250	4.6395	4.2941	4.2500	3.5000	3.3077	3.0000	4.1250	4.2000	4.2000	3.152	.001
Management of Catering Establishments	4.4773	5.2500	3.9535	4.1176	3.5000	3.4412	4.0000	6.0000	3.8750	3.9000	4.4000	2.141	.018
Latvia and World Tourism Geography	4.3409	4.0000	4.5233	4.9412	4.3750	4.7059	4.4615	1.0000	4.7500	5.0000	5.0000	2.093	.021
Travel Organization and Management	3.5000	3.5000	4.0233	3.8824	3.8750	4.7059	4.1538	1.0000	4.5000	4.7000	2.8000	3.153	.001
Marketing	3.7727	4.2500	4.3837	2.8235	3.6250	3.9118	4.7692	1.0000	4.0000	5.3000	4.6000	3.829	.000

example, the highest self-evaluation of the knowledge was given to the course of *Communication Psychology* (mean=5.60 by bellboys/table-bussers, mean=5.50 by managers, mean=5.20 by marketing specialists, mean=5.32 by travel consultants). The lowest means were given to knowledge in *Financial Management and Accounting* (mean=2.65 by maids), knowledge in *Economics* (mean=2.76 by maids), knowledge in *Travel Organization and Management* (mean=2.80 by bellboys/table-bussers). Performing the duties of these posts did not require the aforementioned knowledge, which might explain their comparatively low evaluation. The limitation in analyzing the data as to the posts lies in the fact that only one student has performed the job of a cook, therefore the means for a cook were not analyzed.

The Anova test did not reveal significant differences regarding evaluation of the students' knowledge done by employers in accordance with their post (top-level managers, mid-level managers, others).

Evaluating the students' abilities to act strategically – the highest evaluation was given by those students who had work experience or internship in the lodging sector. However, overall, the students did not evaluate their skills of a strategic approach to entrepreneurship as high as employers – the total means: 4.43 and 4.52 (F=4.470, p-value=0.035).

The students' and the employers' views regarding foreign language skills are similar. Both very highly evaluated ability to communicate in foreign languages: in English (means 5.69 and 5.62 respectively), Russian (means 5.44 and 5.55 respectively) and a third language (German/French) skills (means 4.70 and 4.63 respectively). Interestingly, the need to possess Russian language skills was evaluated higher by students and employers who work at state and municipality institutions – the mean above 5.50 m in all cases. Compared to other language skills slightly underestimated was the need for the third language skills – not all groups considered it as an important skill (e.g., mean=3.92 for employers of campsites, mean=4.16 for employers of bistros). This might refer to French since there are not many French speaking tourists in Latvia but German speaking countries are a traditional tourism market for Latvia. Thus more attention has to be paid to popularization of the German language among students as well. The student survey also pointed to their wish to learn Spanish and Russian.

Regarding communication and collaboration skills, both students and employers evaluated collaboration skills slightly more highly. The highest evaluation of these skills was received by the respondents working at bistros (students' mean for teamwork 5.86; employers' mean=5.57) and guest houses (students' mean for teamwork 5.73; employers' mean=5.91).

In general, student skills and abilities received a comparatively high self-evaluation and a high evaluation by employers (refer to *Table 3 and Table 4*). However, a comparatively low evaluation was given to creativity. Interestingly, both employers and students evaluated these skills at lower than 5.00, with the only exceptions – guest house employers (mean=5.45) and students having internship in guest houses (mean=5.27), restaurant employers (mean=5.42) and employers of bistros (mean=5.43).

A similar pattern was observed evaluating organizational skills. Students' organizational skills were evaluated higher by those working in the catering sector: mean=5.10 for students who worked in restaurants and 5.08 – in cafes and mean=5.33 for employers from restaurants and 5.29 – from bistros. This points to the students' abilities to manage their own work and collaborate with colleagues.

The applied Anova test to the student survey pointed to significant differences in the lodging sector: abilities to work with different computerised reservation systems (F=2.172, p-value=0.046) and creativity (F=3.123, p-value=0.006), in the catering sector: organizational skills (F=2.747, p-value=0.029). The Anova test applied to the employer survey revealed the following differences in the lodging sector: applying information technology skills (F=2.802, p-value=0.012), positive attitude to work (F=2.190, p-value=0.046), in the catering sector: English language skills (F=3.369, p-value=0.011), strategic approach to entrepreneurship (F=3.341, p-value=0.011), creativity (F=3.811, p-value=0.005), in the state and municipality sector: the third language skills (F=3.020, p=0.019), creativity (F=4.360, p-value=0.002).

Similarly, there were not many significant differences singled out comparing the employers' evaluation of the students' skills and abilities by their post (categories: top-level managers, mid-level managers, other). The differences were exposed in the following skills and abilities: evaluating the students' official language skills (F=7.141, p-value=0.000), abilities to communicate with colleagues (F=2.770, p-value=0.043), ability to work in a multicultural team (F=3.641, p-value=0.014), positive attitude to work (F=3.414, p-value=0.019). In most situations mid-level managers have evaluated the students' skills and abilities slightly higher than the other groups which might be explained by their closer cooperation with the students in performing everyday work duties.

