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Czech Hospitality and Tourism Papers (hereinafter CHTP Journal), publishes mainly scientific and survey papers focusing on the development of theoretical and practical aspects of the hotel and spa industry, gastronomy and tourism. Papers are published in English language.

The CHTP Journal serves primarily as a platform for the presentation of an author's, or team of author's, original research results in the above-mentioned fields. A "Consultation and Discussion" section contains survey papers and also specialized survey papers from the pedagogical and expert activities of academics, as well as reports on research project results.

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SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

Lucie Plzáková, Petr Studnička, Josef Vlček

INDIVIDUALIZATION OF DEMAND OF TOURISM INDUSTRY AND ACTIVITIES OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Abstract: *The birth of the individual consumer is an expression of the present style of life, whose realm has become emotional consumption. People want to achieve self-realization, and tourism represents the products and services that help them fulfill this need. Most consumers complete their tourism product on their own. Providers of tourism services need to understand tourism consumers' behavior, or they cannot respond appropriately to their clients' needs for innovation. The development of a tourism destination depends on the destination´s ability to develop and adapt its resources, activities of destination management organizations, and coordination of links to neighboring areas.*

Key words: *consumer behavior, destination management organizations, individualization of demand, innovation of supply, travel and tourism industry*

JEL Classification: *M20, L83*

Introduction

Predicting peoples´ behavior is complicated, for we are not able to look into their consciousness. A consumer is considered to be a "black box", and is commonly studied with the help of a "stimulus – response" model. Four groups of factors, described in marketing literature, are said to influence consumer behavior. "These are cultural, social, personal and psychological factors." (Kotler, Armstrong, 2004, p. 270) These factors take on a narrower meaning when applied to the tourism industry because marketing in this sector primarily focuses on the supply side of the market. "Emphasis is placed on two types of factors that influence individual customer behavior – personal and interpersonal." (Morrison, 1994, pp. 71-90)

The study of potential demand, which is a reflection of peoples´ needs and expresses the sum of all intended purchases on the market, is a part of market analysis. When analyzing their market potential, companies try to determine whether there exist a sufficient number of prospective customers whose needs and wishes they want to meet. This information represents an important step for specifying market segments (the target market), creating a marketing strategy, and implementing an operative marketing plan.

The consumption of tourism services in contemporary society is considered to be a standard part of consumption in general. The most significant trend influencing current demand for services in the tourism industry is the individualization of demand – 51 per cent of Czechs organize their holidays on their own, and 36 per cent use travel agency services, which is the second highest percentage within the EU (Table 1).

Table 1: Way of organizing main holiday trip in European Union and V4 countries

Country	*Individually [%]*	*Through travel agency [%]*	*Other [%]*
EU-27	66.1	24.9	9.0
Czech Republic	51.3	36.4	12.3
Slovakia	53.7	39.6	6.7
Hungary	75.5	17.1	7.4
Poland	77.7	14.8	7.5

Source: European Commission, 2010.

Satisfaction of individualized demand is more challenging not only for the consumers themselves, but above all for the providers of services (travel agencies), who as a whole create the tourism industry products (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of travel agencies in the Czech Republic in 2005-2012

Region	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Prague	268	322	375	421	458	478	516	542
Central Bohemia	70	76	77	87	97	99	101	105
South Bohemia	52	56	61	64	63	59	60	61
Plzeň	35	36	35	36	39	41	42	41
Karlovy Vary	21	28	33	33	34	36	37	38
Ústí nad Labem	57	60	62	64	64	63	65	67
Liberec	42	45	45	44	46	45	47	46
Hradec Králové	54	58	53	55	53	56	57	60
Pardubice	42	39	43	46	49	46	50	52
Vysočina	57	56	52	53	53	48	48	46
South Moravia	132	146	161	165	177	187	188	194
Olomouc	43	45	48	52	58	59	65	70
Zlín	45	46	48	54	56	57	58	61
Moravia-Silesia	97	104	110	117	121	120	123	118
Total (CZ)	*1.015*	*1.117*	*1.203*	*1.291*	*1.368*	*1.394*	*1.457*	*1.501*

Source: Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, 2013.

Tourism industry products and services are always implemented at a particular destination and these services are administered by a range of providers whose share is constantly changing in real terms and over time. Tourists buy these partial products and their consumption provides a feeling of satisfaction, which is further fulfilled by the synergetic effect resulting from their current consumption level. For tourists, distance from their residence complicates their familiarization with the tourism supply of a particular destination. Tourist information centers (TIC´s) are an integral part of destination management, where they perform a very important role. These institutions are far more active at the local level than at the regional level and very often assume the role of destination management organizations (DMO´s), mainly for individual tourists.

From the theoretical point of view, the goal is to understand the consumer behavior of those participating in travel and tourism, which on one hand satisfies basic needs (physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural) and on the other hand is influenced by a range of factors (economic, social, etc.). Furthermore, due to the present decline in tourism industry demand, we aim to assess the impact of the economic environment, lifestyles, and other current factors influencing consumers´ decision-making behavior. The aim of this article is to find out what factors influence tourism industry consumers´ behavior, to describe the potential, accessible, and serviced tourism industry market.

Materials and Methods

The main sources for the investigation were from publicly available information from organization´s websites, annual reports from the Czech Statistical Office, and the knowledge and experience of the authors, mainly from three research projects – The Innovating Approach to Tourism Management System in the Czech Republic at the National and Regional Level (Czech Tourist Authority, 2013-2014), The Organization and Management of Tourism at the Regional Level in the Czech Republic (Czech Tourist Authority, 2011-2012) and The Research on Domestic and Incoming Foreign Tourism in Relation to Mitigating Socio-Economic Disparities (Ministry of Regional Development CZ, 2007-2011).

The methods used in this paper include analysis and study of documents, analysis of secondary data, personal interviews, analysis of primary data, time series and comparative analysis, following the procedure of Honneth and Kotler et al. Partial results have been compiled according to selected indicators of the Czech Statistical Office (net use of beds, use of rooms) and Ministry of Industry and Trade (number of travel agencies).

Results

In today's world, lifestyle ceases to be based on the free decisions of man, but more related to the presentation of his identity. Individualism, which is a manifestation of human emancipation and self-awareness, is actually the only thing that remains to a person in this atomized society. This model of individualization affects all dimensions of human life and increases their dependence on the market. Although people are casting off many traditional life relationships, their consumption is leading to the standardization and unification of existential forms.

The conceptual framework is formed by consumer behavior. At the end of the nineteen seventies consumer society passed its second phase, i.e. a society of abundance, in which the consumption of goods was raised to a style of life and to a meaning of life. Emotional consumerism – or consumption for the emotional effect, understood as amassing pleasure, gratification and subjective well-being, became a new incentive. Consuming today serves not only as a presentation of an individual's social and economic identity, but it also gives one the chance to answer the age-old question – "who am I?" "Homo consumericus" buys standard products; however, these are always being interpreted in new ways and arranged in different patterns of consumption which express his individual identity. "Consumption depends more and more on individual goals, hobbies and criteria." (Lipovetsky, 2007, p. 46)

Nowadays, one does not buy a product, but a lifestyle connected to a particular brand. "The most important thing is no longer the social effect and the moment of "have you seen what I've got?", but rather the image of the brand. (Lipovetsky, 2007, p. 53) We do not want to impress other people, but ourselves. The goal of the individual person is to build his own lifestyle and fill his leisure time. Economic wealth helps us to reach a broader individual sovereignty; however, it causes our deeper dependence on market power. The source of unlimited consumer demand is not a competitive struggle for higher social status, but a person focused on himself and endowed with the freedom to reshape and manage his own life.

The modern consumer reflects a particular lifestyle that has been adopted by society and part of which is the ever-growing significance of entertainment and leisure time. It is estimated that people over 15 years old spend about 30 per cent of their time on entertainment and social activities. The "leisure time industry" has focused on participative and emotive activities, and offers more and more experiences within the framework of entertainment and spectacles, games, tourism, and sports. Each of them has its own economic character and social address and is intended for a particular lifestyle. A consumer becomes a "collector of experiences" and consuming, like a game, becomes its own particular reward.

The birth of an individual consumer is a result of a range of factors. The most important ones are:

a) goods diffusion (e.g., broadening of the supply of durables – cars, electric appliances);
b) the entertainment industry boom;
c) transformation of distribution networks;

d) services growth;
e) increase in income.

“For the typical consumer there is a predominance of non-real services over real ones. Real ones have an authentic quality (they are not artificial products of the advertising and fashion industries). They contribute to the emancipation of the person. However, a consumer also affirms, for many reasons, his need for the opposite – non-real needs, which are generated by the market or competition between companies.” (Duffková et al., 2008, p. 186)

Individual hedonism is supported by self-service sales (direct contact between the supply and demand) and the growth of leisure time, which has led to a higher expenditure on entertainment and leisure time activities. One expression of the individualistic consumer is impulse purchasing, which brings immediate joy and happiness, here and now. A consumer becomes more emancipated, and at the same time, is creating his own lifestyle. He comes across only one barrier – his purchasing power. A man changes into “an entrepreneuring consumer” and becomes a consumer specialist. “Consumption attitudes lead a person to an idea – that it is his duty to make himself and his life better, to cultivate and develop himself, and to overcome his own personal deficiencies, as well as other obstacles blocking the path to his style of life.” (Kubátová, 2010, p. 133)

Demand in the travel and tourism industry is a result of an individual person’s decision, whose visit to a particular destination satisfies his needs. Present consumption of travel and tourism industry services is considered an inseparable part of general consumption. Tourism is only in small measure a part of functional consumption – consumption that is necessary for one’s existence; much more important for the person is the imaginative and symbolic significance. For many people, a visit to a particular destination represents “conspicuous consumption” and in this way they build their “own identity”, or prove their place in a certain social class (group).

Segmentation variables, which stem from buyer’s behavior on the market, and enable us to differentiate between consumers on the basis of their consumer behavior, are not paid enough attention to. They concern causal criteria (e.g. segmentation according to perceived value or according to opportunity) and segmentation according to usage (frequency of use, user’s status, loyalty, relation to new products, etc.) Psychographic segmentation, which explains the differences in market behavior based on essential social and psychological predispositions, is also not sufficiently employed.

Availability of information about people’s leisure time activities – when and where they spend their holiday, whether individually or in groups, and what forms these activities take (relaxation, personal cultivation, sport, entertainment, fun) – is quite limited (and has to be paid for). Changes in demand and consumer behavior in the tourism industry have not been sufficiently identified, and we do not know the causes of changes in leisure time spending. Decisions concerning purchasing products and services in the tourism industry seem to be “terra incognita” and companies’ reactions to these changes have not been efficient enough. Tourists proceed from available information offered by particular destinations and essentially create their own travel and tourism products.

Consumer behavior is most often followed according to how they react to what is offered. Consumer motivation in travel and tourism varies from the satisfaction of other demands, because it lies at the very top of the needs hierarchy (Maslow). Tourism is a product intended for leisure time; it meets one’s need for self-realization and strengthens one’s sense of fulfillment. It is an expression of the individualism of one’s life path. These expressions bring about socio-cultural changes in the current society which are the result of a “…mutual strengthening of always separately progressing development dynamics…” (Honneth, 2007, p. 193)

The marketing profile of an individual customer and the process of creating consumer demand represent a “blank spot” in tourism industry theory. Research methods commonly involve studying visitors’ motivations, and produce quantified results (e.g. why they came – the research of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic and the Czech Tourist Authority). The value of these data is not sufficient to establish customer profiles for current tourism industry clients and does not allow for the creation of typologies. We have just partial information about the fact that a tourist creates his own tourism industry product according his intellectual abilities, his interests, disposable income, use of leisure time, etc. It is thus useful to understand how the decision making process matures, and if it is possible to influence this process.

There is a significant correlation between the situation in the travel and tourism industry in the Czech Republic and the development trends of the Czech and European economies (Table 3). The economic crisis has influenced the population’s consumer behavior. A decrease in incomes has led to households practicing a more responsible way of living, restricting their expenditures, and changing their structure. Czech households reacted to the economic crisis by substituting outgoing tourism with domestic tourism, and in more drastic cases, eliminated such expenditure from their family budget.

Table 3: Actual macroeconomic development in the countries EU-27 in 2012

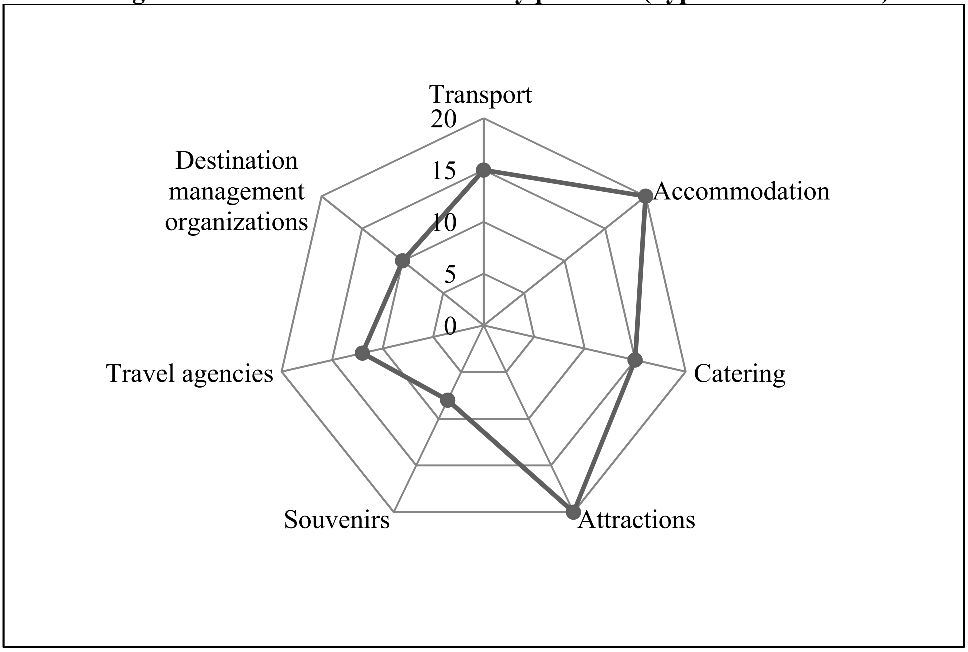
Rich and Growing (4)	*No Rich and Growing (7)*
Germany, Ireland, Austria, Sweden	Estonia, Malta, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland
Rich and No Growing (7)	*No Rich and No Growing (9)*
Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Finland, Denmark, United Kingdom, Netherlands	Romania, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech Rep.

Source: Conseq Investment Management, 2013.

A tourism industry product from the supply side is “…a flexible set of individual, different, and relatively independent activities implemented through various services and types of goods that create a unique and variable package of individual and differentiated services.”