4 Discussion

The findings of the conducted study have been compared to other studies conducted in the field of tourism education providing a similar tourism offer and demand, as well as similar education systems and similarities and differences have been distinguished.

The findings of the study regarding the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the tourism business are similar to the latest studies conducted in Europe. Both this study and the study conducted in Croatia (Kužnin, Agušaj, 2011) show that the stakeholders admit the importance of creativity, team working skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, communication skills and the applicable, practical knowledge of the tourism business. The difference is demonstrated in the variable of 'creativity' as Croatian students evaluate their creativity higher than the Latvian students.

Similarities regarding the skills necessary for work in the tourism business have been found with a study conducted in Spain (Bustelo, Fernandez, & Tomás, 2010) which is one of the most comprehensive studies conducted in the field of tourism education analyzing the Spanish tourism curricula, their objectives, and students' abilities to be developed. Both studies recognize the significance of generic skills – an ability to analyze and synthesize information, language competence, IT skills, decision making, working in interdisciplinary and multicultural teams, creativity, leadership, etc. Bustelo, Fernandez, & Tomás (2010) point to three aspects of developing specific skills: 1) learning knowledge, 2) learning to do, and 3) learning to develop attitudes, which links the content of the studies to the methodologies chosen.

Regarding the courses included in the tourism curriculum, both this study and the study conducted in Estonia (Tooman, Müristaja, Holleran, 2007) reveal that both higher education institutions apply a similar approach – including the courses that develop students' generic and subject specific competences (e.g., the Basics of Tourism Industry, Catering, Hotel Administration, Management, Tourism Geography, Accounting, foreign languages, etc.).

The present study and the studies conducted in Croatia (Božinović, Friganović-Sain & Perić, 2011) and Estonia (Tooman, Müristaja, Holleran, 2007) point to the significance of foreign languages. However, the differences have been found as well. The present study shows the significance of the English, German and Russian language competence. Whereas the findings of the study conducted in Croatia apart from the English and German language competence (89.72% and 50.47 % of the respondents respectively), stress the significance of the Italian language competence (52.34%). In turn, the study conducted in Estonia reveals the significance of the Finnish language, which is included in the tourism curriculum of Pärnu College of the University of Tartu, Estonia. These findings might be explained by the geographical location of the countries. The findings of the present study concerning the foreign language competence are also similar to the results of the study conducted in the neighbouring country – Lithuania (Pukelis & Pileicikiene, 2009) which revealed that students possess highly developed foreign language skills, demonstrate good knowledge of other countries and cultures and their idiosyncrasies, which may help them while working in a multicultural environment.

Contrary to the study conducted in Spain, the Balearic Islands (Munar & Montaño, 2009) where international dimension received a very low evaluation among employers, the present study stresses the importance of the international dimension. Similar to this study, the findings of another study conducted in Spain at the University of Valencia (Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008) showed that graduates found English language (7.41 points from 10) and computer skills (7.51 points) the most useful skills for their employment. Other skills that were mentioned as significant were communication skills, team working skills and social skills, which coincide with the findings of this study.

Tasks involving an international or multicultural scope as well as research projects relating to cross-cultural and comparative studies in hospitality and tourism may be applied in order to develop students' intercultural competence (Sangpikul, 2009).

Similarities were found regarding the ability to work in teams and the ability to apply knowledge in practice. This study, the studies conducted in Valencia, Spain, (Boni & Lozano, 2007) and in the Balearic Islands (Munar & Montaño, 2009) showed that the stakeholders recognised their significance ranking them at top positions. However, the employer survey showed that an ability to apply theoretical knowledge into practice could be strengthened.

The capacity for applying knowledge in practice might be developed by choosing various types of exercises; organizing lectures, seminars, field work; working on industrial projects; undergoing internship in the industry, participating in study visits, field excursions; doing research work; performing problem solving tasks; involving practitioners in course delivery (Approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in competence based degree programmes, 2005).

As the findings of the study show, students still lack experience in collaboration and organizational skills. Therefore, it is essential to develop team working skills which also influence the development of the previous two. This can be done by fostering student cooperation in discussing different topics, resolving problem tasks, working on common assignments and projects, making presentations in groups and pairs, introducing peers to their research results, etc. Project work and group work are useful not only for promoting student collaboration skills and team working abilities but also for enhancing their leadership skills. It is important to promote both peer-to-peer collaboration and collaboration between students and the professor. However, it has to be emphasized that the professor has to be an observer and supporter and let students themselves collaborate and attain the goal. The professor encourages student cooperation and independent studies, providing support if needed and the students have to feel the professor's readiness to help them at any time.

The creation of a favourable learning environment stimulates students' autonomous learning as it allows students to perform tasks independently and be aware that they can receive help and advice when/if necessary. Professors have to create a learning environment in which students 'are willing to share information and in which they can easily communicate with others' (Wang, 2008, 412) thus enhancing their communication skills, developing collaboration skills and team working skills.

Other advantages of collaborative learning are the active exchange of ideas, increased motivation, enhancing critical thinking, fostering socialization, developing better understanding of work in a multicultural environment and developing student attitudes towards learning (Hassanien, 2006).

5 Conclusions

"The world faces many challenges, of which one of the most important is creating the leaders of tomorrow" (TEFI, 2009, 2). In this situation a special role is given to universities as the leading force in educating the younger generation who will be entering the labour market in the near future and will be responsible for developing industry and society. As they will be working in conditions no one can currently predict, it is especially important to promote the professional competence of future manager as well as the generic competences that would enable them to learn fast, adapt to new circumstances and creatively develop their industry. Thus the role of universities is increasing all over the word. However, to strive for a common aim, university professors have to work hand-in-hand with the industry representatives thus contributing to the creation of new curricula and updating the existing ones in accordance with the needs of the industry and considering the requirements of the whole society. This can be done by conducting joint studies, and by exploring the needs and wishes of stakeholders in order to create updated curricula that could be successfully implemented in the next decade as well.

This study showed that both the students and the tourism professionals consider that the most important knowledge, skills and abilities for successful operation in the tourism business are as follows: the knowledge of *Communication Psychology*, *Personnel Management*, *Commercial Activity in Tourism,* abilities to communicate with clients and colleagues, English language skills, the ability to work in a multicultural team, a positive attitude to work, organizational skills, the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, official language skills, IT skills, initiative, Russian language skills, strategic approach to entrepreneurship and creativity. Based on work experience the employers, contrary to the students, find the knowledge of marketing, finances, and accounting very significant.

Fig. 1: *Tourism and Hospitality Management Curriculum of BAT*

Study year	Basic Study Courses	Professional Study Courses by Choice: Hotel and Restaurant Management	Professional Study Courses by Choice: Management and Logistics of Travel	Professional Study Courses by Choice: Tourism Management in the Intercultural and e-environment
4th study year	**Trends in world tourism and scientific research work** Finance management Tourism planning and management E-commerce Corporate responsibility and sustainability	Rural Tourism	International Law	Advertising Language and E-communication Technologies
3rd study year	**Planning of tourism industry, tourism project management. International tourism business** Political science Tourism project management Tourism and market research World culture history Marketing of services and tourism Tourism economics and globalization Accounting and taxes Philosophy Personnel management	Business Etiquette and Communica-tion in Hospitality	Business Etiquette and Communication in Hospitality	Language and Intercultural Communication 2
2nd study year	**Organizing and Managing Business Operations** Commercial activity in tourism Tourism geography Economics Organization and management of travel Commercial law Management Civil defence Professional Terminology (English) 3/4 Professional Terminology (German, French, Spanish or Russian) 3/4	Management of Catering Enterprises; Systems of Hotel Management	Tourism Logistics Culture of Latvia and Baltic States	Computer Graphics and Design; Language and Intercultural Communication
1st study year	**Tourism Industry and the Basic Skills that are Necessary** Tourism and hospitality Organization and service of catering Information Technologies Psychology of interaction Professional Terminology (English) 1/2 Professional Terminology (German, French, Spanish or Russian) 1/2	Hotel Depart-ment's Management	Travel Agencies and Information Systems	Internet Technologies

The comparison of the findings with similar studies conducted in Europe (Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Croatia) showed that the main required courses are similar. Depending on the national context, each country has its priorities but the core subjects/modules are similar. The largest difference is exposed with regards to foreign languages and ability to work in a multicultural environment.

The findings of the conducted study enabled an improvement to the curriculum. To ensure that every student can select the study courses that comply with their interests, the outcome of the surveys and suggestions of representatives of the industry were taken into account and as a result a new specialization – *Tourism management in the intercultural and e-environment* was developed providing students an opportunity to develop the skills necessary to compete in a global and modern labour market. The new specialization contains such study courses as *Internet Technologies*, *Computer Graphics and Design*, *Language and Intercultural Communication, E-commerce, the Language of Advertising and Promotion.* Thus the students can choose between three different specializations: *Hotel and Restaurant Management, Management and Logistics of Travel, and Tourism Management in the Intercultural and E-environment* (refer to *Figure 1*).

Both students and employers admitted the significance of language competence in the tourism business therefore languages take a special role in the curriculum. During the first two years, students study English and another foreign language. An important suggestion following from the conducted research was to provide students with an opportunity to study not only German or French as a second foreign language, but also Spanish or Russian. Such a proposal was made by the industry taking into account tourist market segments in Europe and Latvia particularly. This proposal was also accepted and now it is incorporated in the curriculum.

The regulation of BAT envisages that all curricula should be accepted by the Faculty Council. Therefore it can be assumed that the study programme corresponds to the industry's needs and is competitive in the regional and global market.

Although, in general both students and employers highly evaluate student knowledge, skills and abilities, certain fields still need to be improved. The students demonstrated a comparatively low success at the courses connected with economics and finances. One of the improvements could be joining courses in modules consisting of related study courses and increasing the contact hours/the scope of ECTS for the module, e.g., *Economics* and *Financial Management and Accounting.* Another suggestion that might be applied when developing student skills and abilities might be using cross-disciplinary approach to studies. The conducted study showed that in the majority of cases there are no significant differences between evaluation of student skills and abilities done by different actors, as well as their significance for operating in the tourism business has been admitted by all stakeholders. This means that these skills and abilities can be developed in all study courses. For example, student creativity, a strategic approach to entrepreneurship, and team working skills might be enhanced in general education courses, field theoretical basic courses, specialization courses by applying group work, project work, discussions, case studies, and problem-solving tasks. The skills developed might be further strengthened in the internship training in the industry. The necessary precondition to implement this approach is cooperation between the professors of different study courses. The created supportive learning environment that motivates student learning will help developing skills and abilities and acquiring the knowledge, especially if the studies provide an opportunity for cooperation between peers, and students and professors, as well as motivate students to independent studies thus promoting their autonomous learning.