(Attl, Nejdl, 2004, p. 155) Tourism industry products (Diagram 1) and services are always implemented at a particular destination and these services are administered by a range of providers whose share is constantly changing (in real terms and over time). “From an economic point of view, tourism industry products are offered in only portions of markets and are “produced” by providers of “partial products” – transport, accommodation, catering, attractions (natural, historical, cultural, sociable), souvenirs, travel agencies and destination management organizations.” (Vlček, 2008, pp. 136-137) Tourists buy these partial products and their consumption provides a feeling of satisfaction, which is further fulfilled by the synergetic effect resulting from their current consumption level.

Diagram 1: Model of tourism industry products (hypothetical variant)



Source: Plzáková, Studnička, Vlček, 2013.

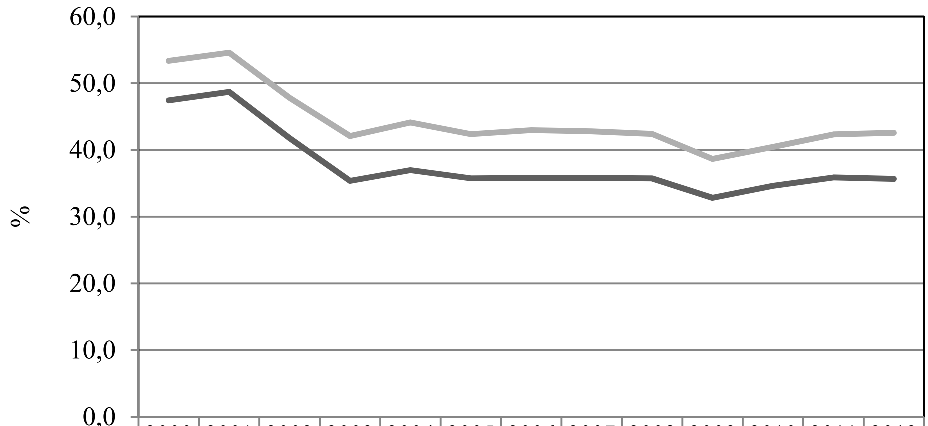
A systemic approach to tourism allows for the understanding of this phenomenon as a process of meeting needs and demands. An analysis of the demand for tourism brings knowledge of the decisions of tourists. An analysis of the destination product allows for an understanding of the process of meeting needs within tourism. In tourism consumption people use simple heuristics. This observation allows the authors to combine an analysis of the demand for tourism with the supply of the destination product.

For some tourists, completion of these partial products is done by travel agencies. Most tourists, however, complete their “product” on their own and only utilize available offers.

Providers of partial products do not know their prospective customers´ needs and wishes, or their financial possibilities, etc. Therefore, the structure of the tourism industry products on offer does not fully correspond with the demand. Quite a substantial segment is not used, especially in the area of domestic tourism, because occupancy rate in the Czech Republic is on average ca. 35 per cent (Graph 1).

People want to achieve self-realization, and tourism represents the products and services that help them fulfill this need. Most consumers complete their tourism product on their own. Providers of tourism services need to understand tourism consumers' behavior, or they cannot respond appropriately to their clients' needs for innovation. Profiles of tourism consumers can help providers find new forms of communication with their clients.

Graph 1: Net use of beds (NUB) and use of rooms (UR) at hotels and similar accommodation establishments in the Czech Republic in 2000-2012 (in %)



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
NUB	47,4	48,7	41,8	35,4	37,0	35,8	35,8	35,8	35,7	32,8	34,6	35,9	35,7
UR	53,4	54,6	47,8	42,1	44,1	42,4	43,0	42,8	42,4	38,7	40,5	42,3	42,6

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2012.

Some examples have shown that coordinated travel agency activities in the "creation" of travel and tourism products can be, to some measure, replaced and supplemented. Local government bodies, destination management organizations (DMO) can secure travel and tourism development in their particular destination, provide information about tourism activities, support specific institutions for the development of tourism, and try to prevent a negative impact on natural and social environments, etc. DMO´s (Table 4) are located less according to National Tourism Policy of the Czech Republic for 2014-2020 (2013, p. 123) in Bohemia (77 per cent) such as in Moravia (91 per cent).

Table 4: Territorial level for activities of DMO´s in the Czech Republic

Territorial level	*2010*	*2013*
National	1	1
Regional (administrative unit)	6	6
Regional (tourist region)	21	26
Local	1	7

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

It is possible to mitigate inter-regional disparities through applying the principles of destination management. “When managing tourism destinations, the basic components of classical management can be used, but above all it is necessary to apply the principle of the 3C´s – cooperation, coordination and communication.” (UNWTO, 2007) “From a management perspective, the development of a tourism destination depends significantly on the destination’s ability to develop and adapt its resources, management at the destination level (destination management organizations), and coordination of links to neighboring areas or other tourism destinations with an emphasis on exchange of experience and the creation of joint tourism products. One can also not ignore the issue of the current state of tourism management in regions, in tourist regions, and at the national level in the Czech Republic. The proposal for the Law on the promotion of the tourism development, prepared by the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic, illustrates the importance of destination management.” (Plzáková, Studnička, 2013, p. 212)

A DMO should play the role of “facilitator” which first stimulates the so-called crystallization of the core, and gradually helps in creating a functional unit, whose output is the destination product. The integrating principle of this process is a public-private partnership (PPP), which helps bridge the fragmented interests of individual entities in the form of creative connections. The principle of partnership is an inevitable element of the development of sites and regions, because it generates a collective learning process, and the dissemination of positive experiences from practice enhances economic growth and competitiveness.

Discussion

The success of providers of tourism products and services depends not only on their struggle with the competition, but above all in their abilities to overcome an increasing saturation of the market. Entrepreneurs have to be able to take advantage of their clients’ ever-growing interest in personal development, their rising disposable income, and the increasing amount of leisure time.

The expansion of the travel and tourism industry in the Czech Republic after 1990 was fostered by unsatisfied demand. Outgoing tourism products offered by travel agencies represented significant innovation and the structure of the client base could be classified as homogenous. Travel agencies applied an undifferentiated marketing strategy and the whole market was offered just one market mix – mass marketing. Gradual satisfaction of demand led towards a product-differentiated market and towards respect for differences in customer demands, which resulted in targeted marketing. Market segmentation within the tourism industry uses descriptive criteria based on the general characteristics of the consumer. The segments are based on demographic and geographic criteria, relation to the product, and distribution channels. In some cases differentiation of consumers according to their response to marketing stimuli is used.

Demand research, which also partially includes consumer behavior in the tourism industry, yields primarily quantitative information – what percentage (e.g. of Czechs) will take a holiday, what their reasons are for travel, what they expect from the particular destination, which destinations are their favorite, etc. This source of this information is the ongoing monitoring of visitors to tourist regions in the Czech Republic (at http://monitoring.czechtourism.cz) and monitoring of tourists within the European Union.

The development of the tourism industry (not only domestic tourism, but inbound as well) in the Czech Republic has been given systematic attention in recent years. The basic conceptual document approved by the government of the Czech Republic has been "The Approach to State Policy in the Travel and Tourism Industry in the Czech Republic for the Period of 2014-2020". A significant part of its implementation is a series of national projects aimed at the support and development of domestic, inbound and outbound tourism. Entrepreneurs who supply the content of the above mentioned projects do so mostly from intuition, rather than on the basis of a theoretical background.

Conclusion

Customers' purchasing behavior plays a principal role in the creation of company's marketing programs. Expert knowledge of the factors influencing consumer behavior, from the point of awareness to the act of purchasing, as well as post-purchasing behavior, help to reveal the broader contexts linked with satisfying consumer demands. Consumer behavior is not an isolated process of human conduct. Instead, it is always influenced by other people and by the level of societal development.

In relation to the demand, research is oriented to the analysis of relevant trends arising in a post-industrial society. Within this framework, the individualization of peoples´ behavior is a result of separately progressing dynamics – income and leisure time increase, substantial service sector development, and social mobilization growth. Their synergetic effect influences and diversifies peoples´ life situations. Individualization is understood as a process of the empowerment of personal autonomy.

In relation to the supply, research activities will involve an analysis of individual product and service providers, and their abilities to offer innovations. A marketing approach makes up the background of the analysis of tourism industry products because it is necessary to separate the period of mass consumption, the transition to customer segmentation, and the rise of consumer society, in which "consumption for one's self" plays a significant role.

The travel and tourism industry involves both end consumers and producers. We accept the individualization of social relations that "…lead towards the fact that each individual person is intensively confronted with expectations that he is responsible for his own life, and that he alone is responsible for his own destiny." (Günther, 2007, p. 147) At the same time however, we cannot forget, that an individual person's life is more and more organized by the market.

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SURVEY PAPERS

Miroslav Čertík

CHANGES IN THE FINANCING OF SPA TREATMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Abstract: *Czech spas are a part of the system of medical care in the Czech Republic, but more than other types of health care, they are dependent on direct revenues from patients. The impact of restrictive measures in the Czech health insurance system in the years 2012-2013 on the economic situation of individual spas was obvious. The solution is to increase the number of domestic and foreign self-paying patients, reduce the average length of stay and in some cases, make at least a partial shift from traditional spa treatment to newer, non-medical forms of health tourism.*

Key words: *health insurance, health tourism, hospitality, medical spa, spa treatment*

JEL Classification: *H51, I13, L83*

Introduction

Health insurance companies are very reluctant to release funds for spa care for their insured. It is therefore understandable in the current situation, where there is a lack of funds for acute care and physicians are limited in prescription drugs, that the spa seems an unnecessary luxury. Czech spas are a part of the system of medical care in the Czech Republic, but more than other types of health care, they are dependent on direct revenues from patients. This is one of the positive effects of large-scale privatization, which the Czech spa industry underwent in the last decade of the 20th century. Most spa organizations are privately owned, and only a small part is owned and operated by state or municipal spas. Individual spa organizations must be able to deal with this issue.

Czech spas underwent extensive privatization after 1989. Despite this, spas are still essentially dependent on societal resources that are provided in the form of comprehensive and partial payments for spa care. Spas in the Czech Republic are still an integral part of the Czech health system, which is the subject of legislation in a number of laws including Law No. 20/1966 Coll. Health Care. It also means that it is closely associated with most of the problems that plague Czech healthcare. In addition, within the medical profession, there is a widespread perception that spas are a relic of the 19th century and are an unnecessary luxury. This position is based on the notion that the Czech spa industry has high financial demands and a low therapeutic effectiveness.

"The importance of spas in the Czech Republic lies in their historical context. A peculiar trait is that they are both part of the health care system in the Czech Republic and also a significant part of the tourism industry. Spas have been traditionally put in health-socio-economic categories." (Nejdl, 2005, p. 8) The benefits of spas are viewed mainly in the context of their health and economic sense, though social and environmental benefits are also sometimes mentioned. A number of authors have concerned themselves with the economic benefits of health tourism. One of them is C. Molnar, who distinguishes between direct, indirect and induced (generated) benefits of spas (Table 1).

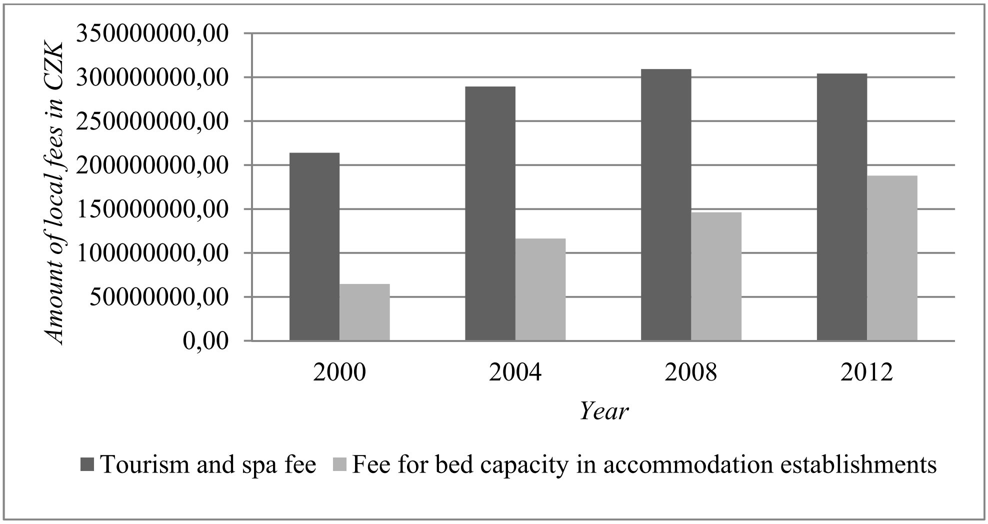
Table 1: Economic influences of health tourism – benefits of hospitality establishments

Direct benefits	*Indirect benefits*	*Generated benefits*
Revenue benefits	Employees Entrepreneur National government Local government	Revenue and profit of suppliers and employees of tourism-related complementary enterprises; government revenue
Job creation	Quantity Quality	As a counterbalance to outsourcing at supplier companies
Encouragement of entrepreneurship and investing	Incentives Accommodation Hospitality	Development of overall infrastructure tourism-related complementary enterprises
Payment balance benefits	National government revenue Foreign currency revenue (foreign visitors)	Government revenues local health tourism supply curbs foreign visits made by locals
Multiplier effects		

Source: Molnár (2010, p. 107).

Economic enterprises, municipalities, and the state are also considered recipients of the benefits of spas. One of the most important groups of local benefits of spa sites are tourism and spa fees and fees for bed capacity in accommodation establishments (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Tourism and spa fees and fees for bed capacity in accommodation establishments in the Czech Republic in the years 2000-2012



Source: Own elaboration, using data from www.rozpocetobce.cz, 2014.

Materials and Methods

The main problem here is not so much a theoretical definition of these benefits as their monitoring and quantification. Some effects are fairly simple and statistically well-covered (job creation), while other cases are more complicated. By far the most difficult is the measurement of indirect and induced (generated) economic benefits of spas. This problem has been sidelined for a long time in the Czech Republic. It is related, among other things, to the closure of the Balneology Research Institute in the early 90's of the last century, when there was an interruption to the continuity of economic research, and a loss of the methodological tools used to measure the economic effects of spas.

The approach of the current departmental authorities for spas, including the Ministry of Health, is, from an economic point of view, very one-sided. As a result only the expenditure side is reflected, which is associated with the operation of the spas. Nejdl (2005, p. 10) writes: "From the departmental perspective, only costs associated with spas are known. Overall benefits of the spa industry are currently not monitored anywhere either randomly or systematically, not is the Ministry of Health very interested in them, and therefore they are not taken into account when assessing the effectiveness of spas." This approach is due to many factors. It is primarily caused by the constant pressure from a lack of financial resources and the need to allocate these resources in the most efficient way. The second reason is the systemic changes that occur in health care and change the parameters and rules for funding.