To summarize, the findings of the study may be used to update the present tourism curriculum and/or design new curricula for other tourism specialities.

"Tourism is not a peripheral activity in the world. It is rather a hallmark activity of the postmodern world. As such it is a significant factor in world-making and people-making. The same can be said for universities – they are major enterprises and can be sources of innovative thinking and change. The intersection of tourism and universities is therefore a powerful nexus of potential influence" (TEFI, 2009, 4) that can enhance the development of society and contribute to the fulfillment of the three EU strategic priorities – smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth (Europe 2020, 2010).

Izzivi na področju izobraževanja za turizem: skladnost učnega programa s potrebami v gospodarstvu

Povzetek

Študija je bila izvedena v četrtem največjem zavodu za terciarno izobraževanje v Latviji, ki vključuje tudi visokošolsko izobraževanje na področju turizma. Namen raziskave je bil preučiti potrebe deležnikov, oceniti znanje študentov turizma ter ugotoviti, kakšna raven spretnosti in sposobnosti je potrebna za opravljanje dela na področju poslovnega turizma. Obenem je bil cilj študije tudi ugotoviti, kako bi lahko izboljšali obstoječi učni program. Študija je potekala v treh fazah: analiza konteksta, vprašalnik, ki je zajemal 262 študentov turizma in 192 delodajalcev po Likertovi lestvici, primerjava rezultatov z ugotovitvami podobnih študij iz drugih držav in priprava sklepov in predlogov za izboljšanje učnega programa. Mnenja deležnikov smo preučili s kvantitativnim pristopom, ki je temeljil na analizi primarnih (deskriptivna statistika) in sekundarnih podatkih (Levenejev test enakosti varianc in ANOVA test). Rezultati študije so pokazali, kakšna znanja, spretnosti in sposobnosti so potrebni za uspeh na področju poslovnega turizma. Rezultati kažejo tudi na to, da sedanji učni načrt zadostuje potrebam gospodarstva in študentom. Študenti pripisujejo veliko vrednost znanju in veščinam, ki so jih pridobili v času študija. To potrjujejo tudi delodajalci, ki so znanje, veščine in sposobnosti študentov zelo dobro ocenili. Učni program bi lahko izboljšali z moduli povezanih študijskih predmetov, z uvedbo interdisciplinarnega pristopa do študija in z uporabo ustreznih metod poučevanja in učenja, z uvedbo bolj spodbudnega učnega okolja, s stimulacijo samostojnega učenja ter z motiviranjem študentov.

Ključne besede: učni program pri predmetu turizma, znanja, veščine, sposobnosti

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Beer tourism – from theory to practice

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Abstract

Due to the interest in the development of gastronomy and the food and beverage culture of different countries and regions, culinary travel is gaining in popularity all over the world and gastronomic tourism has become an independent product on its own within tourism. Beer tourism has become an integrated part of gastronomic tourism. The purpose of this paper is to place beer tourism, which attracts a growing number of visitors, as a product into the system of tourism as well as to review its outward forms and future development possibilities.

Keywords: gastro tourism, theory, beer tourism, practice

1 Introduction

The most frequent motives of travel for tourism are the search for an enjoyable experience, entertainment, experience, attraction, hobby, adventure, dynamism, and new, unknown and unusual things. Guests are attracted by nicer and more substantial relaxation possibilities, without stress, experiencing the opportunities offered by each and every situation. Currently, the interest in local gastronomic specialities, full value meals, and select and primarily healthy fare are at the top of the list of expectations together with food and beverages that can provide high quality enjoyment for the senses through their quality and exterior.

Wine has a more prestigious tradition on the list of beverages of gastronomy than beer, nevertheless top quality beers have already appeared. They do not merely function as thirst quenchers but can also provide culinary enjoyment either on their own or accompanying meals if they are consumed at a special place. The purpose of this essay is to place beer tourism, which is attracting a growing number of visitors, as a product into the system of tourism, as well as to review its outward forms and future development possibilities.

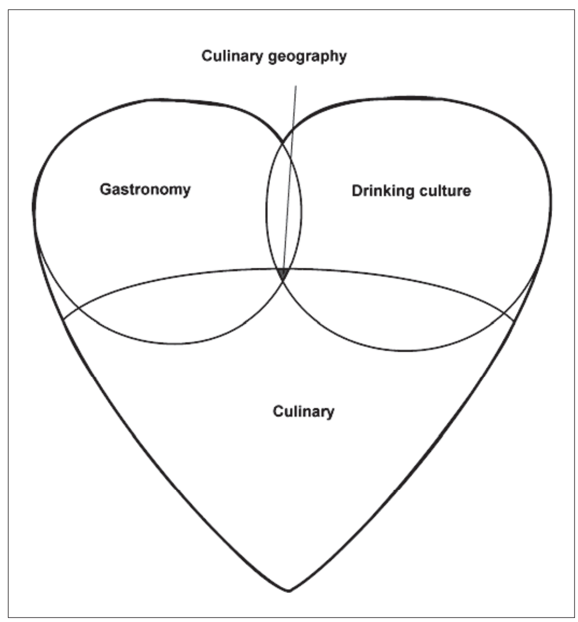
2 The system of gastrotourism

Due to the interest in the development of gastronomy and the food and beverage culture of different countries and regions, culinary travel is gaining popularity all over the world and gastronomic tourism has become an independent product on its own within tourism. Gillespie stated that 'the study of gastronomy is the understanding of the scope of production and preparation of food and drink as well as how, where, when and why they are consumed.' (Gillespie, 2001). According to Wolf, 'gastronomic tourism is the pursuit of travel in the quest for the enjoyment of prepared food, drinks and other related food activities' (Wolf, 2006).

Gastronomic tourism is also known as "food tourism", "tasting tourism" or "culinary tourism". Culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences. Gastronomic tourism refers to trips made to destinations where the local food and beverages are the main motivating factors for travel.

Dávid et al. interpret culinary geography in a wider scope than gastronomic tourism; their heart-shaped model has been widely published (Dávid, Kerekesné & Újvári, 2010). According to Dávid and Baros the features of a region and living space are formulated by the common force of historical, geographical, ethnic, psychological, religious, cultural, economic and individual factors which induce rational and emotional judgements and sentiments and shape a particular depiction coloured by historic brushstrokes (Dávid & Baros, 2010). Amongst all these, gastronomy and beverage culture have and outstanding role. In their interpretation these two characteristics refer to the tradition-based value creation of peculiarities while culinary aspects are in connection with complex consumer practices (Figure 1).

Fig. 1: *The heart-shaped model of culinary geography*



Source: Dávid & Baros, 2010

Considering the types of tourism gastronomic tourism belongs to the sphere of leisure tourism while of the two basic forms of tourism, it can be placed into the alternative rather than the mass tourism section. Gastronomic tourism is nothing else but change of place in order to learn about the gastronomic values of a given area (Bujdosó, Kerekesné & Újvári, 2011).

Gastronomic tourism offers a wide choice especially in countries with great traditions and attractions. To foster culinary tourism, the food or beverage experience must be unique and memorable (Caffyn, 2010). Culinary tourism is much more than just restaurants and wineries. Here are some examples that would qualify as culinary tourism: gastronomic events and programmes, gastronomic museums, sights of gastronomic based thematic journeys, restaurants confectionaries, pubs as tourism attractions, theme dinners, and other gastronomic attractions.

3 The basis of beer tourism

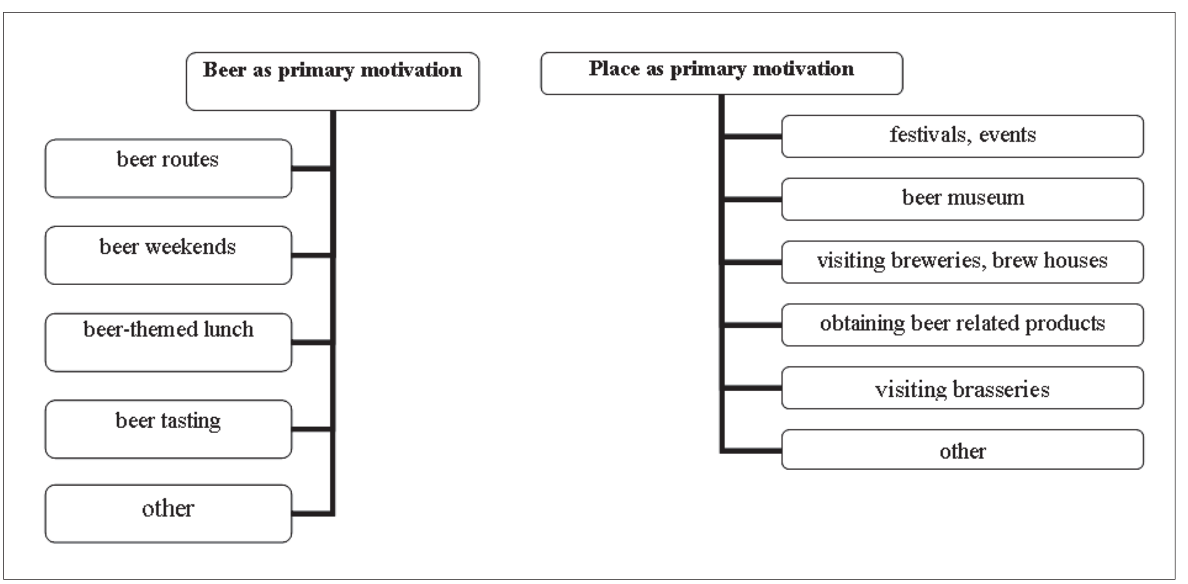
Beer drinkers and other tourists are often interested in visiting breweries and other beer-related attractions. Thus beer tourism is a growing industry as more and more companies offer tours to beer brewing regions. Besides, there are beer associations in almost all countries that have a stake in beer tourism; these associations can provide information about specialities, places to discover, and brassieres. What is more, it is not always necessary for us to travel to where beer is made, as the specialities of the chosen region can easily be ordered online (Bujdosó et al., 2011). Due to the above mentioned facts, beer tourism has become a new and popular form of alternative tourism especially within certain target groups (Brown, 2011).