Investigation of the Czech spa industry in the last decade has produced numerous questions, and among the most important are those that relate to the economic operations of spas. How is the Czech spa industry, then, from an economic point of view? Do public sources of funding, from health insurance, still play a significant role? These are just some of the questions we will address in this article.

Results

Public health care is part of each government's program and one of the key points of our society. Health care is dealt with by both public and private medical facilities. The providers of these facilities are the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, regions operating within their independent jurisdictions, municipalities operating within their independent jurisdictions, legal entities and individuals. The manner in which funds are provided to ensure health care is based primarily on the existence of public health insurance. Expenditure on health is an important part of the state budget. The main trends in spending on Czech health care are shown in Table 2.

In absolute terms, total expenditure in this period rose by 283,635 million CZK, public spending by 246,918 million CZK. Expenditure from health insurance rose in this period by 231,270 million CZK, and private spending by about 46,717 million CZK which was the fastest growing rate. The share of health expenditure in the GDP hovered at around 7 % in this period, and in 2012 reached a level of 7.63 %. Following this, it is important to note the cost structure of the health care insurance segment and its development in the period 2000-2012. This information is shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Expenditures and trends in health care in the Czech Republic in millions CZK in the years 2000-2012

Expenditure items	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Public expenditure	132,962	191,365	243,281	242,410	246,918
From this:					
▪ Expenditure from health insurance	115,792	170,093	222,500	225,547	231,270
▪ Expenditure by the department and local authorities	17,170	21,263	20,781	16,863	15,648
Private expenditure	13,873	27,418	45,745	45,358	46,717
Total expenditure	*146,835*	*218,774*	*289,035*	*287,768*	*293,635*
Share of GDP in %	*6.47*	*7.02*	*7.62*	*7.73*	*7.63*

Source: Own elaboration, using data from the Czech Institute for Healthcare Information and Statistics, 2014.

The trends arising from Table 3 are clear. The decrease in costs for spas was both absolute and relative. The total expenditure of health insurance during this period increased by 42,565 million CZK (23.45 %), while the cost of spa treatment in the same period fell by 463 million CZK (-15.52 %). The share of costs on health care in the period 2007-2012 decreased from 1.65 % to 1.13 %.

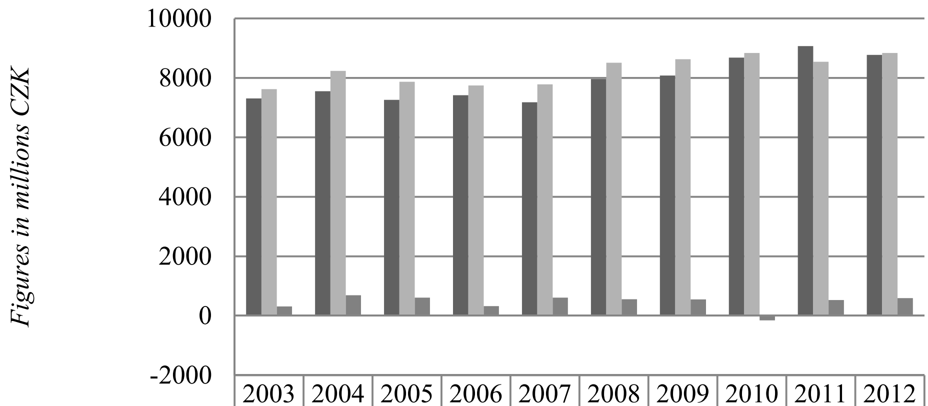
Table 3: Health insurance costs for health care according to segment in the Czech Republic in the years 2007-2012

Segment of health care	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Total outpatient care	43,431	48,164	54,379	55,511	58,000	58,761
Total institutional care	92,378	99,184	107,992	215,804	113,051	113,776
From this:						
▪ Spa treatment	2,984	2,862	3,182	3,202	2,985	2,521
Total cost of health care	181,358	193,669	213,354	215,804	219,909	223,923

Source: Own elaboration, based on data from the Czech Institute for Healthcare Information and Statistics, 2014.

Is there therefore some way to demonstrate the effect of this basically constant (in absolute size) and relatively lower income received from health insurance companies on the profit for treatment spas in the given period? If we look at the Graph 2, we get a somewhat surprising result.

Graph 2: Financial results for spas in the Czech Republic in the years 2003-2012



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Costs	7313	7551	7262	7420	7180	7960	8080	8684	9070	8774
Revenues	7625	8238	7869	7745	7786	8513	8630	8841	8544	8841
Economic results	312	687	607	325	606	553	550	-156	526	591

Source: Own elaboration, based on data from the Czech Institute for Healthcare Information and Statistics, 2014.

During the period 2003-2012 the observed indicators of costs, revenues and profits in Czech treatment spas developed very evenly, and as a whole even positively. Spas saw weaker profits in 2003. One exception was 2010, when there was a decrease in revenues of 156 million CZK. There are clear reasons for this, which have no direct connection with financing of the health insurance companies.

Changes in the structure of visitors to Czech spas

"Spa and wellness tourism represent two subcategories of health-oriented tourism, whose market share has been growing fast for the last several years. According to the US Census Bureau by 2050 the group of people over 65will represent nearly 30 % of the population in Europe and 15 to 20 % on the other continents (except for Africa). Another projecting reveals that by 2025 the proportion of the EU population between 50 and 64 will have increased by 25 %. Simultaneously, because of low birth rates, the 20-29 age groups will have decreased by 20 %. Both trends indicate the forthcoming decades will lead to a transformation in the demographic structure of population and as a consequence they will cause changes in the economies of the leading countries in the world. On the other hand, such tendency could change the lifestyle of millions of people all over the world. The aging society will need to pay more attention to health issues than ever before and disease control and prevention would be of great significance. With a view to that balneology, spa and wellness procedures and treatments could get the chance to strengthen and consolidate their role in the way of living of people. The latter in turn could trigger a new meaning and scope of extent of balneology, spa and wellness procedures and treatments." (Georgiev, Vasileva, 2010, pp. 158-159)

The above results were not achieved by themselves. On the contrary – they are the result of a new marketing strategy for Czech spas, which prefers the so-called "customer-based" approach and focuses on new programs and new customer segments. This of course has been reflected in the structure of visits, which in the past 12 years has changed significantly. We refer in particular to changes affecting the number of patients whose stay is covered by societal resources, or which are covered by the patient's own means. In Graph 3, we can see the tendencies in the structure of Czech spa visitors in terms of method of payment for their stay.

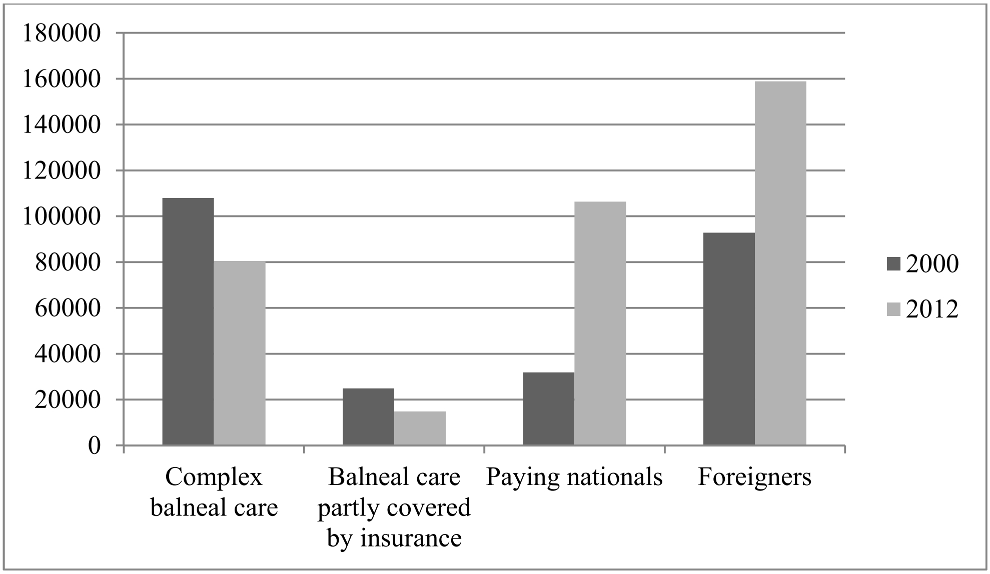
During the period 2000-2012 there have been these major changes in the structure of Czech spa patients:

- the total number of visitors increased by 103,082 (40.04 %);
- the proportion of patients with comprehensive spa stays decreased by 27,422 (-25.50 %);
- the proportion of patients with partially subsidized spa stays decreased by 10.002 (-40.25 %);
- the share of domestic self-paying patients increased by 74,528 (233.97 %);

- the proportion of foreign self-paying patients increased by 66,080 (71.20 %).

The Czech spa industry, therefore, seem to be very stable as a whole, and well able to handle the impact of adverse external influences. Its ability to adapt is related to its focus on the ever-increasing segment of domestic and foreign self-payers, and on strengthening commercially-oriented short-term wellness and similar types of stays, as well as being able to connect to other, economically interesting forms of tourism (congress, incentive, etc.).

Graph 3: The structure of spa patients in the Czech Republic in the years 2000 and 2012



Source: Own elaboration, based on data from the Czech Institute for Healthcare Information and Statistics, 2014.

Discussion

"The impact of restrictive measures in the Czech health insurance system on the economic situation of individual spas is obvious. It manifests itself mainly in the amount of the contribution that health insurance companies provide for each patient. The allowance for spa treatment each year is subject to a conciliation procedure between the insurers and the Union of Medical Spas for the Czech Republic, which represents individual spa organizations." (Attl, 2011, p. 3) "The supply of services in a tourism destination is made up of a composite of the activities of companies (network of providers). Their market position depends not only on the quality of services provided, but also the forms and success of their communication with customers. Part of the business process, which is the sum of other related activities that the company must provide to ensure their active work, is not only advertising, but also finding new customers.“ (Plzáková, Studnička, Vlček, 2013, pp. 446-447)

Another consequence is the decreasing number of patients who have health insurance companies that are willing to pay for comprehensive or partial coverage of spa stays. “The solution is to increase the number of domestic and foreign self-paying patients, reduce the average length of stay and in some cases, make at least a partial shift from traditional spa treatment to newer, non-medical forms of health tourism.” (Attl, Čertík, 2011, p. 17)

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Czech spa industry is, despite all the negative influences, economically viable and quite a successful study. In the past ten years, it has managed to resist many adverse circumstances. In addition to the adverse effects of the climate (floods in 2002), there have been negative economic influences (the global economic crisis, which had severe implications for tourism, including health tourism) and economic-restrictive influences (constant cutbacks in health insurance expenditures for spas in absolute and relative terms).

The achieved results indicate the economic ability to absorb negative impacts and adapt to the situation. This ability has its limits, however. The price of adjustment may be in some cases a change in the character of the therapeutic spa visits, a shortening of the spa stay, and orientation toward other short-term forms of tourism. And this is a trend that in the long run may not bring only positive benefits.

In Coalition Agreement between the ČSSD, the ANO 2011 Movement and the KDU-ČSL for the 2013-2017 Electoral Term (2014, p. 20) in part 6.2 there is said: “We shall improve patients´ access to spa care (a review of the treatment indication list placing a greater stress on rehabilitative care and avoiding the coverage of wellness services with public funds).”

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Jan Žufan, Barbora Koklarová

THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF HOTEL SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS THEIR FURTHER EDUCATION IN THE HOSPITALITY FIELD

Abstract: *The hotel educational system has undergone crucial change after the year 1991. The number of schools has tripled reaching 20% share in the total number of vocational schools in the Czech Republic. A considerable number of teachers is required to ensure teaching of vocational subjects, the teachers receive their initial education in different ways and in different areas. Further education is very important for them whereby they can deepen and broaden their professional and pedagogical education. This paper summarizes the results of a research mapping the development of a network of hotel schools in the Czech Republic in the years 1991-2012 and the attitudes of teachers of vocational subjects towards their further education. In the same period, the proportion of hotel schools increased in the segment of secondary (high) schools from about 7 % to about 21 % and remained stable after 2000. According to qualified estimate, approximately 1,200 teachers of vocational subjects operate at these schools and their pre-graduate education is very diverse. This, along with the natural development of the industry, has resulted in a steady demand for lifelong learning. Teachers themselves show a great interest in a variety of educational activities, and prefer to acquire new limitations knowledge and skills in relation to their expertise, much less the acquisition and development of psycho-pedagogical competencies. They are usually supported in their further education by school management but with in terms of participation in educational events and their compensation (and the payment of related expenses). In ¾ of cases, the participation on lifelong education does not impact teacher ´s remuneration. An important incentive that motivates teachers to participate in continuing education is the fear of losing their jobs.*

Key words: *further education of teachers, hotel school, teacher of vocational subjects, vocational and educational qualifications*

JEL Classification: *A21*

Introduction

After 1990 there has been a fundamental change in the economic structure in the Czech Republic. One of the consequences of the transition from a planned to a market economy was change in proportion of the sectors of the economy. While the primary and secondary sectors were markedly inhibited, the tertiary sector has seen a significant increase in its share of the national economy. That meant and means an increased need for people who work in this sector. Because of the fact that the acquisition of new workers in the form of retraining of workers in the field of manufacturing had its limitations both objective and subjective and at the same time formal education barriers limiting access of students to chosen field stopped existing (guide number). After 1991 a sharp increase of the number of schools providing secondary education in the fields of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism began, exclusively in the fields of graduation. The result of this process is the fact that in the employment of about 110,000 employees and 95,000 self-employed in the field (Beránek, 2013), these schools produce approximately 10,000 graduates annually. Their quality, i.e., what competencies they have and how they are generally ready and motivated to work in the field of education is influenced by many factors of subjective and objective character, with an important role, in our opinion, played by teachers of vocational subjects. And who actually teach specialized courses in the field of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism, and what their relationship to the further education of teachers is – it is the content of this paper.

Subject of examination of our research was both the development of secondary vocational schools providing secondary education in the fields of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism, their geographical distribution and relation to employment in the field and also issues related to vocational teachers in these fields, their initial (pre-graduate) education and the interests and needs in the field of further education. The issue of further education of teachers of hotel schools should be seen in connection with the changes that this segment of vocational education has undergone since 1991. This paper deals with the attitudes of teachers of vocational subjects of hotel schools to their further education.