The market for beer is most likely to be middle-aged men from higher socio-economic groups. Fewer young people and women drink beer and perhaps lower socio-economic groups are more likely to drink beers and lagers from global companies (Caffyn, 2010). According to Caffyn special markets to be considered include stag breaks, college reunions, and sport clubs trips.

4 Forms of beer tourism

Beer tourism may be divided into two distinct groups on the basis of its outward forms. In the first case, beer is the primary source of motivation for the tourist i.e. the aim is to consume the selected, chosen type of beer in a given environment. However, motivation may stem

Fig. 2: *The system of beer tourism*



Source: Author's own compilation

from other factors, for example when a tourist is primarily interested in a place that may be in connection with beer and beer consumption is only secondary or does not take place at all (Figure 2).

4.1 Beer as primary motivation for travel

Beer tasting

The most popular form of beer tourism may be the consumption of the beers of a given country and visiting brasseries. The role of the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, the Baltic States, and Ireland can be considered outstanding. There are different associations in United Kingdom which organise the tasting of different beer brands for tourists. Most of the breweries participating in the Cask Marque scheme offer brewery tours – promoted collectively via www.visitabrewery.co.uk. These include many well-known beer brands: Adnams, Banks's, Black Sheep, Brains, Butcombe, Caledonian, Carlsberg, etc. (Caffyn, 2010). Besides this, craft beers, which are normally produced in small quantities using only natural ingredients without additives or preservatives, have become popular. For this reason they have characteristic and diverse flavour and aroma. Beer tourists (or as they are sometimes called, beer hunters) collect these beers as souvenirs In Germany for example there are specialised beer shops (e.g. Beermania in Munich) that offer countless types of beer, as a matter of fact more than 500 types of beer are offered by Beermania (Bujdosó et al., 2011).

"Beer-themed lunch"

Beer-themed lunch refers to a menu created to accompany a given list of beers where dishes are in harmony with the intrinsic values of the accompanying beer – be it similarity, harmony or even contrast (Bujdosó et al., 2011). Dishes that at first sight might seem bizarre are made with beer e.g. beer ice cream. The motto of the restaurants offering beer themed lunches is that beer is not only part of dinner, but rather it is the ideal beverage for a meal.

During beer themed lunches, the positive effects of this drink is emphasised and included in the menu as different types of beers are offered for certain courses and dishes. The Swan Hotel in London offers beer from aperitif to desserts depending on the dish (http://hotels.adnams.co.uk/the-swan). Similarly, the Restaurant Alus Seta in Riga beer is brought into connection with dishes.

Beer tours

A common mechanism for promoting an area using food or drink as a theme is a trail or route It is helpful to include more general themes such as the landscape and local heritage. Serious beer tourists may be a relatively small sector but they are quite high spenders (Caffyn, 2010). A beer trail might be a major motivator for them to plan a weekend break or short holiday in the area in order to sample local beers, stay at pubs and visit one or two breweries. Thematic routes are mainly characterised by wine tours, however, at the same time there are beer themed routes on our continent. For example the Scottish Stockport Ale Trail promotes three routes through the town each of which features six to eight pubs – conceivably forming the route for a pub crawl (Caffyn, 2010). This seems to be a good model to link the pubs and additional information about local breweries and other visitor attractions nearby. A similar example is presented by the Bavarian "Bier-Tour durch München" (Beer tour through Munich), where beside tasting beer, the tourist will learn about the famous sites of the city. There are 54 beer tours in the region of Oberfranken (BBPA, 2008). Belgian Gent offers an interesting tour of the city. Uniformed guides called 'bellmen' take visitors around the city's most famous pubs**.** When it is time to move to the next pub he rings the bell (Tourism Review, 2010). A Canadian example is the Ale Trail, a beer tourism region set in the Canadian counties of Waterloo and Wellington, which also offers the regions' attractions as a common product (Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto & Summers, 2010) One can also find beer tours in the Baltic States, mainly in the cities. The pubs of Kaunas, Birzai, Panevezys and Klaipeda offer such experience.

Beer weekend

It is of vital importance for settlements featuring beer attractions to be able to offer packages that enable visitors to stay for a number of days. One way to do that is to organise beer weekends. The market for organised beer breaks or holidays appears relatively limited. In the UK only a few operators offer breaks with a beer theme. Warner Leisure highlights beer tasting or a brewery tour as part of a longer package. In the Lake District, Mountain Goat offers 'pint to pint' tours – usually bespoke –for particular groups (Caffyn, 2010).

There are similar examples in Belgium. The Belgian Brewers' Association and the "Mashstaff of the Knights", in collaboration with the City of Brussels organised the Belgian Beer Weekend at the Grand Place of Brussels. Many small, medium and large Belgian breweries participate to present their best selections of beers (Tourism Review, 2010).

A recurrent theme of beer weekends might be the acquisition of the know-how of beer brewing or even the organisation of beer brewing courses. In the United Kingdom the Woolpack Inn in Cumbria offers weekend brewing courses with accommodation in the pub (Caffyn, 2010).

Miscellaneous

Beer is often used for purposes other than consumption, which can also be attractive for tourists. In a family owned brewery in Chodová Planá (the Czech Republic), the world's largest brewery, the so called "Beerarium" awaits tourists offering beer spa and beer therapy treatments as well as Beer-Wellness. There are a number of other beer spas in the country (Prague, Harrachov, Písek u Jablunkov (www.urlaub-im-web.de/Czechtourism). Many smaller hotels in Germany also offer "beer-wellness" treatments emphasising the beneficial effects of malt and hop (e.g. Landhotel Gut Riedelsbach)

4.2 Place as Primary Motivation

Many tourists visit destinations not with the primary purpose of beer consumption, but because the motivation to visit certain places and points of interest stems from other factors, even though these places can be connected to beer.

Brassiere visits

Beer brewing is the same age as mankind and owing to this pubs have been an important location of social and communal life for centuries (Arnold, 2005). During this time famous brasseries and pubs emerged owing to their distinctiveness, atmosphere, historic events and other factors. These places can be found in enticing travel brochures. Pubs, inns and bars are often important architecturally or for their heritage value.

Other places can be thought of as brands which tourists feel they must visit (e.g. U Fleku in Prague, the Delirium Café in Brussels, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in London).

Some other pubs are mini destinations in themselves. Such as The Tan Hill Inn in the Yorkshire Dales – the highest in Britain (Caffyn, 2010), U Kalicha – the pub featured in the famous stories of the Good Soldier Svejk.

The Signal Box Inn at Cleethorpes, in Lincolnshire - the smallest pub in the world, Pub Na Spilce in Plzen – the largest pub in the word. In conclusion, it can be said that these pubs are beer tourist pilgrimage destinations.

Festivals, events

Beer festivals are popular annual events in many places and generate tourist overnight stays and day visitors (Wilson, 2006). Naturally beer is sold at other festivals as well which might be an attractive force. Beer is obviously also an important product featured at most food and drink festivals. When talking about beer related festivals we first think about the Munich Oktoberfest. This event is visited by more than 6 million people annually representing a more than a €1 billion income for the city (Dávid et al., 2009). The Czech Beer Festival in Prague is also visited by more than a million people and programmes in the Baltic States are becoming increasingly popular (Öllesummer in Estonia). Naturally all breweries organise annual festivals whose influence may range from local to international. An individual initiation is the First Craft-Beer Festival of Hungary, which was held on 13-14 May, 2011 in Budapest with the aim to showcase the unknown achievements of Hungarian craft-beer that has been largely overlooked until now.

Besides beer festivals, other beer themed programmes and events with unique attractions must also be mentioned. Examples may be the beer marathon which connects a number of towns in Lithuania. The main point of this event is that participants visit checkpoints (bars, cafés) where the owners accomplish tasks together with the competitors. During the beer marathon beer drinking is not a must but not forbidden either, however, contestants can only walk, run or use the public transport system, the use of any other vehicles if forbidden. The Beer Bike competition in Huston, USA is a similar event. Beer Bike competition is a combination intramural bicycle race and drinking competition dating back to 1957. It takes place at Rice University, with participating students originating from all around the world.

Beer museums, collections

Breweries are an important part of the industrial heritage but pubs, inns and bars are often important architecturally or for their heritage value. Many former or recent breweries or pubs operate as museums. In many countries of Europe, local breweries have beer museums, which allow visitors to learn not only about beer brewing but also about beer culture. Some examples of this are the Plzen Brewery Museum, Saku Brewery Museum in Tallin, the Beer and Oktobertfest Museum in Munich or the Guiness Brewery Museum in Dublin. At the same time, occasionally the collection can be found away from the brewery itself. Some good examples of this are the Alaus Beer Exhibition in Lithuania or the Dreher Museum in Budapest. Beer does not only present a theme in itself for museums, its ingredients can also be exhibited just as in Poperinge, which is famous for its hop museum. Besides, beer accessories (glasses, mugs, etc.) can also be exhibited. De Bier Tempel in Brussels exhibits different beer types as well as glasses, books, mugs, and other beer related objects while Győr in Hungary has organised a Beer mug and coaster exhibition a number of times. The Beer Can Museum, located in East Taunton, Massachusetts, is a collection of more than 4,500 different beer cans (Caffyn, 2010).

Beer house, brewery visits

The best known and classical form of beer tourism is the brewery visit during which the main motivation of the visitor is not necessarily beer consumption or familiarisation with the brewery itself, rather visiting a tourism attraction. Naturally, to make a brewery hospitable for visitors, it must possess the necessary infrastructure above all there must be a visitor centre. In Europe the attractions of Great Britain draw significant numbers of visitors (Table 1).

Almost all breweries in the Czech Republic have a visitor's centre. Such places can be found in Plzen, Ceske Budejovice and Prague. In Germany the so-called event breweries are gaining popularity as unique attractions (e.g. Watzdorfer, Schussenrieder, Hachenburger). In these breweries, the main objective is not necessarily a factory visit or beer tasting, visitors

Table 1: *Visitors to selected breweries in 2008 (Caffyn, 2010)*

Brewery attraction	No. of visitors in 2008
Elgoods Brewery and Garden, Cambridgeshire	6,000
Belvoir Brewery, Leicestershire	10,000
Shepherd Neame Brewery Tours, Kent	17,496
St Peter's Brewery and Visitor Centre, Suffolk	17,500
St Austell Brewery Visitor Centre, Cornwall	30,000

Source: Visit England, 2008.

may be more interested in gaining new experience. Tourist can make individualised gifts and brew beer. In Switzerland the Feldschlösschen brewery promotes itself as "Rheinfelden – Experience the World of Beer" and offers unique experience for tourists.