Materials and Methods

The beginning of the 90s of the 20th century can be clearly designated as a period of fundamental quantitative and qualitative changes in the Czech (Czechoslovak) vocational education, which in its form was developing more or less continuously since the last quarter of the previous century (despite the occupation or Soviet experiments in the fifties). Qualitative changes should be seen mainly in three perspectives – secondary education culminating in a graduation exam ceases to be a matter of selection (despite the introduction of vocational programs graduation in the eighties, the number of students graduation courses in that time to about one third of the affected population years) and gradually increasing the number of pupils leaving primary school to study graduation subjects. The second qualitative change then is the change in the structure of secondary school subjects – from the historic to the technical fields, especially engineering, electrical engineering, or construction, the interest of pupils and their parents moved to the fields associated with the services. It is connected with societal changes as accentuation and services as such in the economy, and the subjective perceptions of employment in these fields as "clean work" with great earnings. Its role was also played by the fact that in the past these were fields with low benchmarks, and hence the demand for them is higher than supply. Effect of purchase of scarce goods was also reflected in this field. The third qualitative change is the emergence of private schools, which allowed the amendment to Act No. 29/1984 Coll., The Education Act (Act No. 522/1990 Coll., Effective from 5. 1. 1991), which recognized alongside other state bodies as the founder of, among others, secondary schools.

We used data provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, obtained from the former Institute for Information on Education (data about the network of schools and school facilities); respectively own data from the Register of the Ministry of Education maintained by Act No. 561/2004 Coll., preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (Education Act). Then we obtained information primarily on the number of schools and disciplines in the period 1991-2012. From which we also derived the number of teachers of vocational subjects. We conducted an investigation among the teachers of vocational subjects in October 2012, which concerned their interest in further education of teachers. From solicited sample of approximately 120 respondents, we managed to get back 101 completed questionnaires, which provides a good sample of these workers. Source of information about the wider context of the issue, i.e. mainly on the employment and economic performance of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism, were provided by investigation of MAG Consulting., Ltd. (Beránek 2013)

Results

In the monitored field in 1991 appeared as follows – the Czech Republic, there were 20 secondary vocational schools with courses focusing on gastronomy, hospitality and tourism, of which 13 hotel schools, 5 business schools and 2 secondary specialized vocational schools (Ministry of Education). Four of these hotel schools this year arose as private schools. At the same time there were in the Czech Republic 75 secondary vocational schools, usually providing education in the fields of teaching cook-waiter, respectively similar. For the assessment of those numbers it is important to mention the total number of secondary technical and vocational schools compared to our reference field. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education there were in the school year 1991/1992 621 secondary vocational schools and 690 vocational schools. Secondary hotel school therefore amounted to about 3 % and secondary vocational schools 11 % of the total number of the types of schools. Due to the fact that in the late eighties and early nineties the main wave of so-called Husak's children (a baby-boom in Czechoslovakia from the beginning of 1970s named after the Secretary General of the ruling Communist Party), reached high school-age, the conditions for the development of secondary education were very favourable, and this was reflected in the sharp increase of the number of schools and pupils who have studied them. An overview is given in Table 1. Because for the needs of our research the most important is the difference between the situation in 1991 (initiated change) and 2012 (year of research), that is why we included with the bordering years 1991 and 2012 also the years 1995 and 2001, as an illustration of the trend.

During these 20 years there was a change in the methodology and new types of secondary schools were created (integrated high school), the data are listed in the summary table for the area of vocational education, regardless of the method of graduation. As can be seen from Table 1, the number of monitored schools within ten years (1991-2001) increased three times, and the total number of secondary vocational schools at the beginning and end of the period was not essentially changed. It did not change either in the next decade, despite of all efforts to optimize the demographic trends, the number of monitored schools, however, decreased by about 10 %, which seems mainly related to the dissolution and merger of the former secondary vocational schools in smaller towns. In 2012 out of 278 secondary vocational schools there were 89 private ones, i.e. 32 %.

Table 1: Evolution of the number of secondary vocational schools

Year	*SVS total*	*SVS monitoring*	*Relative value*
1991	1,311	95	7.20 %
1995	1,755	235	13.40 %
2001	1,383	311	22.50 %
2006	1,376	292	21.20 %
2012	1,347	278	20.70 %

Source: Ministry of Education

The Act on Educational workers provides possible ways in which to obtain the scientific and professional qualifications for teaching technical subjects at secondary schools (Act No. 29/1984 Coll., § 9, paragraph 2), which can be summarized so that it is either a study the teaching field or a field of study related to the subject they teach and study of Educational Sciences (various forms are possible).

The real situation in the Czech Republic is as follows:

a) there is no accredited Master's degree program in point a);

b) assignment of one of the general subject of the study area, which corresponds to the vocational subject taught by § 9, paragraph 2, point b) or c) is very difficult for the majority of subjects in the fields of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism;

c) until 2005, when the first graduates left the IHM Master's degree Management Hotel and Spa could not be obtained an adequate higher education in the field of study, which corresponds to the taught vocational subject.

It is obvious that rapid growth in the number of these schools in the nineties, as given in the previous section, required among other things also adequate staffing. With an average size of vocational schools and their number can be estimated that in the Czech Republic there are about 1,200 teachers of professional (theoretical) subjects, who received their pre-graduate education in various ways, but usually by a combination of self-study of expertise and pedagogical sciences. However, some of them still do not meet the condition of higher education (see below).

As it is clear from the evaluation of the sample, a typical teacher of vocational subjects at secondary vocational schools in the field of gastronomy and hotel business is a woman, 50 years old, medium or college student, and working in the field of education for 20 years. It is obvious, that the lack of a college degree or achieved level are considered by majority of respondents as insufficiency – 59 % of them study in bachelor's, master's or doctoral program at some university. 99 % of the respondents expressed the positive approach to the further education of teachers. Based on this finding, we have not examined potential reasons that would discourage respondents' interest in further education. In other interviews, we focused both on the scope and extent of further education or training and on the support of the management of the schools, in which the respondents operate.

It is probably not surprising, that the largest range of further education is focused on deepening and expanding the expertise of teachers. Development of technologies and products in the gastro and hotel practice requires constant attention in schools. As can be seen from Table 2, the information and communication technologies are on the second place. It was not the subject of our research, whether in terms of education belonging to the so-called information literacy or product training for teachers organized by the creators and distributors of hotel and reservation systems, but if it was the other option, it is again logical and desirable. In the third place, about one quarter of respondents ranked courses on pedagogical and psychological themes. This finding seems to us underestimated, as just a few vocational teachers have pedagogical university education.

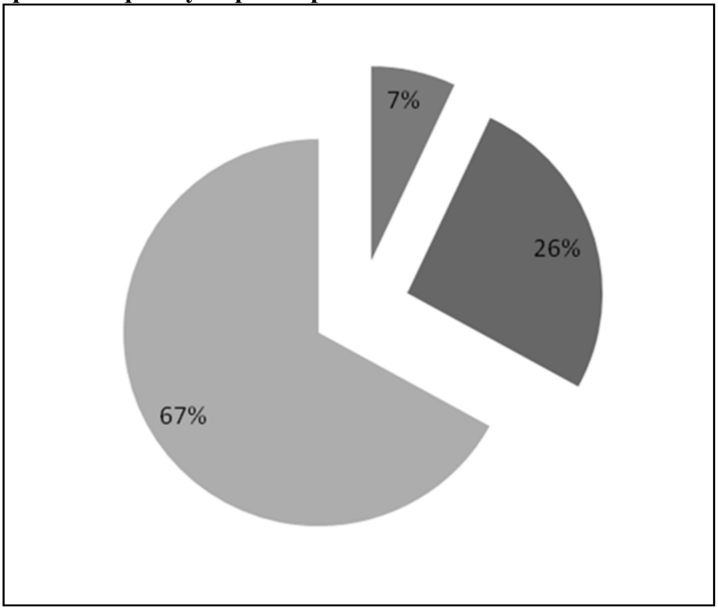
Table 2: Priority list of further education of teachers

Topic	*Subject relative number*
The training on the expertise	84 %
Educational and Psychological topics	26 %
Managerial skills	18 %
Education related to the state graduation	26 %
Information and communication technology	33 %
Other	14 %

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Act on Educational Staff – providing in § 24, paragraph 7) – guarantees 12 days in a school year to participate in further education, subject to statutory conditions and at the discretion of the director. We examined the extent to which our respondents participated in further education in the last year. The results are shown in the Graph 1.

Graph 1: Frequency of participation in further education of teachers



Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Note: 7 %: 5 times and more, 26 %: 3-4 times, 67 %: 1-2 times

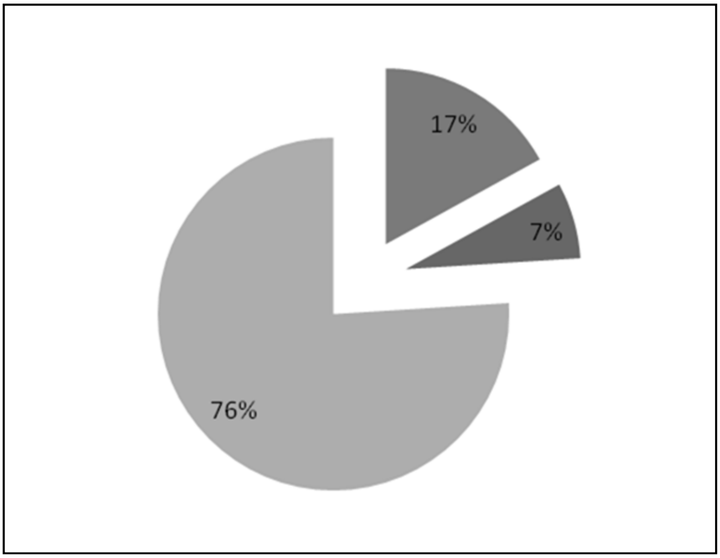
Three quarters of the respondents in this regard stated they participate in the further education regularly scheduled, and the remaining quarter considers their further education as incidental and accidental. In terms of lengths of educational activities, the vast majority of the respondents says that one-day activities are usual (80 % of respondents), longer than two-day activities are completely exceptional.

Many school directors apparently use power, which gives them the provisions of the Act mentioned in the form of wording "unless there are serious operational reasons" and they limit participation of teachers in further education – 10 % of respondents reported that their employer has a negative attitude to their participation on further education. Another 26 % are of the opinion that the employer is "insufficient support". It was not possible for us to verify whether, in some cases, it is not a situation where participation in educational action is motivated by personal interests of teachers, which does not correspond with the needs of the school. We assume that this is not such a case and with regard to the well-known economic situation of the schools we have laid the assumption that these "serious operational reasons" are mainly economic reasons, i.e. costs related to participation in training action. This, to some extent, can be inferred from the finding that employers reimbursed expenses associated with participation in full (participation fees and travel expenses in accordance with the Labour Code) to just 55 % of the respondents. In 35 % they pay a part of the cost (typically a participation fee or ticket) and 10 % of the participants pay their own expenses entirely, which is contrary to the Labour Code, which provides possible participation of employee expenditures, rather than full compensation. (Act No. 262/2006 Coll., § 156 ad. § 227 ff.)

These findings correspond to those H. Žufanová shows in her work, i.e. in secondary schools there is the lowest level of management of further education and training and detection of its quality and efficiency. Even though (or perhaps because of it) this type of schools manage majority of funds for this education. (Žufanová, 2012)

We also investigated whether and how schools encourage or appreciate financial participation in further education. The result is shown in the Graph 2. It should be noted that 37 % of the respondents mention fear of losing their jobs as a reason for their involvement in further education. However, what is the effect of such a motivation on the actual knowledge and skills of teachers is the question.

Graph 2: Financial evaluation of participation in further education of teachers



Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Note: 17 %: single payment, 7 %: influencing of personal bonuses, 76 %: without financial statement

Conclusion

The results of our investigation show that teachers of vocational subjects are aware of the need of their further education and strive to acquire continuously new knowledge and skills, especially in the area of their expertise, information technology and in education and psychology. The management of their schools largely supports this activity, but not quite to the extent foreseen by the Act on Pedagogical Staff and Labour. A significant factor, in more than a third of the respondents, which probably affects their attitude to further education, is also the fear of losing their jobs.

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INFORMATION PAPERS

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY AND POSITIVE WORD OF MOUTH EFFECT. THE CASE OF THE FOUR-STAR HOTEL IN FATIMA

Abstract: *The main purpose of this study was to investigate the level of service quality, which is expressed as a gap between customer's expectation and perception of service quality in the four-star Estrela hotel in Fatima. The additional goal of this research was an attempt of finding the answer to the question if the perceived service quality could result in word of mouth effect. Servqual method and Net Promoter Score were applied. The data analysis is based on a sample of 65 pairs (ex-ante and ex-post) valid questionnaires. Results indicate that the Estrel`s hotel management should pay special attention to two aspects such as cleanliness and standard of meals. Additionally, the perceived service quality expressed in such attributes as cleanliness of a guest room and bathroom, and standard of breakfast and dinner are important drivers of WOM effect.*

Key words: *perceived service quality, Servqual, word of mouth effect*

JEL Classification: *L83, M10*

Introduction

In the highly competitive hotel industry, service becomes one of the most important elements for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the market. Consequently, the efforts of service managers and academic researchers are directed towards understanding how customers perceive the quality of service. Scholars have defined quality in three distinct ways: quality as excellence, quality as value and quality as meeting or exceeding expectations. (Ekinci, 2008)

The term 'excellence' is highly subjective and thus difficult to measure objectively. The quality as value implies that perceived quality equals perceived value while value is defined by the customers' trade-off between benefits and costs. The benefit component might be the same as quality and thus the perceived value is determined by comparing the perceived quality to the price paid. (Bolton, et al., 1991) Although recent literature suggests that service quality is indeed the subjective assessment of service performance by consumers themselves (Choia, et al., 2001), from managers' point of view, the quality as meeting or exceeding expectations theory is the most useful, because it allows to obtain a valuable guideline showing which part of the delivered services should be improved. In this issue "Quality is defined as the summation of the affective evaluations by each customer of each attitude object that creates customer satisfaction". (Wicks, 2009) At present, service quality depends mainly on the gap between customer expectation and perception (Wang, 2011), so in this paper we have adopted the definition by Parasuraman et al., (1988, p. 5), which defines service quality as the discrepancy between a customers' expectation of a service and the customers' perception of the service offering.

In satisfaction literature, expectations are considered as 'predictions' by customers about what is likely to happen during a particular transaction (Anderson, et al., 1994; Parker et al., 2001) while in service quality literature, they are viewed as desires or wants of consumers, that is, what they feel a service provider 'should' offer rather than 'would' offer. (Akbaba, 2006; Wilkins 2007)

For this study, we will define expectations as desires or wants of customers, because this allows us to know exactly what service providers should offer and this is based on past experience and information received. (Douglas et al., 2003) It is important to understand and measure customer's expectations in order to identify any gaps in delivering services with quality that could ensure satisfaction. (Negi, 2009)

Parasuraman et al., (1985, pp. 41-50) developed a conceptual model of service quality where they identified five gaps that could impact the consumer's evaluation of service quality. These gaps were:

Gap 1: Consumer expectation – management perception gap
Gap 2: Management perception – service quality specification gap
Gap 3: Service quality specifications – service delivery gap
Gap 4: Service delivery – external communications gap
Gap 5: Expected Service – perceived service gap

Our study is only based on the discrepancy between the expected and perceived service, viewed from the customer's perspective. We are not focusing on other gaps because they are mainly focused on the hotel's perspective, even though they have an impact on the way customers perceive service quality in Estrela hotel and thus help with closing the gap which arises from the difference between customer's expectation and perception of service quality dimensions.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) suggested that when perceived service quality is high, then it will lead to the increase in customer satisfaction. Also Allan Su, (2002) came up with the conclusion that, there exist a great dependency between both constructs and that an increase in one is likely tolead to an increase in another. The idea of linking service quality and customer satisfaction has existed for a long time. (Lee et al., 2000; Saravana, et al., 2007; Negi, 2009) Additionally, Fen and Lian, (2005, pp. 59-60) found that both, service quality and customer satisfaction, have a positive effect on customer's re-patronage intentions showing that both, service quality and customer satisfaction, have a crucial role to play in the success and survival of any business in the competitive market.

Materials and Methods

Measuring quality in the hotel sector poses a range of problems related to the generally intangible nature of the final product. One can be termed "objective", since it is based on standards that can be measured on the basis of the availability of services and facilities of hotel establishments, the second can be termed "subjective", since it basically analyses the perception of customers or experts. (Núñez-Serrano, 2014) Objective indicators are based on ex-ante information related to facilities, services or other measurable characteristics. Subjective measurements are based on opinions and thus, ex-post information. (Hung, et al., 2012) Following this comprehensive approach to measuring quality in the hotel sector the Servqual model has been conducted. (Parasuraman, et al., 1985) The original model contains 22 items for assessing customer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of service. A level of agreement or disagreement with a given item is rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale. The Servqual model is based on five service quality dimensions, namely, such as:

- tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and personnel appearance);
- reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately);
- responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service);
- assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to gain trust and confidence);
- empathy (providing individualized attention to the customers) (Blešić, et al., 2011; Ryglova, et al., 2012).

During the last few years, a variety of service quality studies have been conducted (Ladhari, 2008) and Servqual method has been applied not only to hotels (Markovi´c et al., 2004; Juwaheer, 2004; Wang, et al., 2007; Raspor, 2009) but among others, in restaurants (Andaleeb, et al., 2006; Namkunget al., 2008), health spas (Snojet al., 2002; Markovi´c et al., 2004), travel agencies (Martinezet al., 2008) and web-sites (Parasuraman, et al., 2005; Nusairet al., 2008).

Despite its wide usage, the model has been criticized by a number of academics (Babakuset al., 1992; Teas, 1994) and as a consequence of this criticism, an alternative measure of service quality for specific service settings has been developed. In order to measure specific attributes to the hotel industry, the following items were considered: parking area (Pizamet al., 1999), appropriate location, available and clear information, variety of facilities (Snojet al., 1998), clean and tidy hotel, feeling safe and secure, ease of finding a way around the hotel and typical service quality for a hotel category (Markovi´c, 2004).

Following the course of action taken by many researchers, we adopted the original Servqual method to the Estrela hotel`s requirements. In the result, an ex-ante and ex-post questionnaire was used, but the structure of questions was tailored to the requirements of the hotel`s managers. Finally, the questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part measured guests' expectations and perceptions of the hotel attributes using a modified Servqual model. Service quality expectations and perceptions were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 7 'strongly agree.' The questionnaire included 13 items, which represented the following dimensions:

- localization;
- cleanliness and equipment;
- staff behaviour;
- gastronomy;
- price-quality relationship.

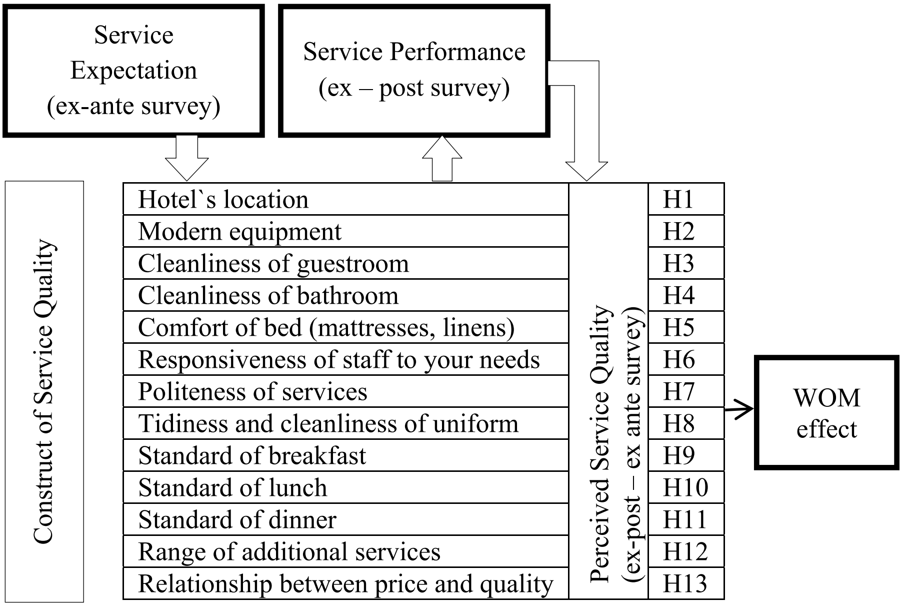
The second part of the questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' demographic and traveling characteristics, which included a country of residence, age, gender, and a question about their visits before this hotel or this city.

The target population of the survey were the guests staying in the Estrela hotel in November 2012. The reception desk staff were asked to give out the questionnaires to the guests during their check-in to express their expectations about specified items and then, once again during their check-out to express the perceived service quality. In this way, each guest, who agreed to take part in this research, was surveyed twice. The data analysis is based on a sample of 65 pairs (ex-ante and ex-post) valid questionnaires.

Beside the service quality in the Estrela hotel, the relationship between the perceived service quality and the positive word of mouth effect (WOM effect) was verified. (Mattila, 2001; Wong, et al., 2002) The WOM effect was assessed by Net Promotor Score, which shows the difference between the percentage of people who are inclined to recommend the given subject of the research (so called, enthusiasts – answers 9 and 10) and those who are resistant to recommend anything (so called, grumblers – answers 0-6). Answers 7 and 8 are of neutral character and are not included in the result of the NPS indicator.

The relationship between the perceived service quality and the word of mouth effect is visualized in the conceptual framework (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

As already mentioned above, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the level of service quality, which is expressed as a gap between customer's expectation and perception of service quality in the four-star Estrela hotel in Fatima. Consequently, reporting descriptive statistics per question suffices to draw helpful conclusions for the hotel management. The additional goal of this research was an attempt of finding the answer to the question if the perceived service quality could result in the word of mouth effect.

Therefore, the following research hypotheses were taken into consideration:
Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the perceived hotel`s location and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between the perceived hotel`s modern equipmentand the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the perceived cleanliness of the guest room and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the perceived cleanliness of the bathroom and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the perceived comfort of the bed and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between the perceived responsiveness of staff to client`s needs and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between the perceived politeness of the services and the word of mouth effect.

Hypothesis 8: There is a positive relationship between the perceived tidiness and the cleanliness of uniformand the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 9: There is a positive relationship between the perceived standard of the breakfast and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 10: There is a positive relationship between the perceived standard of the lunch and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 11: There is a positive relationship between the perceived standard of the dinner and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 12: There is a positive relationship between the perceived range of additional services and the word of mouth effect.
Hypothesis 13: There is a positive relationship between the perceived relationship between price and quality and the word of mouth effect.

Spearman`s Rank correlation analysis method was used to prove or disprove all hypotheses.

While the perceived service quality was defined as a difference between customer's expectation and perception of service quality dimensions (Perceptions – Expectations), the word of mouth effect, on the other hand, was defined as willingness to recommend hotel services to a friend and family, and it was expressed by NPS indicator.

The demographic characteristic of the respondents is presented in Table 1. The sample included domestic (49.3 per cent) and international tourists (50.7 per cent). There were slightly more females (50.8 per cent) than males (49.2 per cent), and most of the respondents (32.3 per cent) were older than 54 years. More than 40 per cent of the hotel guests in the sample had a university education. The Table 1 shows that 91.5 % of the Estrela hotel guests, stayed there for 2-3 nights.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Items	*Percentage*
Gender Male	49.2
Female	50.8
Age below 24	4.6
25-34	16.9
35-45	23.1
46-54	23.1
55 or more	32.3
Level of education Primary school	2.1
Secondary school	11.9
Higher education	46.2
University and above	37.8
Others	2.0

Country of residence Australia	 1.5
Brasil	3.2
Bulgaria	1.5
Canada	1.5
Spain	26.5
Poland	13.5
Portugal	49.3
USA	1.5
Venezuela	1.5
Duration of staying at a hotel 1 night	 5.0
2-3 nights	91.5
4 nights and more	3.5

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Results

While analyzing the findings obtained in the research carried on at the Estrela hotel in Fatima, we notice that the general differences between the perceptions and the expectations of the clients have positive values (+0.47). It means that the Estrela hotel provides a little better quality of service than the guests expected.

Nevertheless, seven attributes were found to be below expectations, such as:

- cleanliness of a guest room (-0.20);
- cleanliness of a bathroom (-0.25);
- comfort of a bed (-0.11);
- politeness of services (-0.05);
- standard of breakfast (-0.22);
- standard of dinner (-0.04);
- a relationship between price and quality (-0.09).

The items with the highest expectation scores were cleanliness of a bathroom (6.82) and cleanliness of a guest room (6.75), so the hotel management must make every effort to improve particularly these aspects of the quality of services (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of means of customers´ expectations and gap scores

Items of service quality	*Expectations (mean)*	*Perceptions (mean)*	*SERVQUAL Gap n = 65*
Importance of hotel`s location	6.31	6.71	0.40
Importance of modern equipment	5.78	6.23	0.45
Cleanliness of guest room	6.75	6.55	-0.20
Cleanliness of bathroom	6.82	6.57	-0.25
Comfort of bed (mattresses, linens)	6.48	6.37	-0.11
Efficiency of check-in	6.14	6.29	0.15
Efficiency of check-out	6.15	6.26	0.11
Responsiveness of staff to your needs	6.25	6.34	0.09
Politeness of services	6.48	6.43	-0.05
Tidiness and cleanliness of uniform	6.22	6.32	0.11
Standard of breakfast	6.32	6.11	-0.22
Standard of lunch	6.22	6.22	0.00
Standard of dinner	6.22	6.18	-0.04
Range of additional services	5.60	5.71	0.11
Relationship between price and quality	6.48	6.38	-0.09
Overall average SERVQUAL score	-	-	0.47

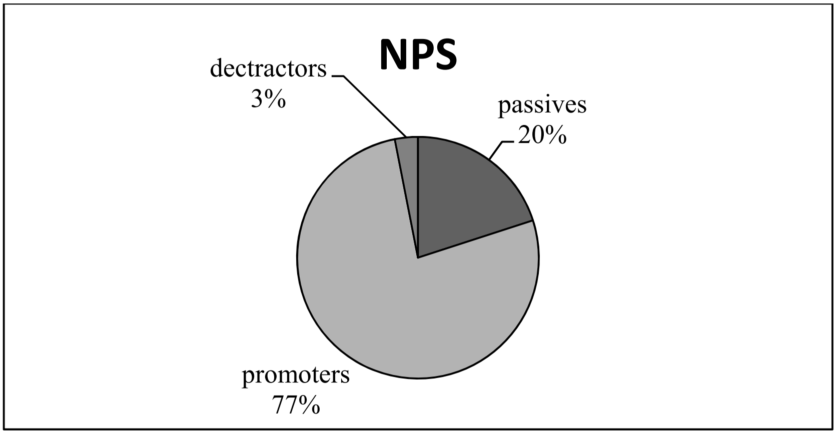
Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

In order to achieve the additional study's goals, an additional indicator, called *Net Promoter Score* (NPS), was used. (Reichheld, 2003) It measures synthetically the respondents' level of satisfaction as well as reflects their natural behaviours. The NPS indicator shows the difference between the percentage of people who are inclined to recommend the given subject of the research (so called, promoters – answers 9 and 10) and those who are resistant to recommend anything (so called, detractors – answers 0-6). Answers 7 and 8 are of neutral character (called passive) and are not included in the result of the NPS indicator. The same indicator was used by Reichheld (2003) and Ritson (2006) in order to recommend tourist products and services.

The theory is that "Promoters" are satisfied and loyal customers who will keep buying from acompany, and are most likely to suggest that their friends and acquaintances will do the same. "Passives" are somewhat satisfied, but generally unenthusiastic customers who are not particularly motivated to offer a referral, either positive or negative. "Detractors" are dissatisfied customers, quite possibly trapped in a bad relationship, probably seeking alternatives and assumed to be unafraid, perhaps even eager, to share their experience with others. (Brandt, 2007; Reichheld, 2008) Debate over NPS as "the ultimate question" has been surfaced by critics (Keiningham, et al., 2007; Brandt et al., 2007; Mitchel, 2008) and supporters. (Mittal, et al., 2001; Blasberg, et al. 2008)

When asked how willingly they would recommend the Estrela hotel to their friends, most frequently, the respondents chose the values of 9 or 10 (in the 0-10 scale) which puts them into the group of, so called, "promoters" visitors (Graph 1). Overall Net Promoter Score for the Estrela hotel was estimated at 74 %. Additionally, the results have shown that above 30 % of clients were in Fatima before and during their revisit changed their hotel (NPS only for this group of clients = 100 %). Moreover, 30 % of the respondents revisited the Estrela hotel (NPS only for this group of clients = 83 %).

Graph 1: A customer's willingness to recommend the Estrela hotel to family and friends (in percent)



Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Furthermore, the Spearman`s Rank correlation analysis method was applied in order to check, if there is a relationship between all variables which construct the perceived service quality and the word of mouth effect.

Cohen (1988) indicated the following guidelines for interpreting the Spearman correlation values: small r = .10, medium r = .30 and large r = .50.

Medium correlations were found between the word of mouth effect and:

- the cleanliness of a guest room ($r = 0.33$; p-value $= 0.006 < \alpha = 0.05$);
- the cleanliness of a bathroom ($r = 0.30$; p-value $= 0.012 < \alpha = 0.05$);
- the standard of breakfast ($r = 0.37$; p-value $= 0.002 < \alpha = 0.05$);
- the standard of dinner ($r = 0.42$; p-value $= 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$).

Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant and positive relationships between the word of mouth effect and these items, which construct the perceived service quality. Such a situation allows to assume that earlier mentioned hypotheses number 3, 4, 9 and 11 can be supported. Other hypotheses should be rejected. However, there is no significant relationship between the word of mouth effect and variables such as: gender, age, level of education, country of residence, duration of staying at a hotel.