In Belgium, beer brewing spread from monasteries and even today abbeys play an important role in beer brewing. Monks can now serve tourists as well. In many monasteries a monk must be present during the process and most of the money gained from selling the beer should be used for charity.

Gastropubs

Pubs that only offer beer have recently realised that they can increase the number of visitors if they diversify their business by offering gastronomic specialities or accommodation. The market for stylish comfortable accommodation alongside a relaxed pub atmosphere and good food in an attractive location appeals to many people. Gastropub refers to a bar and restaurant that serves high-end beer and food (Farley, 2009). The term gastropub, a portmanteau of gastronomy and pub, originated in England in the late 20th century, English pubs were drinking establishments and little emphasis was placed on the serving of food (Farley, 2009). Well-known gastropubs are The White Swan in London, The Poacher in Kent or the Queen in Brussels Belgium.

Pubs offering accommodation face strong competition from hotels, particularly budget hotels. These have strong brands (reinforced through high-spend marketing) and consistent standards and pricing, they are easy to book and they can refer business among themselves. Some budget hotels even offer the opportunity to drink and eat well in an adjacent pub, owned by the same company (Caffyn, 2010).

The Zibininkai HBH pas Juoza in Lithuania offers beer and food in a unique way; it has its own brewery and it aims to satisfy specific requests as well.

Acquiring beer related products

It is not only beer but also products related to it that may motivate people to travel. These products may be coasters, mugs, beer cans, glasses, beer steins, labels or even bottle caps. More and more people go on so called souvenir-gathering tours in order to acquire beer related items in a given country. Most often this item is beer coasters. Beer coasters (also called beer mats) were used in the 19th century for the first time by the poorer barflies to prevent insects from getting into their drinks (wealthy beer lovers owned porcelain mugs with a top). The art of collecting beer coasters ('beer mats' outside the Unites States) even has its own name: Tegestology. Collectors do not only visit pubs to enlarge their collections but also attend events where they can buy or exchange their collectible items. The important Collector's Fair had the dealers with the usual beer coasters. There are many such events organised especially in Central Europe. The largest one can be found in Martin, Slovakia and Olomuc in the Czech Republic. The international collectors' fairs focus solely on items relating to beer. Collectors very often establish their own organisation (The British Beermat Collectors Society, The Brewery History Society, he Australian Beer Can Collectors Association, etc.), which organise annual events. These associations were founded with the intent of encouraging and fostering the hobby of collecting items related to beer.

Miscellaneous

There are many places and activities related to beer all over the world that cannot easily be placed into the above categories. It is important to mention them as they can form the basis of motivation and travel. Innumerable small scale conferences deal with this topic. One of the largest such events was the Ingolstadt convention in 2007, which was attended by more than 250 researchers from all over the world (http://www.ku-eichstaett.de/tourismus). At the same time people dealing or wishing to deal with beer find a growing number of educational and training courses in this area. An outstanding example for this is the beer-sommelier training of the Bad Gleichenberg Tourism

Schools, which teaches beer culture for students who come from a number of European countries.

A unique and perhaps shocking mixture of beer and sport is the so called beer-pong. This sport is popular in a number of countries and championships are also organised. The World Series of Beer Pong held in January 2010 in the United States, had a $50,000 grand prize and attracted over 1,000 participants, and attracted teams from Ireland, Scotland, Germany and Japan (Lippman, 2010).

Last but not least, the Android Beer Guide must also be mentioned which helps beer tourists to find their way to attractions they want to reach. It supports users by advanced technology and enables the user to browse by name, brewery, country or type, rate and review beers or list of highest rated and most popular beers. In this way, tourists can be part of this beer experience prior to travelling.

5 Conclusion

Beer is a popular motivating factor for travel and a growing number of tourists visit the beer-superpowers. At the same time tourists are increasingly influenced by the possibility of gaining new experience and therefore beer tourism is being diversified. Nevertheless, new challenges must be faced which urge suppliers to provide new products and services. The basis of this is to connect beer and local attractions and create so called "beer packages". A beer package is a specialist beer themed trip including trips to breweries, interesting pubs, festivals and beer tastings, perhaps linked to walking or other food related activities. There should be the scope to link beer to other attractions or products of interest to visitors, such as other local food specialities, particularly those which complement beer, for example cheese, meat, sausages or even chocolate (Caffyn, 2010).

Pivski turizem – iz teorije v prakso

Povzetek

Zaradi zanimanja za razvoj gastronomije in kulture pitja in prehranjevanja različnih držav in regij, postajajo kulinarična potovanja čedalje bolj priljubljena povsod po svetu, gastronomski turizem pa je postal samostojen produkt na področju turizma. Pivski turizem je danes sestavni del gastronomskega turizma. Namen tega prispevka je umestiti pivski turizem kot turistični produkt, ki privablja rastoče število turistov, v širši okvir turizma ter predstaviti njegove različne oblike in prihodnje možnosti za razvoj.

Ključne besede: gastro turizem, teorija, pivski turizem, praksa

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