Discussion

In hotel industry, service quality, as an extremely subjective category, iscrucial to the satisfaction of the client. Customers with extreme levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction are more likely to share experiences than customers with neutral opinions. (Anderson, 1998; Alexandrov et al., 2013)

As proved, Servqual method can be widely applied, not only in science but also in practice in various services. The aim of the scientists is to work out and test useful instruments for managers in order to help them determine those organizational variables that will guarantee the best service quality with minimal costs. This methodology can assist hotel managers in assessing the position of the hotel regarding its quality of service and strategic and operative decision-making. Despite its popularity and wide application (Kumar et al. 2009; Badri et al. 2005; Negi, 2009), Servqual is exposed to numerous criticism, from both the conceptual and the operational aspects. (Cronin et al., 1992; Buttle, 1996) The Net Promoter Score method has also been criticized for being based and formulated in favor of a positive response. (Mazor et al., 2002) In addition, an individual's "likelihood to recommend" is influenced by many factors, including that person's overall predisposition to recommending anything, the potential audience to whom such a recommendation might be made, and even the desire of the person making the recommendation to appear "in the know".

While analyzing the findings obtained in the research carried on at the Estrela hotel in Fatima we should remember that results are clearly conditioned by expectations, which were far greater in hotels of a higher category. (Lopez, et al., 2004) However, the results indicate that the Estrel`s hotel management should pay special attention to two aspects, such as: cleanliness and standard of meals. Also literature review suggests that cleanliness (Lockyer, et al., 2003; Gu, et al., 2008; Barber, et al., 2010) is an attribute that hotel guests perceive as being important. In future, hotel management should also focus on improving all seven attributes which were found to be provided below client`s expectations, because as the literature indicates employees' empathy and competence (Choi, et al., 2001; Markovic, 2004; Akbaba, 2006), as a relationship between price and quality (Gundersen, et al., 1996; Choi, et al., 2001) are the most important attributes influencing the perception of quality.

Additionally, the perceived service quality expressed in such attributes as cleanliness of a guest room and bathroom, and a standard of breakfast and dinner are important drivers of the WOM effect.

Conclusion

The research indicates that Servqual method and Net Promoter Score are able to be used as useful tools for hotel managers. However, adjustment of these tools to expectations of hotel managers should be obligatory. Managers` knowledge about the perceived service quality and the level of guest`s satisfaction is necessary to understand the word of mouth effect.

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PRAGUE AS THE DESTINATION FOR MACEDONIANS IN THE PRODUCT OF TOURISM AGENCIES

Abstract: *The subject of this paper is the travel arrangements to visit Prague organized by travel agencies in the Republic of Macedonia. Prague, as an attractive destination has been present on the tourism market in Macedonia for the last ten years, but only a small number of tour operators organize trips to this famous European center. The paper contains an analysis and presents the contents of the arrangements to visit Prague, their prices and duration, the period in which they are realized, additional activities and optional excursions offered to the Macedonian tourists, the number of participants and tour operators who organize and popularize urban tourism.*

Key words: *Macedonia, national holidays, Prague, travel agencies, travel arrangements*

JEL Classification: *L83*

Introduction

The Golden city, the city of 100 towers, are just some of the superlatives that can be found in brochures, catalogs and websites of travel agencies from Macedonia that organize trips to Prague for Macedonian tourists. Macedonia is a country located in Southern/Mediterranean Europe [1]. It has a favorable geographical position as it is situated in the center of the Balkan Peninsula and covers an area of 25,713 km² [2]. The total population is 2,022,547 inhabitants. The country's capital Skopje has 506,926 inhabitants [3]. Other larger towns - emissive centers of tourism are: Tetovo, Kumanovo, Bitola, Prilep, Strumica, Stip, etc. Most of the travel agencies are located in these towns.

Tourist agencies are commercial entities dealing with the preparation, organization and mediation services related to traveling and accommodation, by third parties, or in such combination as own services (travel arrangement) offered to the tourist clientele [4]. According to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS level 3), Macedonia is divided into eight statistical regions [5] (the Czech Republic is divided into 14 regions). In Macedonia there are 402 travel agencies, 196 of which have License A (tour operators - with the opportunity to organize a trip abroad), while 206 agencies have License B (for the most part they act as tour operators intermediaries and are able to organize trips within the country) [6]. Table 1 shows that most of the travel agencies are located in the Skopje region, 192 exactly. These agencies, according to their field of business are emissive, since they act on the territory that makes the largest tourist clientele - the capital

Skopje, which is the market with the highest tourism demand in the country. Their task is to activate potential tourists to engage in tourist movements. Second largest region with 54 travel agencies is the Southwest region. These agencies are mostly of receptive character, due to the lake resorts from Ohrid and Struga. The main activity of these travel agencies is providing conditions to meet the travel needs within the tourist environment. The Polog region (with 48 travel agencies) and the Pelagonia region (with 36 travel agencies) are regions dominated by tourist agencies of combined character, as well as the remaining four regions are: North-east, South, East and Vardar.

Table 1: Regional dispersion of travel agencies in Macedonia

Region	*Number of travel agencies*	*License A*	*License B*
East	12	8	4
Skopje	192	125	67
Vardar	10	7	3
North-east	29	7	22
South-west	54	14	40
South-east	21	9	12
Polog	48	10	38
Pelagonia	36	16	20
Total	402	196	206

Source: Ministry of economy, Department of tourism and hospitality. Register of travel agencies, 2013.

Visits to cities across Europe is typical for Macedonian tourists during national holidays, high school and senior year excursions. Organized travel arrangements to visit European cities during the summer season in Macedonia are not offered on the market or may be found very rarely. National holidays, due to free days from work, represent an opportunity for making arrangements of trips abroad that last for several days. Macedonian national holidays are: New Year (December 31^{st}), October 11^{th} (National Uprising Day), September 8^{th} (Independence Day), May 24^{th} (Day of Slavic educators Ss. Cyril and Methodius), 1 May (Labour Day), Orthodox Easter (Resurrection of Christ) and March 8^{th} (International Women's Day). Traditionally, during these national holidays, Macedonian tourists engage in mass tourist traveling. Trips that are organized during the national holidays last from two to fourteen days, but most frequently these tours last from three to five days. Regardless of the character of the national holiday, all organized arrangements for Prague are identical in their content.

High school excursions take place in September, October, November or April and last three to five days. Senior year excursions take place in May, last up to three weeks, a period during which students visit the most important historical, cultural and economic centers in Europe, including Prague (either as bus sightseeing tour or as organized one-night accommodation and tours with a local tour guide). As a means of transport in the implementation of package tours to Prague, tourist agencies prefer tourist class buses, and in the past there were flight arrangements.

Apart from organized trips to Prague, there are also individual trips to this destination. Tourists from Macedonia who individually visit Prague are motivated by the following reasons: visit to friends and relatives, business, sports, events, study opportunities, transit trips, etc. In order to meet such needs, a regular bus line was established from the Republic of Macedonia to the Czech Republic and vice versa, the bus departing from Skopje every Saturday at 08:30 and arriving in Prague at 09:00 pm the following day. TOTO is the carrier company. This line's established stopover is in the city of Brno, where it picks up and leaves passengers. The price of the bus tickets is 81 euro in one direction and 141 euro for a ticket in both directions. Tourists, travelling by bus by arrangement or individually from Macedonia to Prague, travel through the following countries: Serbia, Hungary and Slovakia. In regard to Macedonian citizens traveling to the Czech Republic, there are no visa restrictions, i.e. they may reside within the countries of the European Union for up to 90 days.

The type of tourism related to a visit to cities by tourists can be defined as urban or city tourism. Urban tourism is associated with tourist attractions of a city. Such type of tourism is characterized by mass participation, high consumption and relatively short stay. Seasonal concentration is not emphasized, and certain differences in the number of visitors during some months are more as a result of general tourist mobility in that time interval. It is believed that this type of tourism in relation to all other types has the most balanced arrangement of tourist trade [7]. Urban tourism is a phenomenon that fascinates and can be felt in everyday conversations of people who had visited another city and exchange their experience. For people who seek uniqueness in the places they visit, urban tourism is an integral part of modern life [8]. Urban tourism is slowly, but surely becoming a major source of employment, income and perspective for European cities. As the competition between cities to attract tourists grows, the willingness of organizations from the private and public sector working in the field of urban tourism becomes very important, too. Such organizations are constantly improving the hotel reservation systems, trade, information on tourism product and customer relationship management systems [9].

In Macedonia, there is a wide range of travel arrangements to visit European cities such as Prague, Vienna, Paris, Rome, Venice, Milan, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Sofia, Istanbul, Barcelona, Bucharest, Warsaw, Munich, Budapest, Athens, Krakow, Moscow, etc. It's a challenge to make a profile of Macedonian tourists who visit these urban centers, since the arrangements organized by the travel agencies in Macedonia are group arrangements and are used by tourists of different age, sex, social status, profession, etc.

Apart from the offers to visit European cities, there are travel agencies in Macedonia that organize travel arrangements for visiting urban centers on other continents, such as Beijing, Jerusalem, New York, Dubai, Havana, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and more.

Table 2: Travel arrangements to visit selected cities for the "11th October" holiday 2013

Travel agency	*Prague*	*Vienna*	*Budapest*	*Krakow*	*Istanbul*
Falcon travel	149 €	139 €	95 €	159 €	/
Fibula	159 €	/	99 €	/	109 €
Magelan travel	149 €	139 €	105 €	/	115 €
Nehar travel	135 €	/	99 €	139 €	129 €
Camellia travel	125 €	165 €	155 €	/	/
Balkan turist	140 €	/	99 €	/	125 €

Source: Official web pages of selected travel agencies, October 2013.

Table 2 presents the offers to visit selected cities for the holiday "11 October" by the travel agencies that organize visits to Prague. According to the price of the arrangements, we can observe that the cost for visiting Prague is higher than the cost of the arrangements for visiting cities like Budapest, Vienna and Istanbul, and it is lower than the price of the arrangements for visiting Krakow. The table does not consider arrangements for visiting Milan and Munich, which are more expensive for up to 30 % than Prague arrangements. Considering this data, we can conclude that the travel arrangements for visiting Prague are neither with the lowest nor the highest price on the Macedonian tourist market for visiting European cities, and they may be considered "a happy medium".

Our subject of interest are travel agencies that organize travel arrangements to visit Prague, and the research that was carried out has shown that there are 6 out of 196 travel agencies that have the right to organize such trips. Five out of six travel agencies are located in the Skopje region with seat of business in the city of Skopje (Falcon travel, Fibula, Magelan travel, Nehar travel and Camellia travel), and one travel agency is located in the Vardar region-based city of Kavadarci (Balkan turist). These travel agencies have a history of operating for several years continuously in the field of tourism; have already established business relationships with partners in the Czech Republic and all of the agencies belong to the group of small and medium enterprises (up to 10 employees). Although the organization of travel arrangements to Prague is done by a small number of travel agencies in Macedonia, it should be noted that most of the travel agencies provide a visit to Prague in their arrangements, or perform sales for a certain commission for the account of the organizers of the arrangements. On annual basis, there are organized visits to Prague for approximately 2,000 Macedonian tourists who realize approximately 6,000 overnight stays. According to the Czech Statistical Office, the number of tourists visiting Prague in 2012 was 5,394,283 tourists who realized 13,601,964 overnight stays [10]. According to such data, we may conclude that Macedonian tourists account for a very small proportion of the total number of tourists visiting Prague.

Analysis of the contents of package holidays to visit Prague during the "11th October" national holiday

Lately, in the process of collecting data, the Internet has been increasingly used as a global computer network that can provide information from many fields of interest [11]. Today, it has become one of the most important sources of secondary data and a replacement for a number of traditional sources. Its greater use in research of tourism market consists in the ability to collect a variety of information ranging from individual businesses to the situation on the global market. The main sources of information used in this paper are the official websites of the travel agencies in Macedonia that organize visits to Prague in October, during the "11th October" national holiday. An analysis of the contents of the existing travel arrangements offered to Macedonian tourists has been done. Apart from the analysis of the official websites, informal interviews with employees and managers of these travel agencies were conducted. Informal interviews or unstructured interviews [12] are interviews without any pre-formulated questions, but the questions stem from the overall conversation and are being adapted to a specific situation. The questions vary from subject to subject, and final conclusion is drawn upon the basis of the answers provided.

Traveling, whether for business or pleasure, requires a certain type of arrangement [13]. In order for tourists not to waste their time and money for the organization of trips, they turn to travel agencies. Package holidays are the most important product that is created and marketed by a travel agency and it includes a set of services such as transportation, accommodation and additional services [14]. Organized trips are made on the basis of previously researched market and as a rule intended for a wide range of consumers, and in some circumstances for specific segments of the tourism market (retirees, high school and college students and others). In both cases, arrangement clients are not made known to the travel agency during the creation of the arrangement, thus the agency creates arrangements solely at its discretion and decisions, based on the experience gained, as well as the results of the market research and monitoring [15].

The first organized trips and offers to visit Prague as a tourist destination by travel agencies in Macedonia started ten years ago. Table 3 provides an overview of the Macedonian travel agencies that organize visit to Prague during the "11 October" national holiday in 2013. Table 3 points out the fact that the duration of organized arrangements for Prague may be 4 or 5 days, with 2 or 3 overnight stays respectively. The trip in one direction lasts 24 hours on average, which means that tourists spend 48 hours on the bus in both directions. Hotels providing accommodation for Macedonian tourists in Prague are usually with three stars, such as: Fortuna West and City, Golf, Albion, Top hotel, Olympia, Club hotel, etc., while in periods like New Year and Easter when visits by foreign tourists are increased, the vicinity of Prague is also considered a place for providing accommodation to Macedonian tourists (in a radius of 20-30 km). During this period, arrangements rates are higher by 20%, as opposed to arrangements organized during the year.

In Table 3, we note that two of the six existing arrangements in Prague in their offer include visits and tours of Vienna, one arrangement includes a one-day visit and tour of Dresden, and one arrangement includes a visit to Vienna and Dresden. Only two of the arrangements in Prague don't have a combination of visiting another city, i.e. complete concentration and accommodation of tourists takes place in Prague.

Table 3: Travel arrangements to visit Prague during the "11th October" national holiday 2013

Travel agency	*Arrangement*	*Price*	*Period, days and nights*	*Web pages*
Falcon travel	Prague	149 €	09.-13. 10. 2013 5 days, 3 nights	falcon.com.mk
Fibula	Prague and Vienna	159 €	10.-14. 10. 2013 5 days, 3 nights	fibula.com.mk
Magelan travel	Prague, Dresden and Vienna	149 €	09.-13. 10. 2013 5 days, 3 nights	magelantravel.com.mk
Nehar travel	Prague and Vienna	135 €	10.-13. 10. 2013 4 days, 2 nights	nehartravel.com.mk
Camellia travel	Prague and Dresden	125 €	10.-14. 10. 2013 4 days, 2 nights	camelliatravel.com.mk
Balkan turist	Prague	140 €	10.-14. 10. 2013 4 days, 2 nights	balkanturist.com.mk

Source: Official web pages of selected travel agencies, October 2013.

All arrangements to visit Prague are on bed-and-breakfast basis. Tourists during their stay in Prague have time for sightseeing and leisure activities. Travel agencies also provide visits to discoes and nightclubs in the evening hours, and most often visited are: Honey Bunny (Ocko), Yes club, Duplex, Mecca, Mish Mash, Costel, etc. The most often visited beer saloons are Staropramen, Beer Factory and others. If we analyze package holidays to Prague, one can come to a conclusion that all arrangements during the entire trip specify official escort provided by the travel agency. All travel agencies in their offers include sightseeing of Prague. Sightseeing is performed by local licensed tour guide and includes the following facilities and places in the city: Old Town, Charles Bridge, Maltese Square, the monument of Charles IV, King´s road, the Jewish Quarter, Paris Street, Old Town Square with the Astronomical clock – Orloj, Loreto church, Municipal House, Dusty Tower, the National Museum, Prague castle, the Cathedral of St. Vito and other. The sightseeing lasts 4-5 hours. Local guides present the beauty of Prague to Macedonian tourists in Serbian or Croatian language, because the city doesn't provide a licensed tour guide for Macedonian language. Since Macedonia in the past was part of former Yugoslavia, language barrier in understanding the full presentation of guidelines exists only for generations of tourists born after 1991. If one looks at the pricing arrangements for Prague, a conclusion can be drawn that they range from 125 to 159 euros per person. The price of the arrangement includes transportation, three-star hotel accommodation on bed-and-breakfast basis and a licensed tour escort during the trip and city tours with a local licensed guide.

Table 4 presents additional activities offered in arrangements, such as: Vltava river cruise, dinner in a traditional Czech restaurant or beer saloon and an excursion to Karlovy Vary, excursion to Dresden. The small number of additional activities points out the fact that there is a need to increase the number of additional activities and to expand the offer during the stay of tourists in Prague.

Table 4: Additional activities offered in package holidays to visit Prague during the "11th October" national holiday 2013

Travel agency	*Vltava river cruise*	*Dinner in traditional restaurant or beer saloon*	*Karlovy Vary*
Falcon travel	10 €	25 €	20 €
Fibula	15 €	/	20 €
Magelan travel	25 €	/	25 €
Nehar travel	15 €	25 €	25 €
Camellia travel	/	/	/
Balkan turist	10 €	25 €	20 €

Source: Official web pages of selected travel agencies, October 2013.

Vltava river cruise lasts one to two hours (depending on whether lunch or dinner is included) and takes place in the downtown area. From informal interviews that were conducted with travel agencies staff, it was found that about 70 % of tourists participate in such cruises. Prices for Vltava river cruises depend on the travel agency and usually range from 10-25 €.

Dinner at a traditional Czech restaurant takes two to three hours and usually involves the following menu: appetizer, soup, main dish - goulash or pork shanks and Medovnik (Czech honey cake) as dessert. About 60 % of Macedonian tourists visit a traditional Czech restaurant during their visit to Prague. Traditional Czech restaurants that are often part of the offer by Macedonian travel agencies are Obcanska Plovarna, U Pavouka, U Fleku, etc.

An optional visit, in addition to arrangements for Prague, involves a full day trip to Karlovy Vary, famous spa in the Czech Republic and the favorite spot for European aristocracy. During the excursion, the tourist groups are led by local and licensed guides. This optional excursion is most interesting to Macedonian tourists and it involves 80-90 % of tourists, depending on the type of groups.

If one calculates the prices of all additional activities, a conclusion may be drawn that Macedonian tourists spend 55 to 75 euro on optional outings. A more specific research should be carried out in order to obtain information on total costs that tourists have during their visit to Prague.

Conclusion

Macedonian tourists have a great interest in visiting European cities, usually during national holidays. The results of the research in this paper show that travel agencies publish travel arrangements to Prague (as part of their offer) on their official websites one month prior to the trip. Package holidays to Prague, compared to arrangements to visit other European capitals, according to arrangement prices, are neither the most expensive nor the cheapest. Such arrangements usually take place over a period of four to five days and include two or three nights with breakfast. Most arrangements involve a combined visit to Vienna or Dresden. Due to the short period of time, the number of additional activities for tourists during their stay is limited and includes a Vltava river cruise, dinner at a traditional restaurant and a visit to Karlovy Vary. All arrangements to visit Prague involve city tour with a local guide explaining the beauty of the city in Serbian or Croatian language. It is advisable in future that a licensed and local tourist guide in Macedonian language is provided. The number of travel agencies in Macedonia that organize visit to Prague is small, but these travel agencies cooperate with other agencies acting as intermediaries offering arrangements for a commission. The exact number of Macedonian tourists who visit Prague is not available in the official statistics. From the informal interviews with managers and employees of six travel agencies that bring tourists to this city, an unofficial number of 2,000 tourists who visit Prague on a yearly basis was obtained. Also, there isn't any official data regarding the Macedonian tourists' consumption in Prague, but the estimates of travel agencies show that the consumption amounts to more than 60 euro per day. Extensive research needs to be carried out in order to obtain such information. From informal interviews, we learned that the travel agencies from Macedonia have long and fruitful cooperation with their partners from Prague, and they are satisfied with the professional attitude. The difficulties travel agencies from Macedonia are faced with are related to border-crossing with Serbia and Hungary during the holidays, due to the increase in traffic, which prolongs the travelling time.

One thing is certain, travel agencies in Macedonia offering trips to Prague largely contribute to the popularization of this tourist destination. They continuously advertise, informing potential tourists about the attractiveness of the city and, of course, providing high quality of the organization and implementation of such trips, thus positioning the image of Prague on the Macedonian market.

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SELECTED EVENTS AS A SPECIAL PRODUCT OF GASTROTOURISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Abstract: *This article is devoted to the issue of culinary tourism, or events as a specialized product of gastronomic tourism. It presents the results of quantitative research implemented in the Czech Republic on four types of gastronomic events. The aim was to determine what an important a role food plays in tourism. Whether people are willing to travel for experiences related to food, what gastronomic events they prefer and whether these gastronomic events are the main motivation for visiting the destination.*

Key words: *event, foodies, food tourism, gastronomic tourism, tourist behavior*

JEL Classification: *L83*

Introduction

In recent years, there has been an expansion in the number so-called foodies, a class of experienced and educated consumers who are looking for specialized products suited to their specific needs and interests and are prepared to travel to find these products and the culinary experiences connected with them. The result is a relatively new group of tourists who are acquainted with the traditions and culture of the destinations visited through food products and gastronomy. In the context of culinary tourism, they visit restaurants in which they can enjoy traditional specialties or which offer an exceptional experience of exceptional food which is, moreover, served in an exceptional way.

The aim of this paper is to determine how important a role food plays in tourism, whether people are willing to travel for experiences related to food, what gastronomic events they prefer and whether participating in gastronomic events as products of cultural tourism is the main goal of their journey.

Gastronomic tourism is travel aimed at exploring gastronomy, especially in order to taste national and other culinary delights. In addition to visiting eating establishments, here we include visiting gastronomic events as well as cooking classes and active or passive participation in the gastro competitions.

Foreign scholarly literature makes use of the terms "gastronomic tourism", "culinary tourism" and recently "food travel". In the Czech Republic this terminology is not firmly defined and authors either make use of the English terms or translations thereof. According Hall (2011, p. 5) “often “culinary tourism” (or similar concepts such as “food tourism”, “gastronomic tourism”, “gourmet tourism”, “wine tourism”) is a special interest product that lies at the high end of the market at the intersection of the food, agriculture, hospitality and tourism industries.

The World Food Tourism Association (WFTA, 2012), however, has stopped using the term "culinary tourism" because in its opinion it is misleading. Instead, the concept which includes all of these areas is “travel for food.”For them, what is important is fresh, local, organic, sustainable and seasonal products, as well as preserving local culinary traditions. Hall and Sharples (2008) use the term “food tourism.” According to them, it's a culinary trip to the region for recreational and entertainment purposes, which include visits to food producers, food festivals, food fairs and events, farmer's markets, cooking shows, presentations and tasting of quality food or any tourism activity associated with food. In addition to this, this travel is associated with a particular lifestyle that involves experimentation, learning from different cultures, gaining knowledge and understanding of the properties or attributes relating to tourism products, as well as the culinary specialties produced in the particular localities.

Gastronomic tourism according to Kotíková (2013, p. 39) represents “a form of tourism in which the main motive is gastronomy and culinary experiences. It may be a participation in specialized gastronomic events or experiences associated with the consumption, preparation and presentation of food and getting to know the gastronomic traditions of the destination.” Mitchell and Hall (in Hall, 2011) distinguish between four types of “food tourist” (tourists who travel to experience food):

- gastronomes with high interest/involvement;
- indigenous foodies with high and moderate interest/involvement;
- tourist foodies with low interest/involvement;
- familiar foodies with low interest/involvement.

Through CzechTourism in 2013, the agency Ipsos presented the results of research focusing on incentives for visiting tourist regions in the Czech Republic. One of the motives evaluated by respondents was the "Local gastronomy". This incentive ranked 3rd from a total of 6 options of the motives for visiting the region. (CzechTourism, 2013)

An analysis focused on initiatives and trends in gastronomy in the Czech Republic, which was published in the report *Global Report on Food Tourism* in 2012 states that "food tourism" remains a regional issue. Marketing and promotion of culinary tourism products are focused on the strictly regional market. National or even international marketing activities are not a priority. The “*Report on Global Food Tourism”* (UNWTO, 2012) also examined the importance of different gastronomic tourism products for local markets in terms of operators and organizers of tourist attractions. The most important products are events. The trend towards local products and local visitors is confirmed in this report.

In 2010, the World Food Travel Association published its “Psycho Culinary Profiling” research into consumer behavior in food travel purchase decisions. (WFTA, 2010) This came to some interesting conclusions:

- the reason people disagree on restaurants, hotels, etc., is because they have different expectations of their anticipated food/drink experience;
- consumer expectations can be organized into 13 different categories [adventurer, ambiance, authentic, budget, eclectis, gourmet, innovative, localist, novice, organic, social, trendy, vegetarian];
- consumers can exhibit up to 3 major Psycho Culinary profiles, and usually no more than 1-2 minor profiles. Generally, we say that people have up to 3 “foodie” profiles, which refers to their major Psycho Culinary profiles;
- not only can consumers have profiles, but so can destinations.

Events are the subject of research not only in tourism but also in sport, culture, marketing, management, economics, sociology, psychology and other fields. The topic of events has been studied by a number of academics in the Czech Republic and abroad. The subject of my interest in this study was mainly foreign studies focused on the socio-cultural events in tourism. These have been studied by, among others, by: Kmeco (2007), Getz (2008), Hall and Sharples (2008), Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2011), Kruger and Saayman (2009), Pompurová and Šimočková (2013).

Culinary products here are not are not conceived of as only the actual food, products or meals, but especially a variety of activities-events in which food or drink plays a major role. Over time, these gastronomic events have found fans among domestic and foreign tourists. Thanks to numerous festivals, celebrations, exhibitions, and tastings even ordinary people who regularly do not go to the "better" restaurants can sample many select delicacies.

Kotíková and Schwartzhoffová (2008) present a basic classification system for the events under which gastronomical events can be classified according to different criteria (according to time, season, duration and venue, according to whether it is an event open to the general public or is closed or who organizes it). Based on their classification and especially in accordance with the typology of the planned events by Getz (2008) and Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2011), gastronomic events rank among cultural and local events. This is true even if "some gastronomic events and happenings can take on the character of major or even cultural events -such as wine harvests or beer festivals, where the presentation of food and beverages is only one part of the program" as noted Kotíková (2013, p. 45).

Today, people are willing to travel for experiences centered on food. One of consequences of having such experiences (and not only those connected with food) may be that the gastronomic events stimulate the interest of tourists in destinations where the event takes place. The WFTA also defines culinary tourism as achieving unique and memorable culinary experiences of all kinds while traveling. Locations thus become tourist destinations. The effect of gastronomic events is not only evident in the increased numbers of visitors to a destination, but events can also significantly affect the image of a destination. From the point of view of the roles and functions of gastro events for the destination, gastro events can also generate other positive economic, social, political and environmental effects. Pompurová and Šimočková (2013, p. 95) confirm (state) that "it is important to mention capability of tourism events to increase the destination incomes and to improve infrastructure facilities ".

Gastro Events in the Czech Republic

In recent years, the number of interesting projects and gastronomic events has been increasing. At the same time, it is possible to trace a series of gastronomic trends which indicate long-term improvement in this important segment of tourism in the country. Such events are focused not only in the capital, but are spread throughout the country. Along with more traditional events, new ones have been established which have also managed to attract their own enthusiasts. (Schwartzhoffová, 2011) Most of these events are smaller local occasions that have an impact primarily on one municipality or region. Domestic tourists visit not only restaurants and wine cellars, but also other gastronomic events such as festivals, celebrations, fairs, tastings, exhibitions and fairs. At the same time, farmers markets are also becoming increasingly popular and emerging as new tourist attractions. The phenomenon of the open-air market is known throughout the world, and they are also proving attractive for tourism. The opportunity to purchase local products as well as their atmosphere makes open-air markets a highly-sought attraction for tourists.

Smaller events are focused on the presentation of certain regional gastronomic products. These include, municipal and historical festivals, fairs, markets, food festivals, culinary competitions and harvest festivals (including asparagus, wine and garlic festivals to name just a few) or spirits tastings. Several hundred of these events are held during the year. Good food, drink and entertainment are often elements of their social programs. Here specialized culinary events, especially food and beverages tastings, take a prominent place. Bosáková (2013) identifies the following events:

- *Grand restaurant festival* – which takes place this year in a number of fine restaurants throughout the Czech Republic for the fifth year and has become a popular event including the so-called Yummy Bus and Yummy Train;
- *Prague Food Festival* – a presentation of Prague restaurants and chefs in the gardens of Prague Castle;
- *Chef Time Fest* – dinner with culinary personalities, chefs' duels, Michelin menu, cooking schools and workshops;
- *Gastronomic Festival M. D. Rettigové* in Litomyšl;
- *Beer at the Castle* – microbrewery Festival at Prague Castle;
- *Wallenstein Wine Festival* Staré Hrady;
- *Beer Castle* – microbrewery Festival at Prague Castle;

- *Loštice Music and the Cheese Festival* – a three-day celebration with music and local cheese specialties are held in June;
- *Asparagus Festival Ivančice u Brna* – three-day gastronomic event with mobile restaurants and cultural program;
- *Dačice Sugar Festival* – the June celebration of sugar cubes in Dačice;
- *Onion Fair* in the town of Hořovice – held in October and usually draws up to 18 thousand people;
- *The July Garlic Festival* – in the castle in Buchlovice or the *October Garlic Festival* in Rosice u Brna;
- *Borůvkobraní* (Blueberry Harvest) – in Borovany in South Bohemia is a two-day gastronomic and cultural event, consisting of a blueberry and craft fair, blueberry and traditional Czech food and eating contests with blueberry pies and dumplings;
- *Trnkobraní* (Plumb Harvest) – a multi-genre festival held since 1967 in late August in Vizovice, includes an internationally renowned plum dumpling eating contest;
- *The Taste of the Moravia-Silesia* – a project which aims to revive the original regional specialties. It consists of a culinary competition¸ a best regional food product competition, a best restaurant competition, a best regional beer competition and a gastro festival;
- *Mikulov Gastronomic Festival.*

Materials and Methods

The results presented in this study are based on quantitative research which focused on the visitors at gastrotourism events in the Czech Republic. The aim of the research was to determine the effect of gastronomic tourism on travel and tourism as a whole. To determine whether or not gastronomic products are the main motive for tourists traveling to another region. Individual events were divided into four basic groups. Specifically, my research covers:

a) beer festivals;
b) presentation and tasting of wine or a young wine – festivals, spirits tastings, wine harvests;
c) farmers markets, gastronomic fairs and festivals – here the primary purpose is buying and selling ingredients, food tasting and meals may be an additional part of the program;
d) gastro/food festivals – here the primary purpose is tasting and eating food.

For each event the aim was:

- to determine whether participants attend gastronomic events in the region where they live or travel outside their region;
- compare the frequency of visits to extra-regional gastronomic events;
- analyze whether the gastronomic event was the main motive for visiting the destination;
- to establish the socio-demographic profile of visitors.

The research was conducted in the spring of 2013. It was conducted through personal interviews based on a structured questionnaire using the PAPI technique and the results processed in MS Excel. The sample included 281 respondents. After the inspection and elimination of incomplete results, the *research sample numbered 278 respondents.*

Results

In the sample of 278 respondents, 53.0 % were women and 47.0 % men. The age distribution in the sample was as follows:

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	*Proportion in %*
18-25 year	10.2
26-35 year	22.3
36-45 year	36.2
46-55 year	24.2
over 55 year	6.1

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

It can be seen that there is an equal distribution of working-age respondents, who are the target market for the gastronomic tourism.

a) Beer festival

The main Czech and Moravian specialties are beer and wine. In the Czech Republic there is beer tourism, a large number of breweries organize tours of their facilities, attract tourists to take beer baths or organize beer festivals. The latter were the subject of this research.

45.5 % of respondents were attending beer festivals within their own region. Outside their home region – only 32.5 % of respondents traveled to another region for a beer festival and for 64.1 % of respondents attending the beer festival was the main motivation for their trip, of these, 57.8 % of respondents were at a beer festival outside their region for the first time, 42.2 % participated repeatedly.

Table 2: Beer festival attendance

Factor	*Frequency in %*
Within the region	45.5
Outside of the region	32.5
Not participating	22.0
Main motive	64.1
First time	57.8
Repeatedly	42.2

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

b) Presentation and tasting of wine or young wine

37.1 % of respondents were attending a wine presentation or tasting of wine or young wine in its own region attended by tourists. Outside their home regional most 45 % of respondents were attending in another region. For 54.2 % the tasting was the main motivation for their journey. 32.5 %, of these were attending such an event in another region for the first time 67.5 % participated repeatedly.

Table 3: Participation in wine harvest

Factor	*Frequency in %*
Within the region	37.1
Outside of the region	44.9
Not participating	18.0
Main motive	54.2
First time	32.5
Repeatedly	67.5

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

c) Farmers markets, gastronomic fairs and festivals

Approximately 46 % of respondents were attending farmers markets, gastronomic fairs and festivals (such as the asparagus festival, garlic festival, blueberry harvest) in their own region. Outside their home region – only 15.1 % of respondents were attending from outside their home regions. For 76.3 % of these the event was the main motivation for their journey, 14.3 % of these were attending such an event in another region for the first time, 85.7 % participated repeatedly.

Table 4: Attendance of farmers markets

Factor	*Frequency in %*
Within the region	45.9
Outside of the region	15.1
Not participating	39.0
Main motive	76.3
First time	14.3
Repeatedly	85.7

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

d) Gastro / food festivals

14.5 % of respondents were attending culinary festivals in their own region. The same number of respondents was attending from outside their home regions. For 50.6 % of these, the event was the main motivation for their journey 70.2 % of these were attending such an event in another region for the first time, 30.8 % participated repeatedly**.**

Table 5: Food festival attendance

Factor	*Frequency in %*
Within the region	14.5
Outside of the region	14.5
Not participating	71.0
Main motive	50.6
First time	70.2
Repeatedly	30.8

Source: Own elaboration, 2014.

Discussion

A majority of respondents attend beer festivals, which are the most popular type of food tourism event, but they seek these events primarily near home. This result is understandable as various beer festivals are now held in every major city and those interested in attending do not need to travel far for these events.

The situation is different for events related to wine and wine products. Moreover, if it precisely for these events that most people are willing to travel outside of their region and spend extended periods of time in wine cellars. It is here that we see the greatest potential, and wine-producing regions should focus on these events in their marketing efforts. Also, this research showed that wine tastings and tasting of young wine was the main motivation to travel for only 54 % of respondents. In almost half the cases these events were a welcome addition to trips or recreation.

The surprising result was the great popularity of farmers' markets, gastronomic fairs and festivals. Again, a local focus is dominant. Fortunately, people attend these events again and again. This has to do, in my opinion, with the current trend in both larger and smaller cities to try to rejuvenate the city center, connect with local customs and offer local products.

There was also a very low, 14 %, turnout at culinary festivals and events associated with experiential gastronomy. Although there is talk of increasing interest in gourmet food, which is part of these events, the results of my research did not confirm this.

The results, in my opinion, correspond with the assertion of the Global Report on Food Tourism (UNWTO, 2012), that the growth of food tourism worldwide is an obvious fact. It is one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market.

The results show that actual events represent more than half of the prime reasons why people embark on a journey associated with some sort of gastronomic experience. This confirms the great potential of this segment of tourism to grow. It was also confirmed that the interest is mainly about local events.

Conclusion

The results of this empirical investigation show that people like to attend culinary events in the place where they live, but they are not particularly willing to travel to attend them in other regions.

The main objective was to determine the effect of gastronomic tourism on tourism in general that is to find out if these products are gastronomic tourists' main motive for making the journey. The research measured the attendance level at gastronomic events, the main motive for attending events within the region and outside the region, the main motive for participating repeatedly in the same event and the length of stay at the event. To ascertain its effect the evaluation criteria of whether previous participation in the event was the main motive for making the journey was chosen. The results of the research focused on the views and opinions of customers confirmed that the event (food, beer and wine festivals, farmers' markets/tastings) are the most popular. It turned out that in all cases the event was the main motivation to travel outside the tourist's home region, and this within a range of 45-76 %. Further, the research showed that all the events were well-known and popular among respondents. The most visited wine tasting events were for young wine, which showed 45 % participation from outside the region and 37 % from within the region, while the turnout was very low at culinary festivals. Among attendees from within the region the most popular were farmers markets with 46 % and beer festivals with 45 %.

The research has proven that the event itself is often the deciding factor when planning a trip and that people are truly willing to travel specifically for the gastronomic experience. When comparing results, however, we confirmed the current trend, which says gastronomic tourism has more of a regional and local character. Here, there is still great potential for development, and there is the possibly of further research focusing on consumer motivation to travel to a certain destination for a certain gastro product /event.

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REVIEW

STUDNIČKA, P., KALABISOVÁ, J., PLZÁKOVÁ, L., TINKOVÁ, V. The Effects of Tourism on a Local Level – a Case Study of the Municipality Lipno nad Vltavou. Prague: Press21 Ltd., 2013. 125 p. ISBN 978-80-905181-4-8.

One of the aims of regional policy is an attempt to mitigate regional disparities. In areas with the appropriate pre-requisites, the development of domestic and inbound tourism can also contribute to reducing regional disparities. In these destinations tourism may become the only economically sustainable activity. From the management perspective, the ability of the destination to develop and adapt its resources, the existence of a destination management organization, and the coordination of links to neighboring destinations, with an emphasis on the exchange of experiences and the creation of joint tourism products, are all of fundamental importance for the development of tourism.

The effects of tourism on the local, regional and national levels can be measured regularly. There are two different approaches to capturing cash flow, dividing it into the demand-oriented (expenditure of tourists) and the supply-oriented (income of tourism entities). Particular attention is paid to the impact of tourism on job creation. The economic impact of tourism in the local or regional economy must be evaluated in terms of the direct, indirect and induced effects.

Using the methodology of the World Tourism Organization and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, the type, frequency and forms of data collection required for the periodic measurements of effects of tourism on the local level have been developed. The optimal amount of data in tourism for the ideal length of time series is rare at the local level in the Czech Republic.

This case study, focused on the possibilities of measuring the effects of tourism on the local level, has been carried out using the municipality, Lipno nad Vltavou, which is a mountain destination near water, in which tourism has a dominant position in terms of economic activity. The current state of tourism in the municipality is assessed on the basis of performance and capacity tourism indicators, traffic and revenue of the tourist information center, investment activity in the municipality in relation to tourism, performance of selected operators of tourism services, the view of the employment situation, analysis of the municipality‘s budget with an emphasis on state and local taxes, and the condition of destination management in the wider area of interest.

In 2013, Lipno nad Vltavou was awarded the prestigious title of EDEN – European Destinations of Excellence – from the Europe an Commission. The municipality was entered into the competition with their project „Lipno without Barriers" because the current year was focused on barrier-free travel and the development of social tourism. One of the most important events in the village took place in July 2012 with the grand opening of the barrier- free Treetop Walkway, which was noted as the tourist news of the season in 2012 as part of a contest by the Czech Tourist Authority-CzechTourism in the project Escape from Boredom.

For the future, it will be necessary to define the territorial scope of the destination Lipensko so that it becomes competitive in the tourism market. The municipality itself covers quite a small territory, which, together with the neighboring municipalities of Frymburk and Přední Výtoň, do not form a sufficiently competitive destination. In the most ideal situation, a strong cross-border destination could be built along with territories in Upper Austria and Bavaria.

The Monograph, The Effects of Tourism on a Local Level – a Case Study of the Municipality Lipno nad Vltavou, has been produced with the financial support of the Municipality Lipno nad Vltavou and the destination management organization Lipensko, Ltd. as part of the project Measuring the Effect of Tourism in Lipno nad Vltavou, OLNV-MECR1VŠH-2012 and LIP-MECR2VŠH-2012.

Z recenzních posudků

STUDNIČKA, P., KALABISOVÁ, J., PLZÁKOVÁ, L., TINKOVÁ, V. Efekty cestovního ruchu na lokální úrovni – případová studie Lipno nad Vltavou. Praha: Press21 s.r.o., 2013. 125 str. ISBN 978-80-905181-4-8.

„Čtyřčlenný autorský tým pracovníků Vysoké školy hotelové předložil velmi kvalifikovaně zpracovanou studii zaměřenou na řešení jednoho z vysoce aktuálních soudobých problémů obecně se týkajících způsobů stimulace místního a regionálního rozvoje – a v užším pojetí intenzifikace rozvoje cestovního ruchu na municipální úrovni. Těžiště výzkumu položil do specifikace efektů cestovního ruchu v konkrétní destinaci, jíž je Lipno nad Vltavou.

Mám-li vyjádřit celkové obecné stanovisko vůči monografii, oceňuji zdařilé skloubení obecnějšího výkladu problematiky rozvoje regionálního cestovního ruchu, jakož i aktivit destinace Lipno nad Vlavou s podrobnou analýzou silných a slabých stránek, příležitostí a hrozeb v nastíněné části Jihočeského kraje. Výklad je strukturován do pěti vzájemně logicky *propojených kapitol analyzujících z rozdílných zorných úhlů dvousezónní destinaci cestovního ruchu s bohatou nabídkou příležitostí pro letní a zimní rekreaci.*

Autorský kolektiv spatřuje přínosy cestovního ruchu především ve vybudování a v provozování lyžařského areálu – a to i ve vazbě na využívání ubytovacích a stravovacích zařízení situovaných v obci. Za přínosný je určitě nezbytné označit rozvoj destinačního managementu reprezentovaného v první řadě společností Lipensko, s. r. o. V řízení cestovního ruchu se příznivě projevuje budování networkingu v rámci obce mezi jejími zastupiteli a podnikatelským sektorem, jehož prostřednictvím je mimo jiné propagován slogan Sezóna na Lipně nikdy nekončí.“

prof. PhDr. Karel Lacina, DrSc.
Vysoká škola finanční a správní

„Ekonomický prínos cestovného ruchu závisí primárne od počtu návštevníkov a objemu ich výdavkov na statky cestovného ruchu, ktoré predstavujú príjmy ich producentov alebo sprostredkovateľov. Preto považujem za správne, že autori začali analýzou práve dopytovo-orientovanej metódy, na ktorú nadviazali vysvetlením ponukovo-orientovaných metód. Medzi najvýznamnejší ekonomický prínos rozvoja cestovného ruchu zvlášť v disparitných regiónoch patrí tvorba nových pracovných miest.

Prvá kapitola je ukončená prehľadom prevažne makroekonomických modelov kvantifikácie ekonomických efektov cestovného ruchu. Vysoko oceňujem skutočnosť, že autori sa snažili teoretickú časť odbornej monografie „popretkávať“ praktickými príkladmi z analyzovanej obce.

Druhá kapitola sa zaoberá požiadavkami na indikátory, pomocou ktorých kvantifikujeme ekonomický prínos cestovného ruchu. Na teoretické východiská danej problematiky opäť nadväzuje praktická aplikácia – návrh indikátorov pre obec Lipno nad Vltavou. Oceňujem podrobnosť a prehľadnosť spracovania indikátorov a poukázanie na to, ktoré sú z hľadiska analýzy konkrétnej obce považované za kľúčové.

Posledná kapitola sumarizuje prínos cestovného ruchu pre obec Lipno nad Vltavou. V závere autori poukazujú na to, že žiadna iná aktivita by neprispela k tak intenzívnemu rozvoju obce ako práve cestovný ruch. Odborná monografia je využiteľná v teórii ako aj praxi.“

doc. Ing. Jana Piteková, PhD.
Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banské Bystrici